



## **WFO News**

WFO Members:

As you know this is an important time in the evolution of our society. People are searching for ways to help put an end to racism and racial inequity. A lot of careful thought went into preparing the Statement on Racial Injustice below. The WFO Board of Directors stands behind this statement and we hope that you will also. It is a starting point.

We ask for your help to identify the many barriers that impede the free and open participation in field ornithology for everyone. Breaking down these barriers will promote greater racial diversity and inclusivity in everything we do, including the study of birds, science in general, and access to the natural world. Birds and their habitats benefit greatly when people get along.

Please email me your thoughts, ideas, and suggestions and let's get to work:  
[KLeuschner@collegeofthedesert.edu](mailto:KLeuschner@collegeofthedesert.edu)

Kurt M. Leuschner

Past-President, Western Field Ornithologists

### **Western Field Ornithologists Statement on Racial Injustice**

The recent weeks of on-going protest have made it plain that injustice and police brutality aimed particularly at African-Americans are pervasive in our country. The recent killings of Black Americans by police have been unjustified and have had tragic consequences for our entire society. In addition to the men and women who have been tragically and needlessly killed by the police, the interaction involving Christian Cooper, a black birdwatcher in New York's Central Park, revealed that implicit as well as explicit forms of racism are much more widespread than many of us have recognized. We support the Black Lives Matter movement. We sympathize with the pain that the Black Community experiences. We support a fundamental reform of police policies to hold offenders accountable and eliminate these tragedies.

Equally important is a fundamental change of heart and a willingness to understand these issues from the perspective of the Black Community. When society works to

June 19, 2020 ([Western Field Ornithologists](#))

understand the longstanding forms of racism from the Black American perspective, we can make more effective long-term changes for many who suffer racial discrimination. These turbulent times require all of us to comprehend, speak out, and work for societal change.

The WFO board of directors condemns all acts of individual and institutional racism, harassment, and discrimination. We extend our heartfelt sympathy to the families recently affected by these horrible acts of violence. All of us have an obligation to make our world a safer and more inclusive place. The American Ornithological Society has articulated important ideas and paths forward, and they've assembled [resources and actions](#) that are useful for all of us. We urge you to avail yourselves of these resources.

The primary goal of the WFO is to promote knowledge and education about the birds of western North America. We work to provide opportunities for all people to study and observe birds. Our community of field ornithologists benefits tremendously from racial and cultural diversity. Now, at this critical time in our society, we all should reflect on how individual actions, perceptions, and words can contribute to diversity and inclusion. WFO will continue to develop, maintain, and foster a culture of inclusion and awareness. The WFO board will take specific actions to encourage fuller racial inclusion in field ornithology. Achieving this goal is a priority for WFO now and in the months and years ahead. All suggestions in accomplishing this are encouraged and welcome.