

**IBA 2020 Elections  
Candidate for Secretary  
Alexander Kopatz**

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IBA has been paramount for my work and its alignment in the world of bear research and management. I joined IBA and attended the 2005 conference in Riva del Garda, Italy – with the ambitious goal to study connectivity of brown bear populations in Northern Europe. The striking positivity, inclusiveness, and support, of all its members blew me away. This motivated me to become a scientist to study bears. I defended my Ph.D. on the population structure of brown bears in Northern Europe at the University of Oulu in Finland. Currently I am a scientist for the Norwegian Institute for Nature Research and Rovdata in Trondheim, working on national and international projects. I am a member of the IUCN SSC Conservation Genetics Specialist Group and part of the Management Committee of the European COST Action Genomic Biodiversity Knowledge for Resilient Ecosystems.

I served as a Councillor in 2015, Vice President Eurasia in 2017 and, and Secretary in 2019. My service has been a privilege and a pleasure. I enjoy connecting people of different fields and backgrounds, managers, and researchers, for knowledge sharing, cooperation, and conservation on bears around the globe.

IBA represents what is best when the diversity of bear professionals connect, finding common ground. As IBA Secretary my priority is to keep Council and other tasks running as smoothly as possible and work with my IBA colleagues to implement the changes, we, the membership of the IBA requested in the last membership survey. Admittedly a challenge, especially in these times of increasing environmental, political, and economic instability. The work to reach our goals is and will remain challenging and IBA's work is now ever more important. Besides the fundamental task to set- up IBA for the 21st century, another important task is specifically also to include and support new students, researchers, and managers from non-western countries where bear management and research studies have been advancing. Here, my experiences in international, scientific collaboration may contribute to unify the bear community further, for our common interest and passion: bears.

