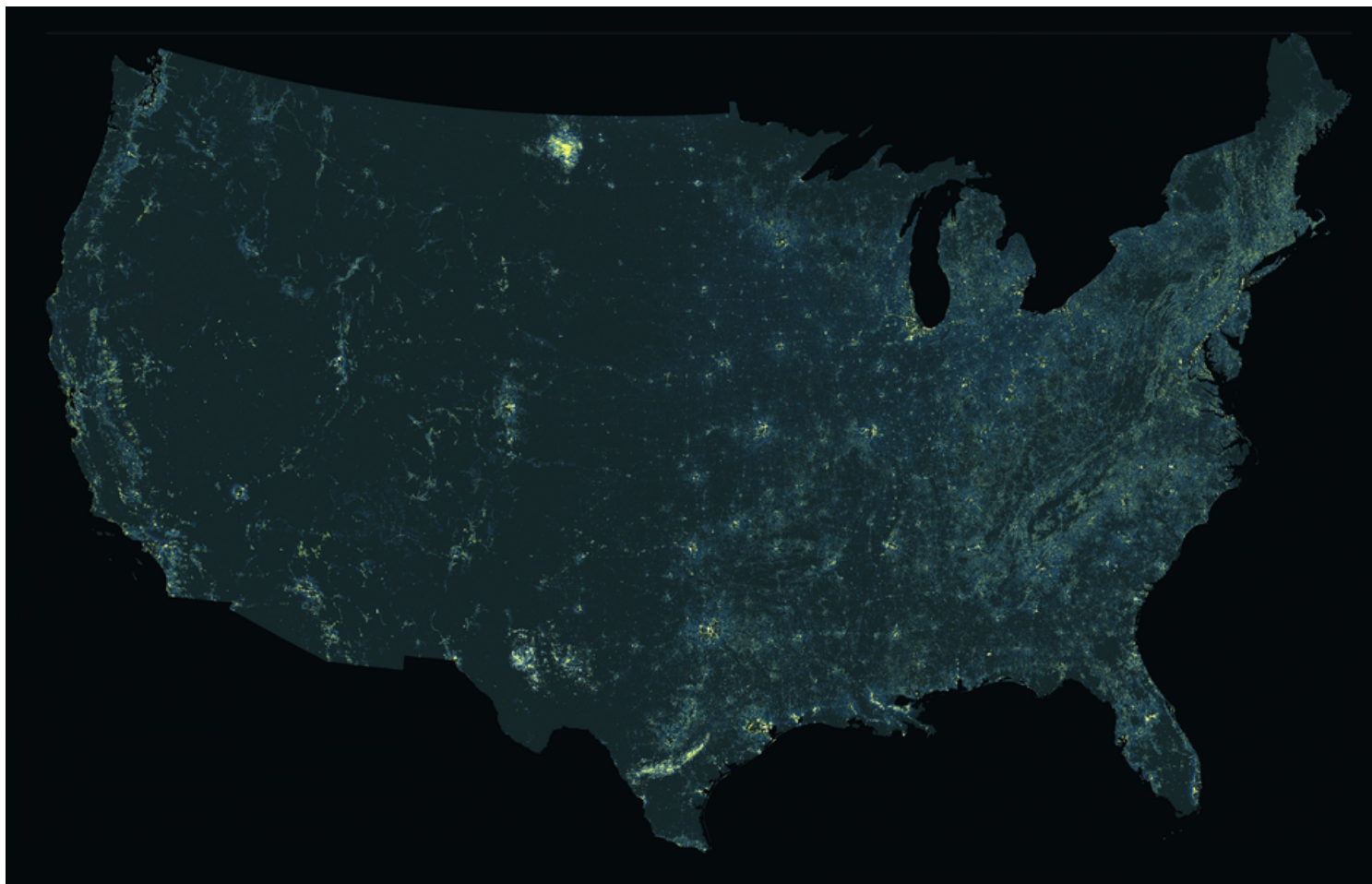


*Thank you for printing content from [www.citylab.com](http://www.citylab.com). If you enjoy this piece, then please check back soon for our latest in urban-centric journalism.*



**Artificial light that floods the night sky is thought to be only an urban phenomenon. But when you adjust for population, the picture is dramatically different.**

The rule of thumb is that if you want to see the Milky Way, you have to venture out to the countryside. That's where the illumination from streetlights and brightly lit offices that floods cities hasn't obscured the night sky. But a recent map tracking the artificial lighting seen at night through satellite imagery paints a very different picture. [In the map of the United States](#) by Tim Wallace, a cartographer at Descartes Labs, metropolitan areas like New York City, Los Angeles, and Chicago are dark, while rural areas in the Dakotas and sparsely populated towns right outside major urban centers stand out as bright spots.