

Orchid Conservation Alliance

Year End Newsletter

Two years into the pandemic, we are still realizing the impacts on the lives of everyone, everywhere. Again, we were unable to offer Orchids in the Wild tours to our members, but we are planning to do so for 2022 (see below for more details). Despite these difficulties, the Orchid Conservation Alliance managed to have a successful year, thanks in large part to our loyal and supportive membership. This year we started a new initiative, a speaker's bureau, where some of our members and directors donate their speaker's fees for orchid seminars. This initiative alone brought in over \$3800! The popularity of virtual orchid society meetings using zoom or similar platforms was truly enabling for this initiative, and it's likely this played a large role in the success of the speaker's bureau. We invite any of our members who give orchid seminars to join. For more information, please see the [speaker page](#) of the new OCA website. If you are the organizer for your orchid society's speakers program(s), please think of the OCA and our speaker's bureau!

This year, our major reserve support has been directed towards two of our partners: EcoMinga and SalvaMontes. In the sections that follow you will find more information about these organisations and their accomplishments and plans for the future.

In this newsletter, we would like to announce a few new fundraising initiatives, directed towards truly impactful, transformative donations. While the donations of our broad membership provide the bread and butter funding for our operations, individual large, one time donations can have dramatic impact and provide the donor with personal recognition (if desired).

Name a new species

Our reserves are continuing to reveal new species all the time: orchids, reptiles, mammals, trees, etc. A donation to the OCA will enable you, if interested, to name a new species, perhaps in honor of yourself, a friend, or some other worthy cause/individual. Currently we have three new species available; two *Lepanthes* (\$15,000 donation ea) and one *Sobralia* (\$20,000). If you are interested in naming a new species, contact Mary Gerritsen (mary@orchidconservationalliance.org) ASAP for images and further details, as the names will be available on a first come, first served basis. Note that it will take 6-8 months for the names to become official as publication in a peer-reviewed journal is required.

Bespoke Orchid Tours

This is a new concept for the OCA, targeted to our members and their friends who would like a small, private, personalized tour. If you are interested in something like this please contact Mary Gerritsen (mary@orchidconservationalliance.org) with details about the country or region you would like to visit, orchids you would like to see, and any reserves and nurseries you would like to visit. Mary will follow up with further questions to determine feasibility and pricing. The purpose of the bespoke trips is to create a highly personalized adventure. Note that these bespoke tours will be more expensive than our group tours, but offer the flexibility of dates, sites visited, participants, and personalized oversight of the itinerary. The spectrum of places to visit and orchids to see is essentially unlimited, so let us know what you are interested in!

Transformative reserve donations

- ◆ \$10,000-Equipment and technical support. This enables the purchase and maintenance of cameras, drones, computer equipment, and other items and services (like internet access) that are essential to the establishment and maintenance of our reserves. It also facilitates exploration and research within the reserves. Many government agencies require surveys, reports and data to support gazettement an area as a permanent nature reserve.
- ◆ \$20,000-This enables the hiring of a guard for a reserve, and/or the purchase of a motorcycle, truck or other transportation needed to police the large areas of our reserves and transport people and materials.
- ◆ \$50,000-Construction of the SalvaMontes research cabin (with naming rights)
- ◆ \$30,000 to \$1,000,000-This will enable the purchase of large parcels of land. If available, donors at this level may request naming rights to one or more new species (depending on the size of the donation), as well naming rights to a section of a reserve (depending on the level of support).

These transformational donation opportunities will shortly be added to our [donation website](#).

Legacy gifts

We totally understand that while you are “alive and kicking”, the concept of a legacy gift may not work with your financial goals.

However, if you would like to make a meaningful, long term and impactful donation, please consider the Orchid Conservation Alliance in your legacy planning. It’s actually quite simple for a donor to name the Orchid Conservation Alliance as the beneficiary of property (or designated portions) such as a bank account, life insurance policy, stock or retirement plan. The bank or other company usually provides a form for the donor to use. To help donors with their paperwork (and to avoid any possible confusion about which charity they intended the gift to go to), our legal name, location, and tax ID number are clearly displayed below as well as on our [website](#).

Planning ahead is very important. If you want at least part of your estate to support conservation, orchids or other initiatives you feel are important, they need to be specified in your will and estate plans. The OCA is fully registered with Charity Navigator, and when and if our donations exceed their minimum for oversight and classification, we will be included in their analysis. Our tax filings are accessible through our [website](#).

So, for clarity, here is the critical information for the Orchid Conservation Alliance

Legal Name:

The Orchid Conservation Alliance

Legal Address:

564 Arden Drive
Encinitas, CA 92024
EIN: 20-2382586

Other ways to support the OCA

Amazon Smile

A portion of the purchases on your Amazon account can be directed towards the registered charity of your choice. Simply go to the Amazon Smile website (smile.amazon.com) and log in with your Amazon credentials. Select your charity of choice (Orchid Conservation Alliance) and proceed with your purchases. Just remember to order through this website instead of the regular Amazon website, and every purchase will support the OCA. This year (to date), the OCA has already received \$214 through the Amazon Smile program.

Provide Orchid Conservation Alliance literature at your Orchid Society meetings and orchid shows

We can send you a literature packet-just let us know.

Host an orchid sale (by your society or individual) and donate part or all of the income to the Orchid Conservation Alliance

This year we had several generous donations from such sales! Thank you for your support!

Make a small monthly donation

Even a small regular donation of \$10-\$30/month adds up over the year. If you have a way to set up a recurring expense on your checking account, this is an easy way to make a difference to orchid conservation. One of our members has been donating \$30 a month long enough to have contributed over \$4000. That's an impressive sum for the cost of few cups of coffee per month!

Key questions and answers about your donations and gifts

How do I know my support will be durable?

We only give money to stable, legally regulated organizations not individuals, and we insist that, if the donation is used for land purchase, that the purchase be made a conservation easement, or whatever the term of art in the particular country is, so that the land cannot legally be developed for non-conservation uses.

Can my donation to the OCA be supplemented by matching donations?

On some occasions, yes it can. For example, we have been able to make arrangements with the Rainforest Trust to provide matching funds for the Dracula Reserve, EcoMinga activities and SalvaMontes. If your employer matches donations for charitable organizations, let us know how to register with their system so that we can be eligible for matching corporate support.

Investments the OCA has made to improve our online presence and fundraising

We applied for, and were granted, a Google ad grant for non-profits. This grant provides up to \$10,000 per month in advertising benefits. We are just getting started on our first advertisement campaign. If you are interested in helping with creating and maintaining our ad campaigns, please contact Mary Gerritsen (mary@orchidconservationalliance.org). We really need help with this effort, and would really appreciate a volunteer or two to assist.

A well maintained and informative website is a critical part of any nonprofit organization. During the COVID downtime we have completely redesigned the OCA website. The costs of this effort are reflected in our financials. We felt this was a worthy investment of our operating funds. It is chock full of photographs, videos, information about our reserves, our partners, detailed descriptions and publications from our past Orchids in the Wild tours, as well as a library of all the previous OCA newsletters. We have also made available our tax filings and registrations with Charity Navigator, although our coffers are not large enough to receive a rating from this organization. Please check out the new website, watch the videos, enjoy the photos, and while you are there, renew your membership! www.orchidconservationalliance.org

The OCA also entered into a relationship with Bloomerang, which streamlines our membership and donation tracking, end of the year tax letters, and email campaigns. Roberta Fox, a recent addition to our team of officers, has headed up this effort and has seamlessly incorporated it into our organization.

The OCA has taken on the Wikipedia project, creating and updating a Wikipedia page for the Orchid Conservation Alliance. Hopefully it will be approved and viewable soon.

Candy Hollinger has continued with our social media posts, and has been busy posting stories and photos on our Facebook and Instagram pages. Candy is always looking for content-if you would like to share some photos from an Orchids in the Wild Trip, please send them, with comments to mary@orchidconservationalliance.org

Updates from our partners:

SalvaMontes

Corporación SalvaMontes is a coalition of people with special interests in orchids, birds, and magnolias endemic to a region north of Medellín near the town of Yarumal. Of special interest to the OCA, of course, are the orchids. At least 38 orchid species are endemic to the region. The reserves are also of special interest for conservation of several magnolia species. One of these, *Magnolia polybypsophylla* is known from only 39 individuals. Locally it is known as the '100 year fence post tree'; its rot resistance and likely overharvesting may explain its current rarity. There are also at least 7 endemic birds and 12

endemic amphibians in the area. When one views the area from Google Earth, it is clear that there is a large virgin forest area between and surrounding the holdings of Corporación SalvaMontes.

During 2021 SalvaMontes has resumed their conservation activities in alignment with their most strategic goals. A field trip was made to assess the population of the critically endangered Ghost Monkey Orchid (*Dracula lemurella*), resulting in tagging and measuring more than 180 plants on a single tree! The SalvaMontes team has also been scouting the natural reserves to find more mature individuals of the 3 threatened Magnolia trees protected inside the reserves, and to collect seed for their propagation. A new tree propagation greenhouse was built, and a forest ranger, who will be in charge of propagating and planting native trees in degraded areas, was hired.

SalvaMontes is also working with the American Bird Conservancy to assess the population of the critically endangered Antioquia brush-finch (*Atlapetes blancae*) and establish conservation agreements with landowners in its distribution range. SalvaMontes continues to scout and negotiate for nearby land parcels with healthy forest remnants that can be bought for the expansion of the nature reserves, allowing for the protection of larger areas of habitat. A collaboration with herpetology researchers from the Universidad de Antioquia resulted in the discovery and publication of two new frog species.

Next year SalvaMontes plans to have an established Magnolia propagation and monitoring program, a baseline census of the Ghost Monkey Orchid population, allowing for the design of appropriate conservation actions, a small cabin for the accommodation of researchers and visitors to the higher areas of the nature reserve and expansion of protected areas with the purchase of least 700 additional acres of neighboring land.



Antioquia brush-finch



New frog species

*Dracula lemurella*

Fundación EcoMinga

Fundación EcoMinga (Ecuador) had an exciting year. In the eastern Andes near Baños they added more than 1500 acres of montane cloud forest (these purchases had been in the works for a long time), and in the western Andes they added 1120 acres in the Dracula Reserve. Both areas received much support from OCA. Their scientific staff have been discovering a steady stream of candidate new species of orchids, with about fourteen species in the process of description from the western Andean reserves (discovered by Luis Baquero and Marco Monteros), and about twenty species in process from the eastern Andean reserves (Lou Jost discoveries). An exciting new development is the large number of new species of trees being discovered in the reserves. These include a new species of *Magnolia* (still unpublished), four new species of *Sciodaphyllum* (formerly *Schefflera*) published last month, and two spectacular new species of *Meriania* published a few months ago (and several more in process). A new *Burmeistera* (another tree) was also published two months ago. Equally exciting has been a steady stream of new frogs, salamanders, and reptiles from the reserves, including one of the most spectacular frogs in the world, which is about to be published. The locations of all Fundación EcoMinga reserves were chosen on the basis of careful study of hotspots of orchid endemism, and it seems that the orchids are good indicators of hotspots of local endemism for other groups of plants and animals.

Not all the news is good, though. Pressure from legal and illegal mining is increasing rapidly in the western Andean reserves, and Fundación EcoMinga is increasing the number of reserve guards with OCA's help to try to control the illegal entries. They are also using all the legal and political tools at their disposal to keep mining away from the reserves.

Next year Fundación EcoMinga hopes to expand its first reserve, the Rio Anzu, to connect it to other reserves in the area and to a nearby national park. This is an unusual area of karst, containing the only known population of *Masdevallia stigi*, and it is the only known Ecuadorian site for a new genus of orchids, *Quechua*, which also has some populations in Peruvian karst areas. Fundación EcoMinga is also continuing to expand the Dracula and Manduriacu reserves in the western Andes, in a race against the miners who are also trying to buy the land. The total of this expansion will cost well over a million dollars. Several naming rights are available to help with this project.



New *Dracula* species



Spectacular new frog species



Masdevallia stigii



Scene of habitat destruction caused by illegal gold mining on the Dracula Reserve

La Palma

Marta Kolanowska receives Prestigious Maxwell/ Hanrahan Field Biology Award and Heisig Nomination

Marta Kolanowska, one of founders of the La Palma reserve in Colombia, is an Associate Professor at the University of Lodz, Poland. She and her colleagues have been working on the establishment of a research station at the [La Palma Reserve](#) in the Sibundoy Valley, at the southern edge of Colombia. We learned recently that she was

awarded the prestigious Maxwell/Hanrahan Field Biology award, a grant intended to provide her with funding, attention and support for her innovative field biology research. Dr. Kolanowska was also nominated for the the Heisig Prize, an award known as the Polish equivalent of the Nobel Prize, developed to honor Polish scientists who conduct research at the highest levels and whose discoveries change the world. Upon receiving the nomination, Dr. Kolanowska was quoted as follows “ I am very pleased with this nomination and I would like to thank you for appreciating my research work. I have found myself among a group of great scientists, and this alone is already a great honor for me. Such competitions, apart from giving great satisfaction, draw attention to specific problems of our world. In the case of my specialization this is an issue of deteriorating state of the nature. Therefore, I appreciate the fact that on such occasions I can make my humble plea for better care for our planet. If the species stopped disappearing, it would be the greatest reward for me, but to succeed there is still a long way ahead of us”. In 2020 she was a recipient of the Otto Wichterle Award for her research activity and her actions in protecting naturally valuable tropical ecosystems.

Congratulations Dr. Kolanowska!

Orchids in the Wild Tours for 2022

For 2022, we are planning what will probably be the most “civilized” of our Orchids in the Wild tours. With the issues of international travel, particularly to developing countries with variable access to COVID-19 related vaccines and treatment, the OCA, at least for 2022, chose to focus on those locations that are most likely safer for our members to visit. Both of the tours are in Europe, where we have (hopefully) harmonized regulations regarding travel, vaccines, COVID testing, and related regulations.

Terrestrial Orchids (and other Geophytes) of Sicily (April 9-20, 2022)

We are planning a trip to Sicily in April of 2022. The tour will be led by Spiro Kasomenakis and Sotiris Alexiou and promises to be a wonderful journey to this delightful island. The tour begins and ends in the city of Catania, which lies at the base of one of Europe’s few active volcanoes, Mt. Aetna. (The four Decade Volcanoes located in Europe are Mt. Etna and Vesuvius in Italy, Santorini in Greece, and Teide in the Canary Islands). Home to over well up to 90 different species and subspecies (the actual total is arguable between the “splitters” and “lumpers”). Sicily is also world renowned for its archaeological sites, incredible and delectable cuisine, the active volcano, Mt. Aetna, and many delightful, incredibly scenic villages and adjacent countryside. We are planning to stay in a luxurious villa for the duration of the tour, with small minivans for transport. In addition to finding orchids, we plan on visiting at least one archeological site and will have at least one free day for non-orchid related activities. A cooking class is

also in the planning! We currently have 6 open spaces on this tour. For more information, please visit our webpage: [Sicily Trip](#)

Terrestrial Orchids and Alpine Plants of Switzerland (June 12-June 27, 2021)

Our trip to Switzerland, focused on the terrestrial orchids of this incredibly scenic country, is planned for June 12-June 27, 2022, and is led by Judith Rapacz, a native of eastern Switzerland. The tour begins in Zurich and includes visits to orchid nature trails, the city of Bern, and alpine meadows, where slipper orchids can be found. Trips up the mountain will include rides on the famous cog railways. This trip is fully subscribed, but you are welcome to read more about the details, and also get your name on the waiting list should there be cancellations. webpage: [Switzerland Trip](#)

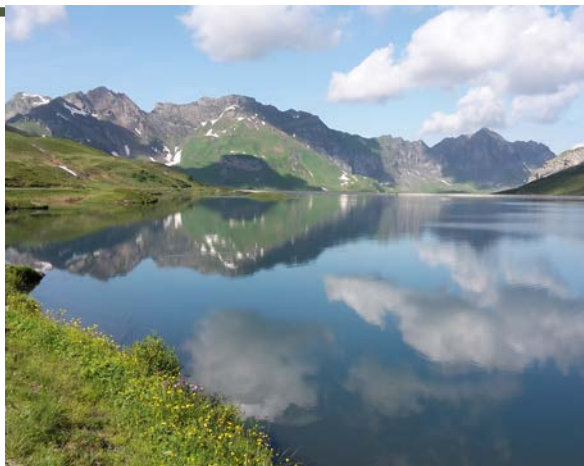
Hopefully by 2023 we will be able to safely resume our trips to France, South and Central America, India, Australia and/or China (we have trips already planned!). OCA members hear about the Orchids in the Wild trips before the general public, and as these tours often fill quickly, being an OCA member is a great way to ensure your participation.

Tell your local orchid society about the Orchid Conservation Alliance Speakers Bureau!

<https://orchidconservationalliance.org/speakers/>



Cypripedium calceolus (Switzerland)



Tannalpsee (Switzerland)



Ophrys speculum (Sicily)



Limnorchis abortivum (Sicily)



Mt. Aetna (Sicily)



Quechua glabrescens (Rio Anzu Reserve, Ecuador). Identified by Lou Jost and colleagues, this terrestrial orchid was found to represent an entirely new genus of orchids! (Note: It had been found earlier in Peru but forgotten!)

Financials in US\$ (Jan 1, 2021-September 30, 2021)

Income Source	Amount	Expenses	Amount
Memberships	3531	Reserves	63106
Donations	68949	Advertising	130
Speaker Fees	3811	Website Design, Care and Hosting	3395
Merchandise Sales	2026	Accounting and Legal	3218
Other	36	Insurance	744
		Office Expenses	1061
		Banking Fees	632
Totals	78353		72286