Wilson Ornithological Society Event Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct is intended to set clear expectations of behavior of participants at all WOS events to ensure that all feel safe and welcome.

The Wilson Ornithological Society welcomes everyone. We are dedicated to providing an inclusive environment that is collaborative, supportive, and engaging for everyone involved, and that is free of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. We expect everyone to help in our mission by being respectful and considerate of each other, providing supportive critique, and embracing the multitude of opinions that are on offer.

Meeting Scope

WOS events (virtual and in person) are intended to foster the open and honest communication of ornithological science and to promote equality of opportunity and treatment for all participants. Effective communication requires that we be courteous in our interactions and that we respect the intellectual property of our colleagues. We represent the field of ornithology and avian conservation, and it is imperative that we behave as professionals toward all participants, staff, and vendors.

All forms of communication among participants during WOS events are considered within the scope of the event and thus fall under the jurisdiction of the Code of Conduct. These include public and private communications in virtual conference rooms, via electronic chat functions (e.g., Q/A box, Zoom Chat), emails, texts (including via platforms such as Signal, Slack, and Whatsapp), social media, phone calls, and other forms of written, verbal, and non-verbal (including visual) communication. In addition, communication, as described above, that occurs after a WOS event but that pertains to content from the event and/or where contact information of a participant was procured during the event may also fall under the purview of this Code of Conduct.

Expectations of Participants

Harassment between participants will not be tolerated in any form. Harassment includes any communication or behavior towards another participant that involves offensive gestures, verbal and written comments, posts on the internet and social media, deliberate intimidation, stalking, harassing photography or recording, sustained disruption of talks or other events, inappropriate physical or electronic contact, microaggressions, and unwelcome attention. It is possible to engage in harassment without the intention of doing so. Participants asked to stop any harassing behavior by anyone are expected to comply immediately, regardless of their intent.
Bad faith reporting under the Code of Conduct will be considered itself a violation of the Code of Conduct. Bad faith reporting is defined as intentionally false and/or malicious reporting of code of conduct violations against another attendee.

Individuals who are currently sanctioned for sexual assault or harassment by an adjudicating institution (e.g., a university or professional society) should not participate in WOS events and could have their meeting participation revoked.

**Reporting an Incident**

Any individual covered by this policy who believes that they have been subjected to harassment, notices that someone else is being harassed, or has any other concerns that an individual’s behavior interferes with the intent of the conference should report the incident immediately.

We ask that individuals report breaches of this Code by emailing WOS.COC.Reports@Gmail.com. The person reporting, who may be a complainant or witness, is not required or expected to discuss the concern with the alleged offender. All complaints will be treated seriously and reviewed promptly and may be investigated. Confidentiality concerning the person harassed and others made uncomfortable by the harassment will be prioritized, and actions may be taken to maintain their safety and comfort.

The membership of the committee that will review CoC breach reports is still being formed and will be established by April 2022.

**Disciplinary Action**

Individuals found to have engaged in behavior prohibited by this policy, as well as those making allegations of a breach of the Code in bad faith, will be subject to disciplinary action. The WOS Executive Committee may take any action they deem appropriate, including a verbal warning, ejection/prohibition from the specific activity in question (e.g., workshop, symposia or even the entire conference), banning them from future WOS conferences or partner society conferences, revoking membership in the society, and/or to the reporting of their behavior to their employer and research funders.

**Retaliation Is Prohibited**

The WOS will not tolerate any form of retaliation – including seeking to violate the confidentiality of a reporting individual – against individuals who file a complaint or assist in an investigation, nor any individuals suspected of doing so. Retaliation is a serious violation of this policy and, like any breach of the Code itself, will be subject to disciplinary action.

**Questions & Appeal**
Any questions regarding this policy should be directed to Auriel Fournier (auriel@illinois.edu), WOS 2022 Scientific Program Chair. In the event that an individual involved in any reported incident is dissatisfied with the disciplinary action, they may appeal to the WOS Executive Committee by emailing WOS President Tim O’Connell (tim.oconnell@okstate.edu).