

DEIJB Bulletin

Michigan Chapter of AFS DEIJ Committee
January 2024

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Warm wishes to all at the start of the New Year! We are excited to share the first MIAFS DEIJ Bulletin of 2024 with you. To increase connectivity, Chapter President Jen Johnson is introducing a webinar series focused on highlighting various committees within MIAFS. Save the webinar dates on your calendar by using the iCalendar link [here](#). The DEIJ committee will present second, on **February 2, 12-1 pm ET**, with a presentation introducing the AFS Equal Opportunities Section. In addition to the MIAFS webinars throughout 2024, the DEIJ committee is planning to regularly hold virtual events and are happy to take suggestions for topics (miafsdeij@gmail.com).

Throughout 2024, the MIAFS Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Committee will continue to strive “to cultivate a chapter culture that ensures all members feel welcome and respected; recruits and retains members with underrepresented identities and backgrounds; and works with the Executive Committee to create and advocate for policies and procedures that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion at the chapter, regional, and international levels”.

As always, please contact us if you would like to become involved with the DEIJB committee or if you come across items that you would like to have shared. You can reach us at miafsdeij@gmail.com (or you may contact us [anonymously](#)).

Hard water and tight lines -

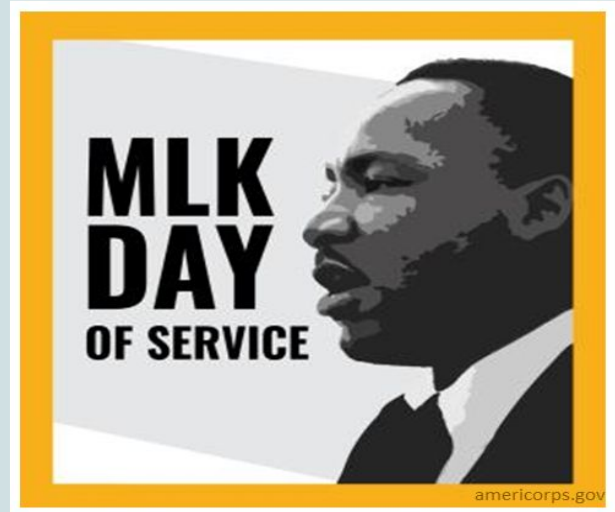
Kyle Brumm (he/him/his)

Dana Castle (she/her/hers)

Lydia Doerr (she/her/hers)

Tracy Galarowicz (she/her/hers)

Kynzie House (she/her/hers)



Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service Monday, January 15, 2024

MLK Day is the only federal holiday designated by Congress as a National Day of Service. By empowering people, strengthening communities, and bridging barriers acts of service moves us closer to Dr. King's vision of a beloved community, where people of different backgrounds live in harmony.

On January 15th, consider participating in an act of service in your community. Whether you simply reach out to a neighbor, meet a tangible need (i.e., fixing up a school), donate time or money to a charitable cause it all helps to build a sense of community and mutual responsibility to care for each other.

Volunteer and Celebrate

[MI Street African American Heritage](#)

[Western Michigan University](#)

[Eastern Michigan University](#)

[University of Michigan](#)

[Michigan State University](#)

[Central Michigan University](#)

[Michigan Tech](#)

[Northern Michigan University](#)

[AmeriCorps](#)

[Feeding America](#)

[Meals on Wheels America](#)

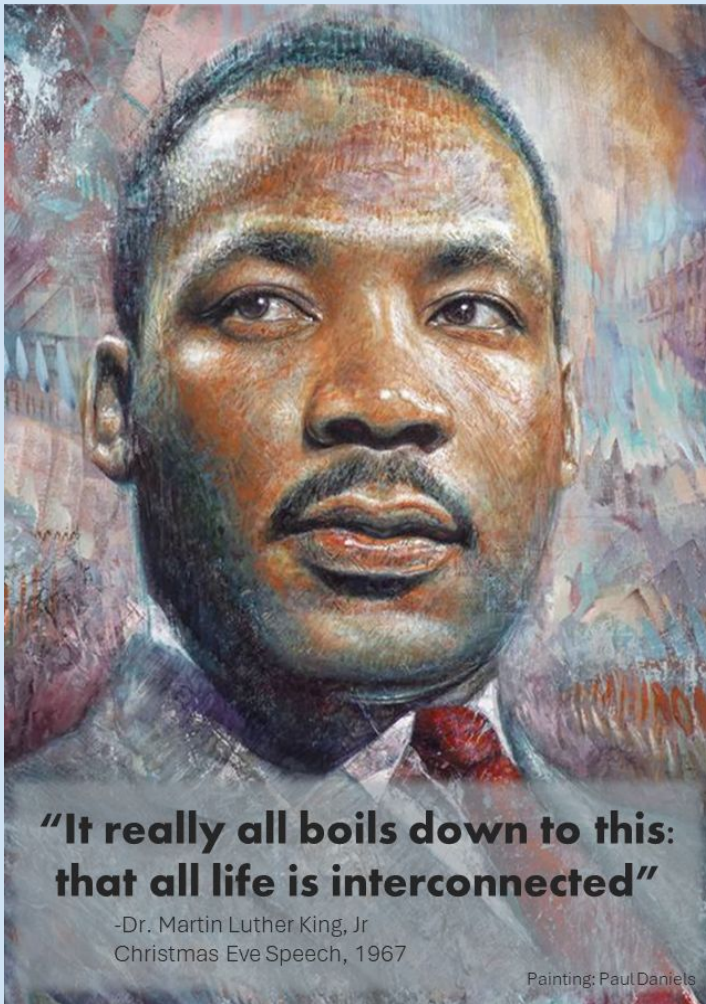
[Points of Light Engage](#)

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. - “All life is interrelated.”

Although Dr. King was assassinated before the environmental movement began 1970's, he recognized that environmental justice is a critical component of social justice. The Nation's environmental justice movement has its roots in Dr. King's work, particularly his protest of the poor housing conditions in Chicago (1966) and support of the sanitation workers' strike in Memphis, Tennessee (1968). Disproportional impact that the climate crisis is having on marginalized communities, means methods for addressing social and environmental inequalities are at forefront of global climate change discussions. As fisheries professionals, we know the importance of a balanced ecosystem and therefore can internalize the importance of Dr. King's message from his *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*: “We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly”.

Explore Dr. King's teachings:

- [“All Life is Interrelated”: Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.s Environmental Justice Legacy](#)
- [Why climate change would have alarmed Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.](#)
- [Martin Luther King Jr. and Environmental Justice: A Leader Ahead of His Time](#)



**“It really all boils down to this:
that all life is interconnected”**

-Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Christmas Eve Speech, 1967

Painting: Paul Daniels

January Awareness Month & Days

- [National Mentoring Month](#)
- [Poverty in America Awareness Month](#)
 - Michigan Resources:
 - [Assistance Programs](#)
 - [Public Benefits - Michigan](#)
 - [Family Independence Program](#)
 - [Financial Assistance Resources for Families](#)
- [Slavery and Human Trafficking Awareness Month](#)
 - Resources:
 - [National Human Trafficking Hotline](#) - 1-888-373-7888
 - [Human Trafficking Resources \(michigan.gov\)](#)
 - [Human Trafficking \(michigan.gov\)](#)
- [World Braille Day](#) - January 4th
- [Korean American Day](#) - January 13th
- [Martin Luther King Jr. Day](#) - January 15th
 - [The 15 Year Battle for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day](#)
- [International Day of Education](#) - January 24th
- [International Day of Commemoration in Memory of Victims of the Holocaust](#) - January 27th

Tools & Resources

- [Mitigating Burnout: Maintaining DEI Sustainability](#) - Michigan Diversity Council, January 24th, 12:00 - 1:30 pm (ET) - Virtual Registration \$49
- [Three Simple Ways to Be a Better Male Ally](#) - Aaron Limonthas, LinkedIn
- [How Workforce Diversity Helps Conservation](#) - Wildlife Professional, 5(2), 2011



What's in a Name?

During the summer of 2020, over two thousand birders and ornithologists submitted a petition to the American Ornithological Society (AOS) to rename all birds whose name contain “significant isolating and demeaning reminders of oppression, slavery, and genocide”. After months of meetings and discussion the AOS, the organization in charge of maintaining the list of common English bird names in North America, decided to not only change eponymous names but to create a committee of diverse representatives to take on the task. Some feel that historical and contemporary practices in ornithology contribute to the exclusion of minorities, which is why AOS President Colleen Handel wants to create change. Particularly, Dr. Handel feels that “We need a much more inclusive and engaging scientific process that focuses attention on the unique features and beauty of the birds themselves” and that “everyone who loves and cares about birds should be able to enjoy and study them freely”. Rather than being eponymous the names of birds should highlight characteristics which will help birders with identification. For example, in 2020 the AOS changed the name of McCown’s longspur (*Rhynchophanes mccownii*, named for a general in the Confederate Army) to the thick-billed Longspur.

Names have power and the use of monikers derived from enslavers, colonialists, racists, and grave-robbars uphold an outdated exclusionary mind set, which is being addressed through wide scale renaming campaigns. In addition to such movements as [Bird Names for Birds](#), the Entomological Society of America launched the [Better Common Names Project](#). Among other goals, these initiatives strive to identify and change names containing derogatory terms, which includes names for invasive species with inappropriate geographic references. For example, State and Federal agencies now use “invasive carp” instead of “Asian carp” as a collective term for introduced grass, bighead, silver, and black carp. In fact, the changing of official common names is not new in fisheries and includes the changing of *Epinephelus itajara* common name from “jewfish” to Atlantic goliath grouper.

The changing of names is a complex topic, as it elicits strong emotions from people on both sides of the issue. While some feel that renaming species begins the process of social justice and healing, others feel that eponymous names should remain as they provide important insight into a species discovery, while still others feel changing a species name does little to address the brutality and injustice of bygone eras. Groups responsible for the renaming process not only should include diverse individuals with expertise in social sciences, communications, biology, and taxonomy, but should also solicit feedback from the public. The push to change names of birds, fish, insects, and places reflects a wider social commentary on the shifting way we view historical figures and will continue to evolve as we address history and social justice.

In Ornithology:

Read - [The movement to rename species](#)

Read - [American Ornithological Society will change the English names of bird species named after people](#)

Read - [Why dozens of North American birds will soon get new names](#)

Listen - [These American brds and dozens more will be renamed, to remove human monikers](#)

In Fisheries:

Read - [Worries over racism, waterways inspire push to rename fish](#)

Read - [Certain types of fish are being renamed in the wake of anti-Asian hate crimes](#)

Read - [Name of Colorado fish officially changed to remove racial slur](#)



Scott's Oriole some have proposed renaming this bird the “yucca oriole” after its habitat. Its current name refers to a general who carried out deadly forced relocations of the Cherokee in the 1800s (Text Suzanne Goldsmith, Illustrations by Zoe Keller, The Nature Conservancy, 2023)