

Dear members of our scientific community,

The Humphries Lab at the University of Rhode Island stands together in solidarity with members of the Black community calling for justice against historic and ongoing acts of state-sponsored violence, most recently highlighted by the horrific killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and David McAtee. It is clear that the deaths of these individuals and countless other members of the Black community at the hands of the police are not anomalies (and we recognize that this list is growing even as we draft this statement). Rather, they are the known product of institutions in the U.S. that systematically oppress Black people. The events underscore a long history of racism and discrimination in our country.

We unequivocally denounce racism in every form, however, we recognize racism, particularly anti-Blackness, has been at the foundation of the scientific enterprise¹. As a research group, we work in communities of color, both in the U.S. and internationally, and take seriously the subject matter that we study, our positions as settlers on stolen Narragansett land (where our offices are based), and the troubling colonial history of our scholarly fields (e.g., fisheries management, conservation science). We try, together, to always think and take action about how this implicates us in ongoing dispossession.

As a research group, we are committed to doing the work to make our learning environments and academic/research community more supportive of Black people and non-Black people of color. This includes:

1. Encouraging, incentivizing, and recognizing learning and training around systemic racism, colonialism, and other forms of oppression;
2. Using our privilege to bolster minoritized voices in our communities and defending them from acts of racism;
3. Advocating for and supporting anti-racist initiatives within our department, university, and scientific community;
4. Holding space (25% of our group lab meetings) to discuss and reflect upon what we have learned;
5. Codifying this in our lab's Code of Conduct that is always publicly available².

We are enthusiastic in engaging critically in the work of Black scholars and activists³, being uncomfortable as we navigate, challenge, and reflect upon the structures of oppression that many of us admittedly benefit from, making mistakes along the way, and holding each other (and ourselves) accountable.

Sincerely,

Austin Humphries,
Elaine Shen,
Lauren Josephs,
Annie Innes-Gold,
Donna Dimarchopoulou,
Yashwant Meghare,
Ivy Blackmore,
Paul Carvalho,
Nicky Roberts,
Elle Wibisono,
Rachel Cohn,
Celeste Venolia,
Catie Alves

¹ <https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/ideology-racism-misusing-science-justify-racial-discrimination>

² <https://ahumphrieslab.com>

³ <https://www.goodgoodgood.co/anti-racism-resources>