

Reinterpreting “R, R & R”

I would like to look at this whole issue from a broader perspective. Light pollution is an aspect of environmental pollution, and is (equally) something that each one of us, as a citizen of Planet Earth, has the power to mitigate. Top-down approaches are certainly needed – legislation by “Them” to commit to new standards or new technologies – but the bottom-up approach is what is actually going to mend the situation, by each and every one of us doing his or her part to Reduce what we are in danger of taking for granted by way of outdoor lighting.

As in the case of environmental pollution, we have a moral duty to respect both the planet and also the wellbeing of other humans and all dependent biological systems. The key lies not only in the “three R’s” of the environmentalist’s motto (Reduce, Re-use, Re-cycle), but also in another set of three R’s which must become enshrined in our behavioural approach: Respect, Responsibility and Right. The present situation has become aggravated by a growing assumption that Want is the same as Need; most definitely it is not, and that confusion is the basic reason why we have allowed the staggeringly bad light pollution of today to become acceptable and accepted.

It is not too late to act, and if we start practising according to the new Three Rs stated above then we can quickly make an impressive difference to the present poor situation.