

## Fireflies under star studded skies

Female fireflies prefer moist ground to lay their eggs. Knowing this, male fireflies display more on cloudy days. The combination of spectacular synchronous firefly flashes and clear skies are very rare. In 2023, I got one such opportunity and witnessed hundreds of thousands of fireflies displaying under a starlit sky. The long exposure nature of the photo showcases the rotation of the earth, causing the stars to trail. With rampant increase in light pollution, starry skies have become a distant past. Excessive, improper lighting spills into protected areas and wildlife corridors, threatening many nocturnal and diurnal species. This image stresses the need to conserve the dark.

Recorded by Sriram Murali and Chandrasekar Rathnam of Wild and Dark Earth, an NGO that conserves nocturnal habitats in India. [wildanddarkorg@gmail.com](mailto:wildanddarkorg@gmail.com)



# Fireflies and lightning

Fireflies flash to communicate, especially to mate. Artificial lighting drowns their light signals, affecting their mating success. Fireflies hardly flash in brightly lit areas. They reduce their activity when their habitat is lit by the Moon because the females wouldn't see their glows from a distance. It's surprising that the light from lightning doesn't break this behaviour. On a cloudy night in 2022, at the Anamalai Tiger Reserve, there was constant lightning at a distance. The cloudy skies diffused the light and the trees were bathed in white light regularly. This did not break their synchronisation or their flashes at all. These were fireflies of the genus *Abscondita*, species unknown\_ote

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