



Introduction to the Special Section on Equity and Inclusion in Primatology

Joanna M. Setchell¹

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Ensuring that our discipline is accessible and welcoming to all, and that we create an environment where everyone feels supported, respected, and included is important for primatologists, primatology, and primates. In addition to avoiding the negative effects that inequities and barriers to inclusion have on the primatologists who experience them, attention to diverse voices, perspectives, and expertise, arising from a diversity of experiences, enriches science and informs successful conservation action.

The Roundtable on Diversity organized by Christopher A. Schmitt at the joint meeting of the International Primatological Society (IPS) and the American Society of Primatologists in Chicago in 2016 (Schmitt 2016) identified barriers to inclusion in primatology and proposed measures to work toward addressing them. Following the roundtable, the IPS formed an *ad hoc* committee on diversity to lead the society in becoming more inclusive, and welcoming, representing, supporting, and serving all the primatological community. *Ad hoc* committees are chaired by IPS officers, in this case Joanna M. Setchell until 2018 when her term as Vice President for Research ended, and now Patricia Izar, current Vice President for Education.

Building on the first roundtable in 2016, the IPS *ad hoc* committee on diversity hosted a roundtable on diversity and inclusion in primatology at the 2018 IPS congress in Nairobi, organized by Joanna M. Setchell, Hebert H. Covert, Laura C. Loyola, Susan M. Cheyne, Mary Blair, Riashna Sithaldeen, Rachel Ikemeh, Michelle Brown, and Janette Wallis (Setchell *et al.* 2018). The roundtable aimed to further explore opportunities and challenges for diversity and inclusion in primatology and to inform future IPS actions.

One outcome of the discussions at the 2018 roundtable was to recommend that the IPS create a new standing committee for equity and inclusion, chaired by a new vice president of the society. Doing so would recognize that the inequities faced by members are ongoing issues that cannot be addressed by a short-term *ad hoc* committee. This proposal, ultimately, led to a vote in favor of amending the IPS Byelaws to establish a

✉ Joanna M. Setchell
joanna.setchell@durham.ac.uk

¹ Department of Anthropology, Durham University, Durham, UK

new post of Vice President for Ethics, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, who will chair a standing committee on Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity. (<http://www.internationalprimatologicalsociety.org/announcements.cfm>). The new vice president and committee will serve to increase awareness of equity, diversity, and inclusion issues and assume an active role in addressing these issues.

The four commentaries in this Special Section of the *International Journal of Primatology* on equity and inclusion are based on presentations at the 2018 roundtable. Each commentary focuses on a challenge we face in primatology. Herbert H. Covert addresses the importance of including habitat country scientists as full partners in all aspects of research, based on more than 25 years of research experience in habitat countries (Covert 2019). Mary Blair writes on the need to decolonize our science and practice in primatology, and on the time and funding required to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion in learned societies such as the IPS (Blair 2019). Laura C. Loyola discusses the financial barriers to entering our discipline, focusing on access to fieldwork experience (Loyola 2019). Finally, Susan M. Cheyne examines the issue of safety for LGBTQ+ primatologists in the field, proposing practical actions to ensure that our working environments are safe for everyone (Cheyne 2019). Together, these commentaries contribute to the effort to increase awareness of equity, diversity, and inclusion issues in primatology, and propose ways in which we can work to remove barriers and make everyone in our discipline feel welcome and supported.

The challenges discussed in this Special Section are just four of the many we face in our discipline. The *International Journal of Primatology* welcomes further commentaries on issues of equity, inclusion, and diversity in primatology.

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