



Michael F. Fay

Chair

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Red List Authority Coordinator

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Location/Affiliation

Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, UK

Number of members

150

Social networks

Facebook: IUCN SSC Orchid Specialist Group

Instagram: @IUCNOrchidSpecialistGroup

Twitter: @IUCN_Orchids

Websites:

www.iucn.org/ssc-groups/orchids-sg/

plants-fungi/orchid-specialist-group

www.orchidspecialistgroup.com



Mission statement

Orchidaceae are the largest family of flowering plants, and they occur in a wide range of ecosystems and habitats. A charismatic group, many species are important in horticulture. Habitats of orchids are, however, threatened throughout the world, and the Orchid Specialist Group (OSG) is dedicated to their conservation and sustainable use.

Projected impact for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

By the end of 2020, we envision a substantial advance in our understanding of threats to orchids. This will be achieved in the following ways: (1) global assessments will be published for a range of taxonomic and geographical subsets of orchids; (2) meetings will be organised to facilitate the exchange of information between orchid conservation practitioners (members of the OSG and others) to ensure that best practice is followed in orchid conservation; (3) we will strive to involve young orchid conservationists from a diversity of countries, especially those with high orchid diversity and perceived threat; (4) we will work with CITES authorities and others to improve awareness and monitoring of the orchid trade, much of which is currently undocumented, illegal and unsustainable.

Targets for the 2017-2020 quadrennium

Assess

Red List: process ca. 300 Red List assessments for inclusion in the Global Red List.

Research activities: complete publication of papers from the 6th International Orchid Conservation Congress.

Plan

Policy: write a review of orchid conservation for Botanical Studies.

Network

Proposal development and funding: raise funds for up to 20 bursaries for students from developing countries to attend the 7th International Orchid Conservation Congress (IOCC VII).

Synergy: consolidate the two new groups within OSG, one looking at trade issues and one looking at molecular identification tools.

Communicate

Scientific meetings: complete planning for the 7th International Orchid Conservation Congress (IOCC VII).

Activities and results 2020

Assess

Red List

i. By the end of 2020, nearly 1,700 species of orchids had been assessed for the Global Red List, an increase of nearly 1,500 in the last decade. (KSR #1)



Cypripedium subtropicum (China). This endangered species was thought to be extinct, until it was rediscovered in 2009 in Yunnan, China. Since then, illegal collection has been a major problem, and it is the subject of a big conservation project
Photo: Yung-I Lee



Vanilla denshikoira (Colombia). This species, described in 2018, is known from only two individuals. It is a wild relative of *V. planifolia*, one of the species used for the production of vanilla. It was discovered in the territory of the indigenous Puinave nation. Members of this nation are among the authors of the paper describing the species, and they chose the name (Denshikoira is a central figure in Puinave mythology)
Photo: Nicola Flanagan

Network

Synergy

i. The two new groups within OSG, one looking at trade issues and one looking at molecular identification tools, are now functioning and making good progress with aims and targets. Importantly, there is a good synergy between these two groups in addressing illegal/unsustainable harvest and trade in orchids, one of the major threats that they face.

Acknowledgements

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Summary of activities 2020

Components of Species Conservation Cycle: 2/5

Assess 1 |

Network 1 |

Main KSRs addressed: 1

KSR: Key Species Result



Thelymitra variegata (Queen of Sheba orchid; Western Australia). This is a narrow endemic to SW Western Australia. It has now been successfully propagated as part of a conservation programme
Photo: Belinda Davis