



June 2, 2020

Dear Wildlifers,

We write to express our heartache over recent events and to join the Black community in calling for justice over the murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and many before them. We recognize that the tragedy of their deaths is anything but new. The history of Black people in our country is plagued by centuries of injustice. This must end. #BlackLivesMatter.

With the coronavirus pandemic isolating us from our friends and loved ones, many of us have taken refuge from stress, sorrow, and fear through immersion in nature. Christian Cooper's experience in Central Park last week lays bare the difficult truth that not everyone has that privilege. Indeed, in our disciplines— the fields of wildlife ecology, fisheries biology, and conservation biology, which remain dominated by white professionals— Black and other people of color regularly face racism at their field sites, in their laboratories, at scientific conferences, and through their broader professional interactions.

And yet, despite contending with such heart-rending turmoil over the past week, the Black wildlife and conservation communities have come together to share beautiful messages of representation with us. We have been incredibly inspired by the stories flooding social media through #BlackInNature and #BlackBirdersWeek. The future of wildlife, fish, and conservation biology is much brighter as a result.

As WFCB faculty, we stand strong with our colleagues, with our students, and with the broader Black community in condemning racism in all forms, both subtle and overt, individual and systemic. We commit to actively being anti-racist, advocate for a brighter, more just and inclusive future for all students, to be your allies through these trying times and into the future, and to educate ourselves and confront our own internal prejudices.

We could not be prouder to have each and every one of you as our students and colleagues in WFCB. You belong here, and your voices deserve to be heard. We want you to know that you can reach out to all of us for support, at any time. Though Academic Surge may be empty, our doors, hearts, and minds are always open to you.

Sincerely,

Nann Fangué, Roger Baldwin, John Eadie, Danny Karp, Doug Kelt, Rob Lusardi, Kiva Oken, Eric Post, Andrew Rypel, Justine Smith, Rahel Sollmann, Brian Todd, and Dirk Van Vuren