

International Dark Sky Week 2021



Wednesday, April 7, 2021

Catch a Daytime Moon

We think of the Moon as Earth’s night light, but we often see it during the daytime. Here’s a note about that from the Longmont Astronomical Society:

During International Dark Sky Week, the Moon is rising in the early morning—about 3:40 a.m. on April 5 and a little later each day until about 7 a.m. on April 12. Unless you are a night owl, if you want to see the Moon look during the day. A daytime Moon is much fainter than at night as there is much less contrast against the bright blue sky. But it’s fun and surprising to see it then. Myriad sources provide rising and setting times for the Moon.

It often surprises some people that we can see the Moon during the day. It’s all about motion! The Moon goes around the Earth about once a month; meanwhile, the Earth is traveling around the Sun. Here’s a nice [demonstration](#) from the National Science Teaching Association that explains how the Moon phases work. But why do we see it during the day? When you see a crescent Moon in the sky before dark, the Moon is still near the Sun with our view from Earth, and is waxing, or getting bigger. If you see a crescent moon in the morning light, it’s a waning moon and has made its journey around the Earth, approaching the New Moon phase.

Here’s a fun way to tell if the Moon is waxing or waning: *If the light is on the right (side of the Moon), it’s getting bright; if it’s on the left rim, it’s getting dim.*

From the International Dark Sky Association:

There is no clear scientific evidence that increased outdoor lighting deters crimes. It may make us feel safer, but has not been shown to make us safer. In fact, most property crime occurs in the light of day. And some crimes like vandalism and graffiti actually thrive on night lighting. A dark sky does not necessarily mean a dark ground. Smart lighting that directs light where it is needed creates a balance between safety and starlight.

Outdoor lighting is intended to enhance safety and security at night, but too much lighting can actually have the opposite effect. Visibility should always be the goal. Glare from bright, unshielded lights actually decreases safety because it shines into our eyes and constricts our pupils. This cannot only be blinding, it also makes it more difficult for our eyes to adjust to low-light conditions.

To learn more about lighting, crime, and safety, visit the [IDA webpage](#).



Dark Sky Tips:

Concerned about street lights and other community lights? Here are [Boulder County’s Lighting Requirements](#). To find out more about ordinances in your own community, click [here](#).