

ABSTRACT ONLY

TOWARDS A FIRST
SPECTRO-PHOTOMETRIC
CHARACTERIZATION OF THE CHILEAN
NIGHT SKY

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Light pollution is widely recognized as a global issue that, like other forms of anthropogenic pollution, has significant impacts on ecosystems and adverse effects on living organisms. In recent years, it has emerged as a fertile field for interdisciplinary scientific research, socioeconomic studies, and wide-ranging cultural debates. Chile is widely known for its rich and distinctive ecosystems, and the superb quality of its northern skies has transformed it into one of the most important astronomical nodes in the world. Nevertheless, a coordinated scientific approach to characterize, quantify and monitor the effects of ALAN on the Chilean sky has only recently started. Our interdisciplinary research group on ALAN was born five years ago with the explicit purpose of filling this need, and aims at providing the international community with the first spectrophotometric characterization of one of the most pristine skies of planet Earth. Since 2019 we have been regularly monitoring more than twenty distinctive sites across the Coquimbo Region (also known as “Región Estrella”), including professional astronomical observatories, astrotourism centers, natural parks, and metropolitan areas. In this poster contribution we will introduce our research group by describing its *raison d’être*; stating its short, medium and long-term goals; and presenting the first results of our surveying campaigns. We further describe how our scientific projects and outreach initiatives, through a constant synergy with public and private institutions, contribute to heighten public awareness about the subtle but devastating effects of light pollution. Finally, we offer an example where our scientific conclusions have supported different public committees in taking more enlightened decisions to preserve the darkness of the Chilean sky, a natural and cultural heritage that is our scientific, moral and social obligation to protect and defend for all future generations.

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