

CBEST STATEMENT ON ANTI-RACISM AND PROMOTING EQUALITY AND JUSTICE

15 JUNE 2020

CBEST strongly supports the movement and the principles of Black Lives Matter. We have been horrified by the killing of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and the so many other black lives that have been extinguished in recent years. This pattern of violence against black people more clearly than ever points to an ongoing environment of racism and discrimination across our country. We know that to do nothing will perpetuate the status quo. Now is the time for us to join the millions of Americans, a great diversity of Americans, who have powerfully and passionately made their voices heard through peaceful protests and through other means. Comprehensive change is needed, not only in policing and criminal justice, but also to rectify systemic racism and discrimination in educational, economic, health care, and other areas that have perpetuated inequality.

As members of the academic community focusing on biodiversity, ecosystem science, ecology, and evolutionary biology, we have been awkwardly aware of the underrepresentation black scientists in our areas of study. Recent events have brought to light that racism raises its ugly head far too often when black people seek to enjoy nature. Whether birding in Central Park or conducting field research, we now understand more than ever that black people and people of color are not free to immerse themselves in nature without being subject to suspicion about their activities for no reason other than the color of their skin. Systemic racism and discrimination are pervasive in our society and we must do more to address it.

We commit ourselves to diversifying science, providing mentorship for black and other POC scientists, and vocally expressing outrage when we see racist acts. We stand with so many of our professional societies that have similarly issued statements in strong support of Black Lives Matter, calling for societal change. As academics who are responsible for the education and training of our students, we pledge to listen, learn, and act in the hope that we will make a difference in the movement to fight and remedy systemic racism and discrimination in our sciences and across the country.

We encourage you to visit:

blacklivesmatter.com

[#blackbirder](https://twitter.com/blackbirder)

[#blackinnature](https://twitter.com/blackinnature)

Statements/Letters from Professional Societies/Groups related to CBEST research themes:

[American Association of Geographers](#)

[American Geophysical Union](#)

[American Ornithological Society](#)

[American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists](#)

[Ecological Society of America](#)

[Society for Conservation Biology](#)

[Society for Ecological Restoration](#)

[Society for the Study of Evolution](#)

[The Society of Systematic Biologists](#)

[Society of Wetland Scientists](#)

