

Indianapolis Zoo's "Beacon of Hope" Would Be Bird Killer

If the Indianapolis Zoo had intended to design a structure to kill birds, it could not have done a better job than the "Beacon of Hope," proposed as part of the new orangutan building. Two features of the proposed building — expanses of glass and bright illumination at night — guarantee that it will kill migratory birds, which are attracted to tall, lighted structures at night and then collide with and are killed by glass during the day.

Conservationists are puzzled why the Indianapolis Zoo, known for recognizing achievement in species protection with the prestigious Indianapolis Prize, would construct a building so obviously deadly to migratory birds, many species of which are in decline and in need of significant conservation efforts. Indianapolis sits within both the Mississippi and Atlantic migratory flyways.

"With so many effective alternatives available," said Dr. James Karl Fischer, Executive Director of The Zoological Lighting Institute and a lighting designer/architect himself, "it is incomprehensible that this zoo would take such a project so far. All that unprotected glass will kill wild birds, and the 'Beacon of Hope' will degrade the luminous habitat for miles around. This is a poor way to deliver what ought to be a strong conservation message."

Ecologist Dr. Travis Longcore, science director of The Urban Wildlands Group and co-editor of the book *Ecological Consequences of Artificial Night Lighting*, observed that, "Scientists have known for many years that tall lighted structures attract birds, often resulting in their subsequent injury or death. Intentionally building such a structure would reveal a callous disregard for animal suffering and conservation science."

As a member of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, the Indianapolis Zoo has expressed commitment to the conservation and preservation of the Earth's fauna, which this project would directly violate.

The Zoological Lighting Institute and The Urban Wildlands Group call on the Indianapolis Zoo not to proceed with this project. The proposed design is a foreseeable mistake that will not be easily corrected once it is built. They urge the Indianapolis Zoo to avoid harmful light pollution and incorporate readily available bird-safe building design guidelines that are consistent with the noble intentions of the project.

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The Zoological Lighting Institute focuses upon photobiology and photo-ecology, raising awareness of the importance of light to exotic animal husbandry and to conservation initiatives alike.

The Urban Wildlands Group is dedicated to the preservation of species, habitats, and ecological processes in urban and urbanizing areas.

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Proposed illuminated tower at Indianapolis Zoo
(<http://indianapoliszoofuture.com/SiteAssets/BeconofHope1.PNG>):

