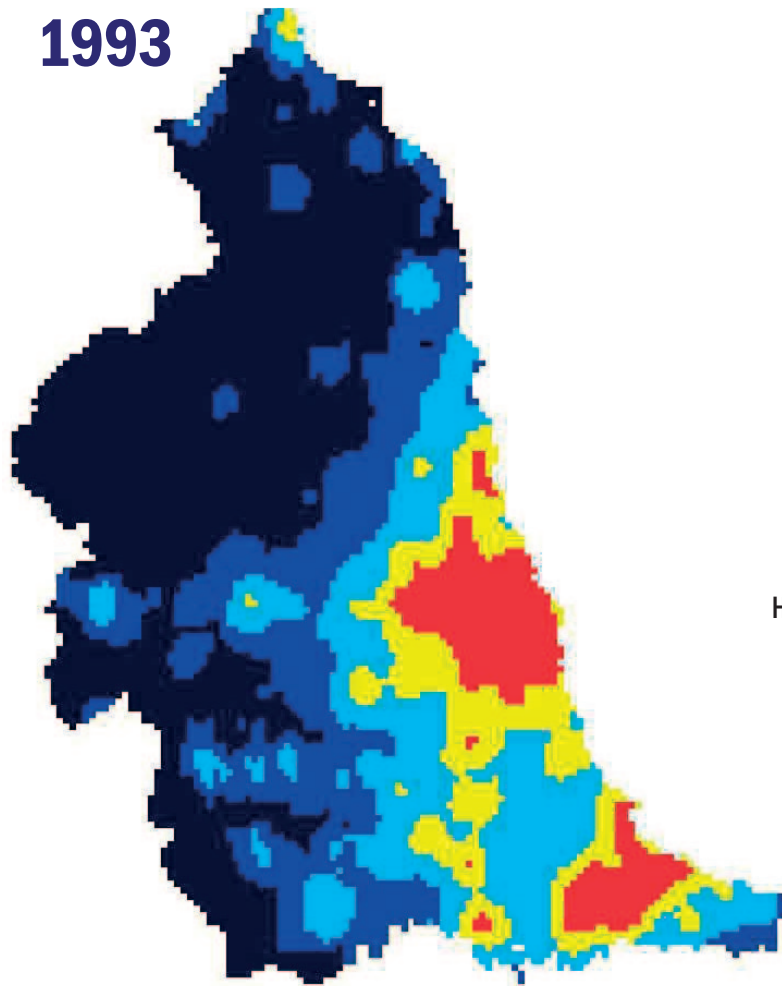


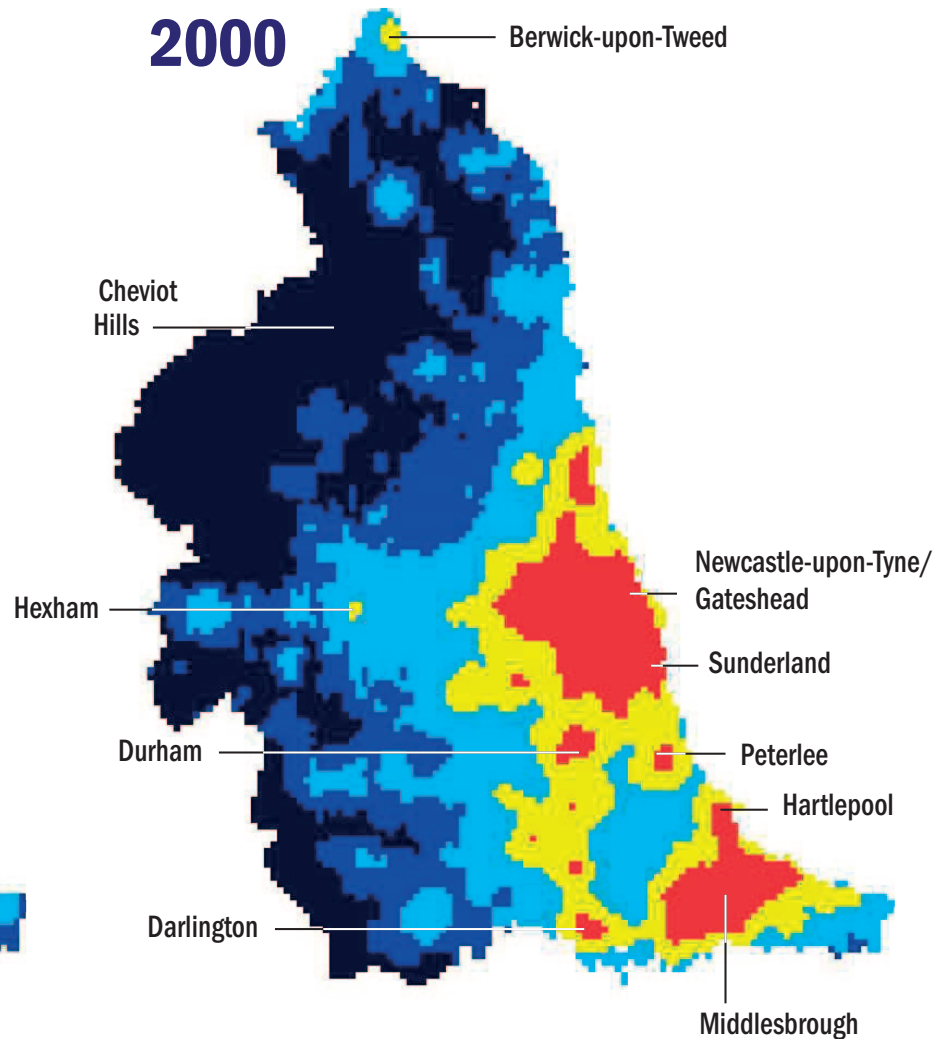
Night Blight in the North East

Satellite data shows that light pollution is rapidly increasing in the region, leaving less and less countryside where we can still enjoy starry, starry nights

1993

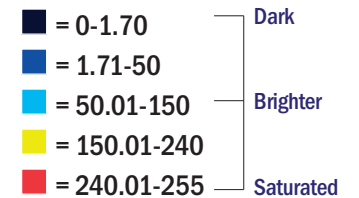


2000

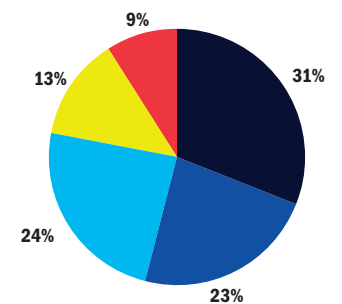


Key

These maps were created from pixels representing a square kilometre. They are a colour representation of satellite measurements of artificial light at night. The light is measured on a range from 0 to 255; 0 means the satellite is detecting no light in that pixel and 255 means the satellite's detector is saturated with light.



The North East in 2000



Why light pollution matters in the North East

The wasteful, careless use of outdoor lights is blighting our night sky, stopping us from being able to see the stars. The problem isn't all lighting, just lights that waste energy by beaming some or all of their light upwards. This causes light pollution, which can be seen as a pinky orange glow lighting up the night sky for miles outside towns and cities.

In the absence of light pollution, you can see thousands of stars on a clear, dark night and our own galaxy, the Milky Way, splashed across the heavens. But where there is light pollution, you can see only a couple of dozen of the very brightest stars. Light pollution wastes electricity and energy, and in doing so it contributes to air pollution and climate change.

CPRE is particularly concerned because darkness at night and starry skies are two of the things that – up to now at least – have defined the countryside and made it so different from towns and cities. That quality needs to be maintained and restored.

Light pollution in the North East is getting worse

Recent satellite data obtained by CPRE shows how much night time light is beaming upwards from each square kilometre of the region. This new data shows that light pollution is both a major problem and one that is growing. For example, Tyne and Wear is now 80% light-saturated and there's nowhere there, or in Teeside, where someone would be able to see the Milky Way.

Light pollution is rapidly spreading in the North East. Using our indicator, light pollution increased 42% in the region between 1993 and 2000 as several new 'red' spots appeared and the light around cities grew. That was the greatest increase of any region – yet the North East still has darker night skies, overall, than any other region and the largest reservoir of truly dark skies (our least light-polluted category). However, it's a shrinking reserve; in 1993, 43% of the region had truly dark skies but by 2000 only 31% was in this category.

Northumberland has been particularly hard hit. Its percentage of areas with truly dark skies decreased 28% and its average night time brightness rose a whopping 1,000%. Durham's amount of light-saturated area quadrupled between 1993 and 2000.

What needs to be done

We can all play a part in stopping the spread of light pollution by ensuring that outdoor lights we are responsible for don't cast any beams upwards. CPRE has produced a leaflet and a background report, both entitled *Night Blight!*, which set out the practical, realistic actions everyone can take to tackle this problem – from Government to individual citizens. These documents tell you more about light pollution throughout the rest of the UK. You can read them, or order printed copies, via our website, www.cpre.org.uk, or by contacting CPRE Publications on Freephone 0800 163680.

Join us! If you support our campaign against light pollution – which we are running with the British Astronomical Association – and want to support this and our other work to protect and enhance the English countryside, becoming a CPRE member is one of the best ways to help. Call now on 020 7981 2800 or visit our website.

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The Campaign to Protect Rural England exists to promote the beauty, tranquillity and diversity of rural England by encouraging the sustainable use of land and other natural resources in town and country. CPRE is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England, number 4302973. Registered charity number 1089685.

2003

County	Percentage of area in each of the five light pollution bands in 2000 (1993 in brackets) – see key and light pollution scale overleaf					Light pollution change, 1993-2000	
	Dark blue 0-1.70	Blue 1.71-50	Light blue 50.01-150	Yellow 150.01-240	Red 240.01-255	Pixel median, 2000 (1993 in brackets)	Percentage change in median, 1993-2000
Durham	16% (22%)	22% (25%)	34% (34%)	25% (18%)	4% (1%)	66 (54)	22%
Northumberland	45% (63%)	28% (22%)	22% (11%)	4% (4%)	1% (1%)	11 (1)	1,000%
Teeside*	0% (0%)	0% (6%)	26% (35%)	37% (28%)	36% (31%)	209 (181)	15%
Tyne and Wear*	0% (0%)	0% (0%)	1% (3%)	19% (21%)	80% (76%)	252 (254)	-1%
REGIONAL TOTAL	31% (43%)	23% (20%)	24% (19%)	13% (10%)	9% (7%)	47 (33)	42%
England total	11% (15%)	16% (29%)	51% (38%)	14% (12%)	7% (6%)	68 (55)	24%

* = old county boundary