



President's Message

June 7, 2020

These are unprecedented times we are living in. Our human world is rife with sadness, fear, outrage and sometimes, chaos. Like many of you, I turn to the natural world for comfort. Watching a cardinal feed her baby, or a seemingly joyful brown thrasher splashing in a bath, brings me great delight and a much needed sense of peace.



In recent weeks, we have been a witness to the murder of George Floyd, the racism experienced by Christian Cooper in Central Park, and massive protests with millions of people flooding our nation's streets. The undeniable truth is that racial injustice and inequality continues to pervade every facet and institution in our society.

With these painful times as a backdrop, I spent several hours online, along with thousands of others, to unite and celebrate the inaugural [Black Birders Week](#). I was humbled. I learned so much about the obstacles and fears that Black birders face. Despite our different backgrounds and life experiences, we share so much. We are all people. And we are all people who love nature, and birds especially.

I'm a very privileged white woman. I can't possibly fully understand what it is like to be Black in America. But I can, and do, strive to stand on the side of justice and equality--unequivocally and without compromise.

Our Audubon chapter is committed to being a community which unites and celebrates *all* people, a community where *everyone* who is interested in and loves birds, wildlife, and nature feels welcomed.

On Friday, June 5th, our Audubon chapter took a small--but significant step--by starting the process of changing our name. Elisha Mitchell, our namesake, accomplished many things but he was also an avowed racist. The name change is not about erasing history but about acknowledging how our country's history of racial injustice impacts people today. I sent a full statement about the name change to our Listserv subscribers. If you have not

seen it, I invite you to [read it here](#) or on our Facebook page. Audubon North Carolina fully supports us in making this change.

Our chapter is committed to making the outdoors and the joy of birds safe and welcoming for all people. I hope you will join us in doing the hard work to make this happen.

-Nancy Casey

Photos courtesy Jason and Jeremy Ward and Katherine Arntzen/Georgia Southern University

