

Interview with Naturalist Reno Sommerhalder: Protecting Kamchatka's Bears



We continue our series of interviews highlighting Kamchatka, Russia. Today we are interviewing [Reno Sommerhalder](#), an internationally recognized bear naturalist, conservationist, wildlife guide and photographer who has traveled to Kamchatka since 2003 to study Kamchatka brown bears.



PHOTO: RENO SOMMERHALDER

Q: Tell our readers a little bit about yourself. When and how did you discover your passion for bears?

I was fresh off the boat, so to speak, when I had a first very close encounter with a bear in the Canadian Rocky Mountains, where I make my home today. This story took place more than 32 years ago. During the day I would hike around with a small cowbell attached to my pack. At night that same bell became my doorbell, hanging from the ceiling of my little tent. The ringing of this bell woke me one night and as I sat up I stared into the face of a bear who had torn open the side of my little abode. We stared at one another, likely both in shock,