



## Master thesis opportunity

The Institute of Nature Conservation in Krakow, Polish Academy of Sciences, invites applications for a **master student** to conduct his/her master thesis within the project **BearConnect** “*Functional connectivity and ecological sustainability of European ecological networks- a case study with the brown bear*”. This project is a collaboration of European research teams, funded under the **BiodivERsA** call within the Horizon 2020 ERA-NET COFUND scheme. The project aims at integrating brown bear movement and genetic data to evaluate functional connectivity in order to assess the effectiveness of the system of protected areas in Europe and to provide policy recommendations. BearConnect also incorporates aspects of population dynamics and species interactions. A specific goal is to understand the role that brown bears have in ecosystems, with a focus on trophic interactions and associated ecosystem services.

The general objective of the master thesis is to study selected aspects of the role of brown bears as seed dispersers of bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*) in the Tatra Mountains (Poland). Potential topics for the master thesis include for instance (1) the contribution of different seed disperser species, including brown bears and other mammal and bird species, to the regeneration of *Vaccinium*, or (2) seed germination of *Vaccinium* in the microhabitats of seed deposition. The Master student will work in close cooperation with a PhD student under the supervision of research team members. Travels, accommodation and other expenses derived from the research work will be covered by the project.

The master student should have good communication skills in English (oral and written), a strong capacity for work, and ability to work in a team and think independently. As he/she will be part of an international research team, social and cooperative character is highly desirable. The successful candidate is expected to contribute to the publication of one scientific paper based on the results of the master thesis. A driving license, willingness to travel and physical ability to work in a variety of field conditions, including mountains, are desirable. Previous experience in conducting fieldwork and other research projects will be much welcome. Basic knowledge on statistics, database management and field identification of plants, birds and mammals will be positively considered. Qualified women are strongly encouraged to apply.

Applications should be sent to Nuria Selva ([nuria@iop.krakow.pl](mailto:nuria@iop.krakow.pl)) and Jörg Albrecht ([albrechtjoerg@icloud.com](mailto:albrechtjoerg@icloud.com)) by 28.02.2017 midnight CET with the subject “BearConnect- Master application”. The pre-selected candidates will be invited for an interview in English in March. The application should be combined into a single pdf file with the following documents in English:

- (1) A letter of interest (maximum 2 pages) describing your motivation to apply and your qualification for the proposed research.
- (2) Curriculum vitae, including copies of relevant certificates.
- (3) A letter of reference from an academic referee with contact details.

Please include in your application the following statement: “In accordance with the personal data protection Act from the 29<sup>th</sup> of August 1997, I hereby agree to process and to store my personal data by the Institution for recruitment purposes”