

CS TWS EDI Questionnaire Results – January 2026

The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) questionnaire began in summer 2025, with a reminder in fall 2025 that added a few more respondents. There were 26 respondents in total over this time, including one from a spammed address that was removed. The total responses reduced to 25, about 7% of the membership (~350 members in 2025). Results are summarized below, following the order of topics in the questionnaire. Comments from open response questions are provided in Appendix A, with some comments highlighted in the text.

Demographics

In terms of demographics, the respondents were roughly split across Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964), Gen X (born 1965-1979), and Millennials/Gen Y (born 1980-1994) (Figure 1). Only a few younger, Gen Z (born 1995-2012) aged members responded. Slightly more females (52%) than males (48%) responded, and most respondents were multi-generational Canadian nationality (72%, Figure 2). Newcomers to Canada were the next most dominant nationality (16%), followed by multi-generational American and Indigenous Canadians (8% and 4% respectively; Figure 2). In terms of cultural group affiliation, most were of European origin (56%), followed by North American / European origins (20%), North American (12%), North American / Indigenous / European origin (8%) and North American / Indigenous (4%, Figure 3). Note that respondents could check multiple applicable cultural affiliations as applicable, resulting in combined cultural affiliations.

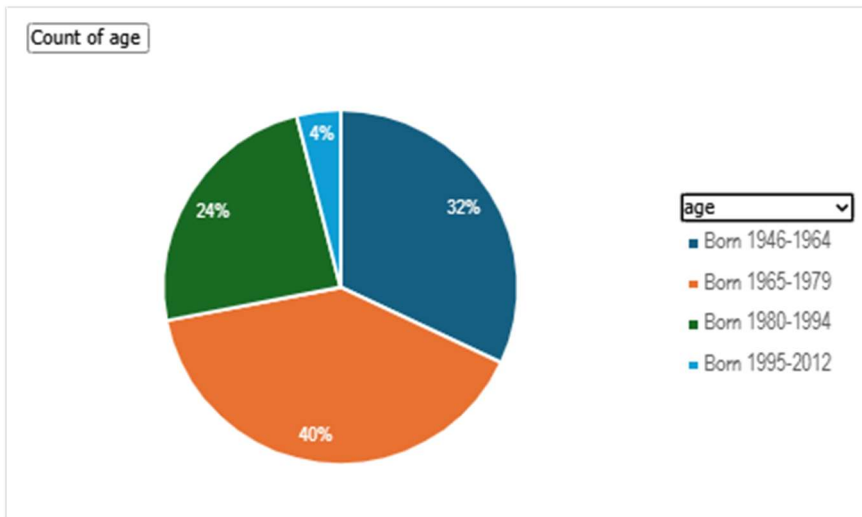


Figure 1. Age demographics of respondents, with number of respondents

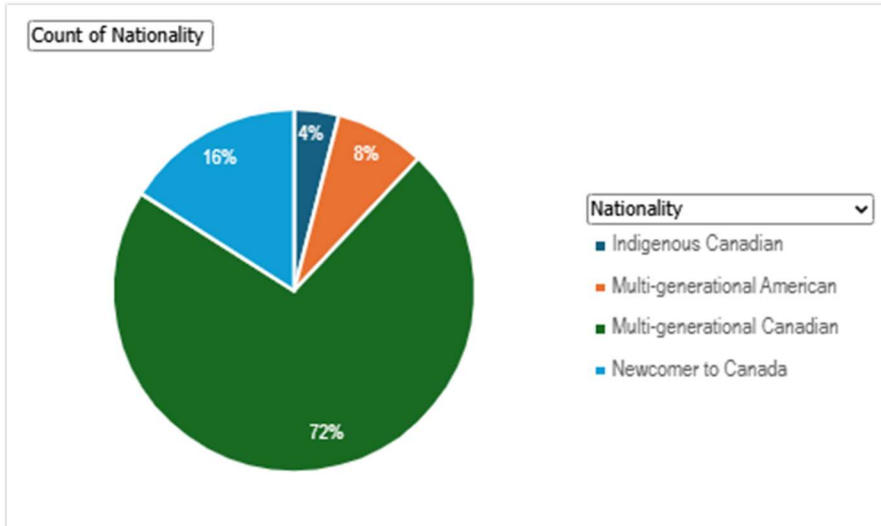


Figure 2. Nationality of respondents, with number of respondents

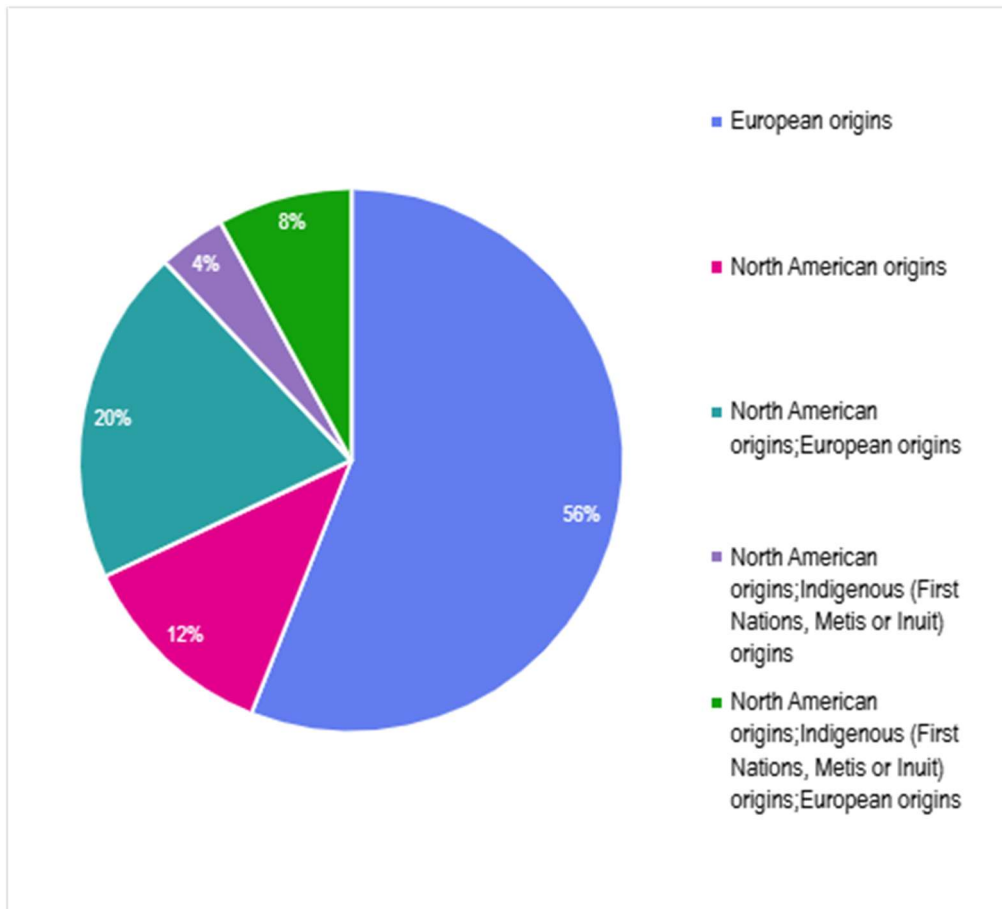


Figure 3. Cultural affiliation of respondents, with number of respondents. Note that multiple responses were permitted.

Various disabilities were identified as potentially impacting respondent's educational or professional career development, including chronic pain (25%), neurodivergence (25%), learning

issues (e.g., ADHD, 17%), sight (8%), hearing (8%) and immune compromised (8%). Some respondents (8%) had no disabilities, or preferred to say and not all respondents provided an answer to this question (Table 1).

Table 1. Disability identified by respondents, with number of respondents. Note that multiple responses were permitted, and respondents were not required to respond to this question.

Disability Type	Count of responses	% of Respondents
Chronic pain issues	3	25%
Neurodivergent	3	25%
Learning issues (e.g., ADHD or dyslexia)	2	17%
Neurodivergent; Immune Compromised	1	8%
Sight; Hearing	1	8%
No disabilities affecting education or professional career	1	8%
Prefer not to say	1	8%
Total	12	100%

Education and Professional Experiences

Regarding educational and profession employment, most had a post-graduate degree (85%), while there was a roughly even distribution of mid-career (28%) and senior (32%) stages of career level, and from young/early career (16%) to retired stages (20% each, Table 3). Only one was a student (representing 4% of respondents). Most were full time employees (52%), followed by retired (20%), and self-employed (16%, Table 4). There were single respondents for part-time employee (4%), unemployed (4%), and non-working student (4%). The private sector was the common employer (32%), followed by government agencies (21%), not-for profit organizations (21%), and self-employed categories (16%) and university or research institutions (11%, Table 5).

Comparing generational age group, education and career stage, the age of professionals in young/early and mid-career level suggested a delay of some older professionals in entering the workforce, or perhaps a change of career path. One Gen X and four Millennials/Gen Y respondents were in the young/early career stage and roughly even number of these age groups were at the mid-career stage (Tables 2 and 3). Since most respondents had post-graduate degrees, additional schooling may have contributed to delayed entry into the workforce. Our questionnaire did not include level of post-graduate training, and differences in MSc and PhD training may play a role in career stage. Unsurprisingly, senior professionals included both Gen X and Baby Boomers and retired professionals were Baby Boomers.

Comments regarding education and entry into the wildlife profession indicated additional potential barriers to career development (Appendix A). Comments relevant to career development included job availability, a lack of wildlife specific training and experience (for entry level jobs and career progression), and child-rearing requirements that limited some job options. Perceptions of the wildlife profession as a male-dominated field and a lack of female role models and mentorship were also raised. Financial barriers related to education, low salary for entry level jobs and internships, and the cost of living were mentioned by several respondents as barriers to both

education and professional development. The need to relocate to take advantage of new opportunities when jobs were limited was also mentioned. One respondent noted the lack of understanding of neurodivergence as a barrier.

Table 2. Education by Generational Age Group

Generational Age Group	Post-graduate degree	Undergraduate degree	Technical college	Total	% of Respondents
Born 1946 – 1964 (Baby Boomers)	6	1	1	8	32%
Born 1965 – 1979 (Gen X)	9	1		10	40%
Born 1980-1994 (Millennials/Gen Y)	6			6	24%
Born 1995-2012 (Gen Z)	1			1	4%
Total	22	2	1	25	
% of Respondents	85%	8%	4%		100%

Table 3. Career Stage by Generational Age Group

Career Stage and Generational Age Group	Count of Respondents	% of Respondents
Student	1	4%
Born 1995-2012 (Gen Z)	1	4%
Young / early career professional (<12 yrs experience)	4	16%
Born 1980-1994 (Millennials/Gen Y)	4	12%
Born 1965 – 1979 (Gen X)	1	4%
Mid-career professional (12-20 yrs experience)	7	28%
Born 1980-1994 (Millennials/Gen Y)	3	12%
Born 1965 – 1979 (Gen X)	4	16%
Senior professional (>20 yrs experience)	8	32%
Born 1965 – 1979 (Gen X)	5	20%
Born 1946 – 1964 (Baby Boomers)	3	12%
Retired	5	20%
Born 1946 – 1964 (Baby Boomers)	5	20%
Grand Total	26	100%

Table 4. Employment Status and Sector

Employment Category	Count of Respondents	% of Respondents
Full-time employee	13	52%
Government agency	4	16%
Not-for-profit organization	4	16%
Private sector (e.g., consulting, corporation)	4	16%
University teaching or research institute	1	4%
Part-time employee	1	4%
Private sector (e.g., consulting, corporation)	1	4%
Retired	5	20%
University teaching or research institute	1	4%
(blank)	4	16%
Self-employed (e.g., independent consultant)	4	16%
Private sector (e.g., consulting, corporation)	1	4%
Self-employed	3	12%
Student (not working)	1	4%
Unemployed	1	4%
Grand Total	26	100%

Table 5. Employment sector of working respondents

Employment Sector	Count of Employer	% of Employers
Private sector (e.g., consulting, corporation)	6	32%
Government agency	4	21%
Not-for-profit organization	4	21%
Self-employed	3	16%
University teaching or research institute	2	11%
Grand Total	19	100%

Professional experiences with inclusion and belonging

Responses regarding individual feelings of inclusion within CSTWS suggested that most respondents have had good experiences, and felt respected and included in CSTWS events and within the society as a whole (Figure 4). While many respondents felt that the Executive was open to concerns about inclusion (Good to Very Good ratings), about a quarter of respondents rated openness as neutral or poor. Responses regarding the level of inclusion on the executive were still fairly high, with about 75% of respondents indicating good to very good ratings, but there was some perception of a lack of inclusion, including one response of ‘very poor’.

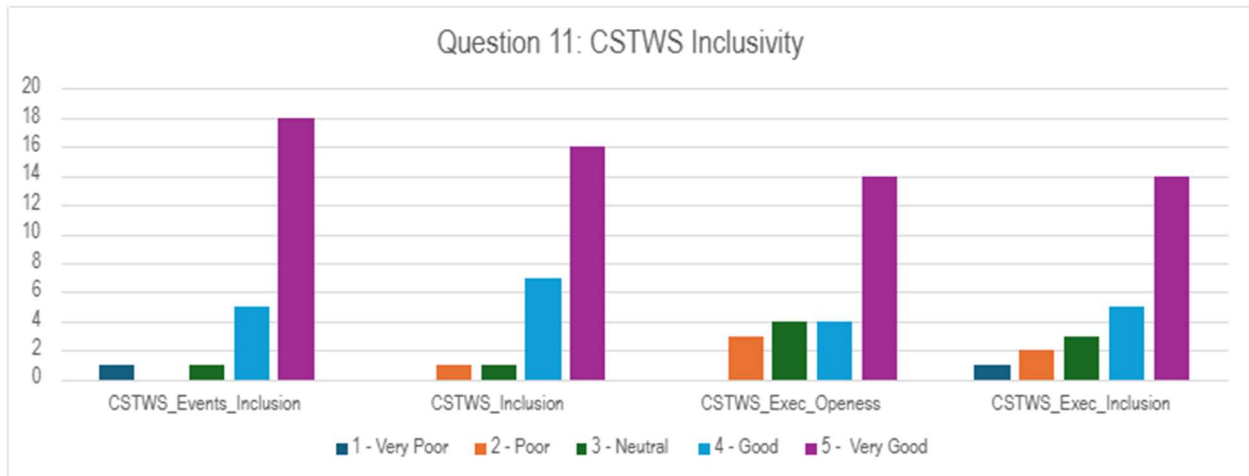


Figure 4. Ratings for CSTWS events, feelings of inclusion in CSTWS, executive openness and inclusion (questionnaire question 11)

In terms of inclusion during respondents' educational and professional experiences, again most people reported very good to good inclusive experiences within their careers and with colleagues (Figure 5). Many felt their instructors or managers would be responsive to concerns about inclusion, but just under half of respondents indicated neutral to poor responsiveness. Lastly, while most respondents felt that their instructors or managers were committed to principles of inclusion, about a quarter of respondents answered neutral to poor on this question.

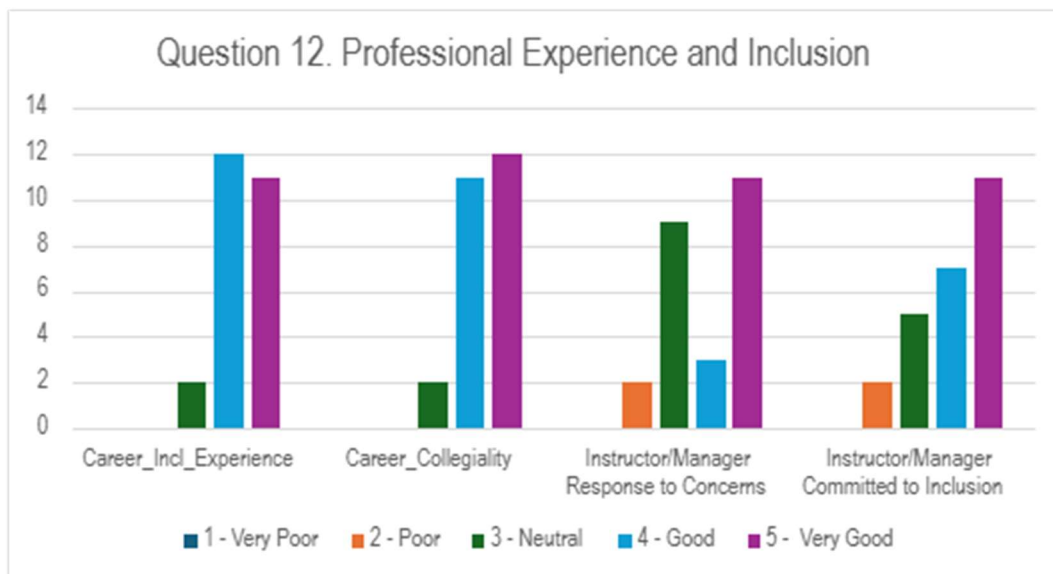


Figure 5. Ratings for career experience, collegiality, and instructor or manager response and commitment to inclusion concerns (questionnaire question 12)

In terms of personal support for EDI, most respondents were supportive of the statement 'I believe that equity, diversity and inclusion is important to the wildlife profession, and wildlife management', although two respondents did not (Figure 6). Regarding their support of CSTWS efforts to promote inclusion and belonging within the Section, and in the wildlife profession, most respondents were

very supportive, with slightly ‘very good’ responses than for personal support ratings. Interestingly, the very poor to poor support ratings also grew slightly in response to this question.

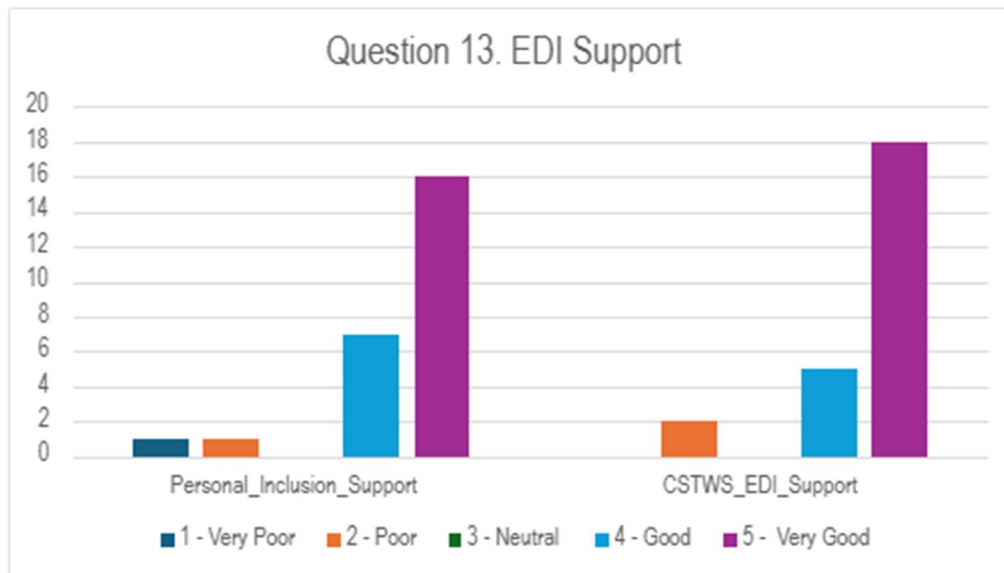


Figure 6. Personal support for EDI Initiatives, and support for CSTWS EDI programs (questionnaire question 13)

The open-ended question asking for construction suggestions for the CSTWS EDI Committee and Executive regarding EDI activities provided some insight to these ratings. Two respondents disagreed with the emphasis being placed on EDI initiatives, suggesting that focus can make EDI into “more of an issue than it needs to be”. On the other hand, one respondent felt that in their 20 years of experience with TWS, that it was a ‘highly racist organization’. This respondent appeared to be lumping in the broader organization, rather than the Canadian Section specifically. Two other respondents highlighted the invisibility of certain groups (e.g., neurodivergence, chronic illnesses), and the need to consider those with different needs or learning and work styles.

These differing views seem to reflect broader social dialogue regarding EDI initiatives, with some seeing a need for more inclusive workplaces, while others were disagreeing with how inclusion is being encouraged. Moving forward, CSTWS EDI initiatives will need to consider how best to acknowledge and promote respectful inclusion. This could include providing supports for programs to help ‘level the playing field’, for example by providing training or equipment supports to help students and young professionals enter the profession. Two respondents provided constructive feedback in this area: to work more closely with the Education committee to create webinars on EDI, and to provide more visibility on what is being done (e.g., grants, activities and webinars). Some additional constructive suggestions included encouraging representation from young people on the Executive or committees, and to promote a broader image of ‘wildlifers’, as more than the ‘rod and gun club’. Inclusion of younger demographics would certainly help to broaden the understanding of current needs and concerns of students and young professionals that could in turn drive meaningful programs.

Next Steps

The relatively low response to this questionnaire makes generalization to all members difficult. Despite multiple email reminders and an extended response time, only 25 members completed the questionnaire. Yet the concerns highlighted by those who did respond suggests that efforts to acknowledge and support the needs of a diverse membership are still valid. These concerns extend beyond diversity though, and focus more on equity. Financial barriers for students and young professionals to enter the profession are important, as are the availability of well-paying jobs and training and mentoring opportunities. Developing an understanding of the 'invisible' characteristics reported by members, such as neurodivergence and chronic illnesses would help promote a more inclusive profession, and society. The high levels of respectful interactions reported by questionnaire participants, in our profession and in the CSTWS suggests that with awareness of such equity issues, we can help address some of these concerns.

Building on the constructive suggestions provided, we can help support awareness, training, and perhaps financial needs of our members to address equity concerns. Going forward, the EDI Committee recommends working more closely with the Education Committee to help raise awareness of both diverse communities of colleagues and members of the public, and means of promoting understanding of different perspectives. We can also support training and financial support initiatives, working with colleagues at the TWS and Chapter level. Recruitment of younger committee members and Executive nominees, as well as incorporating considerations for different learning and communication styles and health concerns into CSTWS events can be readily initiated at the Section level, and promoted to Chapters as well. Such initiatives can help promote a more diverse and inclusive profession, by addressing the different barriers experienced by different members of our profession, and the public, government and agency members with which we work.

Appendix A. Open Comment Responses

10. Entry into the wildlife profession can require substantial investment of time and effort. Thinking of your educational and early career experiences, what barriers or aids did you experience in the early stages of your career?

Responses:

- Being female
- Barriers - lack of knowledge about potential careers in the wildlife field in late high school, finances, fisheries work at that time was still very male dominated, and also not knowing the right people - at that time you had to know people who worked in MNR and DFO to get a job with them
aids - being given sufficient time in the field to learn and work through scientific keys, excellent training from the Royal Ontario Museum, followed by significant field practice and another female co-worker who mentored me in fish identification.
- Lack of role models and mentorship for women early on.
- Advantage being a mature student
- Limited number of available jobs.
- Funding
- Cost of living is very high now and there is little to offset this available
- Financial barriers
- Old white men
- Money. Entry level jobs and internships didn't pay. Everyone wanted work for free. Graduate school stipends were not liveable wages.
- As someone who had a challenging socioeconomic background and no external support systems, early career was challenging especially with extremely low paying field positions often requiring a vehicle and travel. Field technician positions need higher pay.
- I am retired so have no problems here
- Being a young mother in a small rural community limited my career options early in my career. As a result I missed the opportunity to build a diversity and abundance of field experience during that time. Because of this, I had limited options for mid-career roles.
- I was fortunate to get a lot of scholarships to fund my education, and to have some amazing professors in my undergraduate and graduate studies (including my supervisors). My only barrier is that my degrees are not in ecology/wildlife, and I am finding it difficult to transition into the wildlife profession.
- Mentorship and guidance on what to focus on, or what options I had for a career path.
- Reliance on student loans during undergrad
- Lack of understanding of neurodivergence.
- None except for financial, required student loans.
- Jobs were limited, had to be flexible to relocate on short notice to take advantage of opportunities. If you do a good job then opportunities will arise
- None
- Lack of experience in the field and the relative rarity of full-time jobs.

14. Do you have any constructive suggestions for the CSTWS EDI Committee or Executive Board for programs or initiatives that would help promote inclusion and belonging at all levels within our profession?

- Work closely with the Education committee to create webinars on EDI
- More visibility in what is done; grants, more activities and webinars.
- Stop making it more of an issue than it needs to be

- Not at this time.
- My 20+ years of experience, TWS is a highly racist organization
- Consider indoor air quality. If events include food, consider an outdoor space or a 'to go' option.
- Please don't forget about invisible disabilities like suppressed or compromised immune systems and long covid. As a science based organization, please also examine the 450,000+ studies (found on litcovid) on the fact that covid is systemic, neurodegenerative, immune depleting, vascular disease and we've known this since 2020/2021. The organization should be doing more to promote safe conferences (filtration, ventilation, testing, and/or mask wearing) alternative platforms for gathering and safety spaces for members that have long covid.
- I am curious to see what the Committee comes up with before making comments
- While I, as an old white guy, have not experienced many barriers I know that my female colleagues have chosen to not continue with TWS because they needed to justify their opinions to old white guys and especially the hook and bullet club generation that built TWS. I think TWS often focuses on their traditions - without realizing that those "traditions" only appeal to a subset of wildlifera.
- Neurodivergence tends to be an 'invisible' form of diversity, and can cause challenges with work and school expectations that are seen as failings of the neurodivergent individual, rather than something that warrants understanding and accommodation. I don't know how the committee might approach this problem, but it can be very frustrating to not be seen or understood as neurodivergent.
- No
- Try to get as much representation as possible from young people on the Executive, or para-Executive.

Appendix B. Original Questionnaire

CSTWS EDI Committee – EDI Survey

Note comments for analysis in green font were not included in the survey questionnaire.

At the Canadian Section of The Wildlife Society, we are committed to fostering a professional community that reflects and values the diversity of its members. To help us better understand the composition of our membership and to identify ways to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) within our organization, we invite you to complete this demographic survey.

Your participation will help us:

- *Gain insights into the diversity of experiences and identities within our membership.*
- *Identify gaps and opportunities to make our organization more inclusive and accessible.*
- *Inform the development of initiatives that support a welcoming and equitable environment for all wildlife professionals.*

Participation in this survey is voluntary, and your responses will remain confidential. The information collected will only be reported in aggregate form to protect individual anonymity.

By sharing your input, you are contributing to meaningful efforts to build a stronger, more inclusive Canadian Section of The Wildlife Society—one that values and supports members of all backgrounds.

Thank you for taking the time to help us shape the future of our organization.

Section 1. Demographics: To help us better characterize the current diversity in our membership, please provide responses to the following questions.

1. Your age group from the list below:
 - a. Born 1946 – 1964 (Baby Boomer)
 - b. Born 1965 – 1979 (Generation X)
 - c. Born 1980-1994 (Millennial Generation or Gen Y)
 - d. Born 1995-2012 (Generation Z or iGen)

Note that the age groupings correspond to specific demographics that can be grouped by common experiences. Based on the Demographics Age Groups from U Southern California ([link](#)). Used to see identify any generational differences in experiences.

2. The gender you identify with, from the list below:
 - a. Female
 - b. Male
 - c. Non-binary
 - d. Gender fluid
 - e. Transgender
 - f. Prefer not to say

g. Other (please describe in your own words): [text option](#)

3. Your current nationality:

- a. Indigenous Canadian
- b. Multi-generational Canadian
- c. Multi-generational American
- d. Newcomer to Canada
- e. Prefer not to say

4. The ethnic or cultural group that you identify with (mark as many as apply):

- a. North American origins
- b. Indigenous (First Nations, Metis or Inuit) origins
- c. European origins
- d. Caribbean origins
- e. Latin, Central and South American origins
- f. African origins
- g. Asian origins
- h. Oceanian origins
- i. Other ethnic and cultural origins
- j. Prefer not to say

[Terminology from Stats Can – for comparison to CDN Demographics](#)

5. Any disabilities that may have affected your educational or professional career (e.g., need for accommodations):

- a. Sight
- b. Hearing
- c. Mobility
- d. Chronic pain issues
- e. Neurodivergent
- f. Learning issues (e.g., ADHD or dyslexia)
- g. Other (please describe in your own words): [text option](#)
- h. Prefer not to say

Section 2. Educational Background and Professional Employment: to help us better characterize the educational and professional experience of our members, please provide responses to the following questions.

6. Please indicate your highest level of education:
 - a. High school
 - b. Technical college
 - c. Undergraduate degree
 - d. Post-graduate degree

7. Current stage of career:
 - a. Student
 - b. Young / early career professional (<12 yrs experience)
 - c. Mid-career professional (12-20 yrs experience)
 - d. Senior professional (>20 yrs experience)
 - e. Retired

8. Current employment status:
 - a. Student (not working)
 - b. Unemployed
 - c. Part-time employee
 - d. Full-time employee
 - e. Self-employed (independent consultant)
 - f. Retired

9. If currently employed, please indicate the industry sector that best describes your area of employment:
 - a. Government agency
 - b. Not-for profit organization
 - c. Private sector (e.g., consulting, corporation)
 - d. Self-employed
 - e. University teaching or research institute
 - f. Other: [text option](#)

10. Entry into the wildlife profession can require substantial investment of time and effort. Thinking of your educational and early career experiences, what barriers or aids did you experience in the early stages of your career? [Open text comment](#)

Section 3. Professional experiences with inclusion and belonging: to help us better understand your experiences as a wildlife professional with respect to inclusion and belonging, please provide responses to the following questions.

11. Thinking of your experience with the CSTWS, please rate the following aspects of inclusion (Likert scale of 1 to 5):

- a. I feel comfortable attending CSTWS activities such as conferences and webinars.
- b. I feel accepted and treated with respect by other CSTWS members.
- c. I feel I can voice concerns to the CSTWS Executive about issues of respect and inclusion, in the wildlife industry, or within the organization.
- d. I feel that the CSTWS Executive is committed to inclusion and belonging for all in the wildlife profession.

12. Thinking of your experiences during your educational and/or professional career, please rate the following aspects of inclusion (Likert scale of 1 to 5):

- a. I have generally felt comfortable and accepted in my school or work environment.
- b. I have felt accepted and treated with respect by my school or work colleagues.
- c. I feel I could voice concerns to my instructors or management about issues of respect and inclusion during educational training, or in my workplace.
- d. I feel that my instructors or work managers are committed to inclusion and belonging for all in my profession.

13. In your experience with equity, diversity and inclusion programs as a student or professional, please rate your level of agreement with the following statements (Likert scale of 1 to 5):

- a. I believe that equity, diversity and inclusion is important to the wildlife profession, and wildlife management.
- b. I support CSTWS efforts to be promote inclusion and belonging within the Section, and in the wildlife profession.

14. Do you have any constructive suggestions for the CSTWS EDI Committee or Executives for programs or initiatives that would help promote inclusion and belonging at all levels within our profession?