



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 22, 2010 - San Francisco, CA - The Golden Gate Audubon Society, Pacific Gas and Electric Company and the San Francisco Department of the Environment announce the spring **Lights Out for Birds – San Francisco**, a program helping building owners, managers and tenants save energy and money while protecting migratory birds. **Lights Out for Birds** asks participants to turn off building lights during the bird migration (February through May and August through November each year).

“Participants in the **Lights Out for Birds** program can save natural resources, money, and birds by **turning off lighting after dusk** each evening and **leaving lights off until dawn**,” said Mike Lynes, Conservation Director for Golden Gate Audubon. “Over 250 species of birds migrate through San Francisco in the spring and fall, and many that migrate at night can become confused by the City’s lights and collide with tall buildings and towers. The **Lights Out for Birds** program can reduce bird deaths while cutting energy costs and saving participants thousands of dollars each year.”

Collisions kill hundreds of millions of birds each year. Last year, the North American Bird Conservation Initiative—a joint effort of federal agencies and non-profit conservation organizations—released the “2009 State of the Birds” in which it reported that the majority of migratory birds in North America are suffering significant population declines due to human-induced causes, including habitat loss and collisions. Effective *Lights Out* programs can help stem these population declines.

Participants in the *Lights Out for Birds* program also gain significant financial benefits. Building operators and tenants have reported significant savings on energy bills as a result of participation—one business in Toronto reported a savings of \$200,000 in 2006. Last week Mayor Gavin Newsom announced energy efficient retrofit funding for 2,000 small to mid-sized businesses and 500 homes. By installing timers or motion detectors and turning off unnecessary lights, building owners and operators can significantly reduce their energy bill. Reduced energy consumption decreases overall greenhouse gas emissions, which is essential in the effort to combat climate change.

San Francisco was one of the first cities to implement a *Lights Out* program in 2008. Now over 21 cities in the US and Canada have a *Lights Out* program. Conservationists hope that the program extends to every major city in North America, to save birds, energy and money.

Building owners, managers and tenants that are interested in participating should contact the San Francisco Department of the Environment or a PG&E representative to learn about how to participate in this program. For more information about local bird populations and how to help, contact the Golden Gate Audubon Society at (510) 843-6551.

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