



The Society of Canadian Ornithologists/la Société des Ornithologistes du Canada (SCO-SOC) stands with other societies in condemning acts of racism, including the deaths of Black people at the hands of police and vigilantes. SCO-SOC condemns all acts of individual and institutional racism, harassment, and discrimination. We also acknowledge that racism is not simply a problem in other countries, but remains pervasive in Canada, as evidenced by protests this week surrounding the suspicious death of Regis Korchinski-Paquet in Toronto, the wave of anti-Asian attacks in Vancouver, and the numbers of missing and murdered Indigenous women in Canada. Systemic racism continues to be an ongoing issue for our Indigenous peoples. We wish to join the voices of protest that are saying enough is enough.

However, it is not simply isolated acts of violence that are the problem, but underlying biases in all our actions that can continue to perpetuate inequality. The video of a white dogwalker threatening a Black birdwatcher and calling the police simply because he had requested that she respect park rules and leash her pet underlines the severity of this inequality. No one should feel vulnerable, voiceless and pre-judged. No one should feel that their gender, sexuality or race precludes them from seeking nature in public spaces. All of us have the responsibility to stand with and support our colleagues, students, and strangers to ensure equality for all humans. Now is the time to face both the acknowledged and the unrecognized inequities and embrace the changes we need to make.

Correcting the inequalities in our social system, and within the SCO-SOC, will take time to do well, and we commit to dedicating ourselves to these efforts over the long term. While we have heard many calls for immediate action, we feel that these issues are deep and serious and significant, and we need to take the time to come up with meaningful responses. We need to give these issues the depth of consideration that they deserve. As such, our first step will be to form an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee that will be tasked with determining both short-term (implementation in next few weeks) and long-term actions that we can follow to support ornithologists of all minority groups in Canada. We will keep in regular contact with our members to let you know how the SCO-SOC will move forward with actions to help combat systemic racism.

If you would like to help the SCO-SOC towards our goals of decreasing racism and promoting diversity within our organization and in ornithology in general, please consider volunteering for our committee. We will be seeking a diverse committee representing Black and Indigenous People, People of Colour, and geographic, language, and gender diversity, and concerns of other minorities. In an email stating your interest in participating, please let us know how you would see yourself contributing to this diversity. Please contact our President to volunteer: Dr. Colleen Barber, colleen.barber@smu.ca.

Colleen Barber
President

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