

The Fireflies of Georgia

Worldwide there are more than 2,300 species of “fireflies” or “lightning bugs” and Georgia is home to at least 45 species!

Compiled by the Atlanta Firefly Project and designed by Stephanie Damplo Luke
Visit www.atlantafireflyproject.org to learn more.

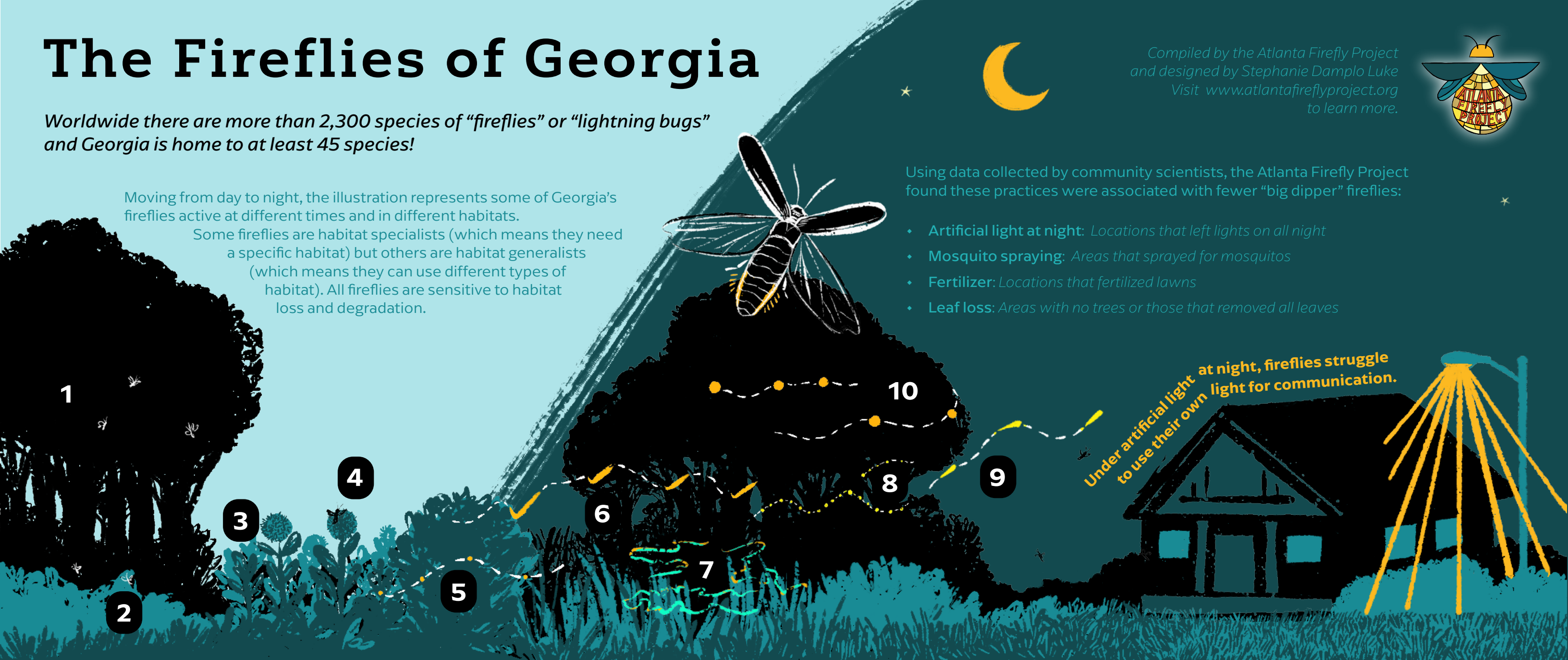


Moving from day to night, the illustration represents some of Georgia's fireflies active at different times and in different habitats.

Some fireflies are habitat specialists (which means they need a specific habitat) but others are habitat generalists (which means they can use different types of habitat). All fireflies are sensitive to habitat loss and degradation.

Using data collected by community scientists, the Atlanta Firefly Project found these practices were associated with fewer “big dipper” fireflies:

- **Artificial light at night:** Locations that left lights on all night
- **Mosquito spraying:** Areas that sprayed for mosquitos
- **Fertilizer:** Locations that fertilized lawns
- **Leaf loss:** Areas with no trees or those that removed all leaves



These day-active (diurnal) fireflies use pheromones, instead of light, to find mates.



1. Lucidota atra - Males fly slowly through the forest, and females perch on low plants.

2. Pollaclasis bifaria - An uncommon yet widespread species and with unique branched antenna.

3. Ellychnia corrusca - Our earliest firefly, survives freezing temperatures by sheltering in tree bark.

4. Pyropyga minuta - Called the “flower elf,” it might be living in your garden nectaring on milkweed.

Males of these dusk and night-active species have unique flash trains and flash colors, used to locate females.

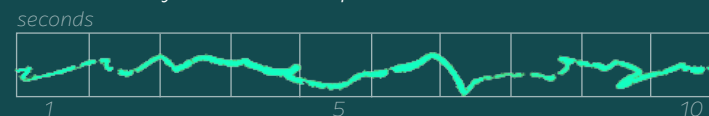
5. Photinus australis - Makes bad-tasting defensive chemicals called lucibufagins used to deter predators.



6. Photinus pyralis - “Big dipper” is common in our yards and has been observed to nectar on milkweed flowers.



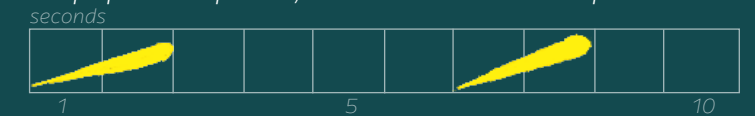
7. Phausic reticulata - Females are wingless and flightless and they cannot travel far.



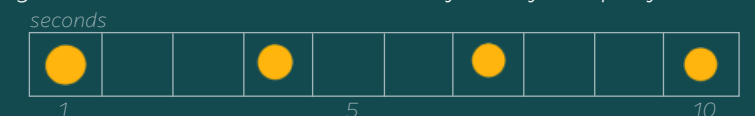
8. Photuris frontalis - Males can synchronize their flashes in large populations.



9. Photuris lucicrescens - Females mimic the flashes of a photinus female, in order to lure and eat a photinus male.



10. Pyractomena borealis - A spring flasher living on trees and reuses the same colony trees year after year.



All fireflies light up as larvae, though not all species light up as adults.