

IUCN SSC Orchid Specialist Group

2016-2017 Report



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:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/835566089908869/>

Instagram:

https://www.instagram.com/orchid_specialist_group/

Twitter:

@IUCN_Orchids

Website:

<http://www.iucn.org/ssc-groups/orchids-sg/plants-fungi/orchid-specialist-group>

<http://globalorchidtrade.wixsite.com/home/orchids-trade>



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.

Main activities by Key Priority Area (2016 & 2017)

Barometer of life

■ Red List

i. All slipper orchid species have been red listed, revealing that c. 90% are threatened. Major threats are illegal harvest and habitat destruction. (KSR #1)

ii. Nearly 1,000 species of orchids appeared on the Global Red List by the end of 2017. (KSR #1)

Communications

■ Communication

i. Three issues of the OSG newsletter were edited by Marilyn Light and circulated to members of OSG and other interested individuals. (KSR #28)

ii. FaceBook page with > 500 members, Twitter feeds and OSG website maintained. (KSR #28)

■ Research activities

i. Publication of papers from 6th International Orchid Conservation Congress in *Botanical Journal of the Linnean Society* on track for spring 2018. (KSR #43)

■ Scientific meetings

i. Meetings of OSG are held at appropriate scientific events around the world to encourage cooperation/membership of OSG. (KSR #28)

ii. Initiated planning for the 7th International Orchid Conservation Congress. This series represents the flagship meetings organised by OSG and is held every three to four years. (KSR #28)

iii. Participated as member of Scientific Committee for Xth International Orchid Workshop. Meeting held in Bialystok (Poland) was organised by members of the OSG and collaborators with many talks focusing on orchid conservation. (KSR #28)

Conservation action

■ Synergy

i. Established two new groups within OSG, one looking at trade issues and one looking at molecular identification tools. Both new groups have formulated their membership and strategies for action.

Increasing diversity of SSC

■ Membership

i. OSG reconstituted with c. 150 members.

Policy

■ Policy advice

i. Coordinated review of orchid trade for publication. (KSR #26)

ii. Organised side event at CITES Plants Committee Meeting. (KSR #26)

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the funding which allowed us to complete the Red List of slipper orchids and SSC Chair Simon Stuart and staff for their support for this project.

Wild collected *Dendrobium chrysotoxum*
on sale at a market in China
Photo: Stephan W. Gale



Epiphytic orchids on remnant tree in disturbed montane forest, Laos
Photo: Stephan W. Gale



Cypripedium calceolus, a high profile species
for orchid conservation in Europe and temperate Asia
Photo: Colin Newlands

Targets for the quadrennium 2017-2020

Barometer of life

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

Capacity building

Proposal development and funding: raise funds for up to 20 bursaries for students from developing countries to attend IOCC VII.

Communications

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

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

Conservation action

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

Policy

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

Projected impact for the quadrennium 2017-2020

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 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 the CITES authorities and others to improve awareness and monitoring of orchid trade, much of which is currently undocumented, illegal and unsustainable.

Summary of activities (2016-2017)

Key Priority Area ratio: 5/7

Key Priority Areas addressed:

- Barometer of life (2 activities)
- Communications (6 activities)
- Conservation action (1 activity)
- Increasing diversity of SSC (1 activity)
- Policy (2 activities)

Main KSRs addressed: 1, 26, 28, 43

KSR: Key Species Result