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December 12, 2025

ORCHID CONSERVATION ALLIANCE

Thelymitra ixioides

**DECEMBER 2025
NEWSLETTER**



OCA Year-End Summary

We have had another wonderful year!

Here are a few statistics for Jan 1, 2025-December 5, 2025.

Dollars Raised

Total Donations and Memberships	\$148,013
Speaker Donations	\$2,450
Merchandise Sales	\$13,133
Trip Profits	\$52,705

Reserve and Conservation Activities

EcoMinga Reserves Support	\$75,735
SalvaMontes Reserve Expansion	\$70,000
Tasmania Orchid Detection Project	\$13,263

OCA Membership Details

Number of Members and Donors	767
Number of Orchids in the Wild Tours	5
Number of T-shirts Sold	249
Number of Orchid/Garden Shows Participated In	6

awaiting further rating evaluations (currently underway). In addition to direct donations and membership renewals, our website also supports direct stock donations and Donor Directed Fund donations (<https://orchidconservationalliance.org/donate/>).

This year, in addition to expanding the SalvaMontes reserves, we provided additional funding to EcoMinga to support reserve management.

The Orchid Conservation Alliance: Presence at Orchid Shows

This year we had sales and membership tables at the Ft. Lauderdale Orchid Society Show (Ft. Lauderdale, FL, January 10-12), the Tamiami International Orchid Festival (Miami, FL, January 17-19), the Pacific Orchid Exposition (San Francisco, CA, February 27-March 2), Santa Barbara International Orchid Show (March 20-22), Orchids in the Park (San Francisco, July 26-27), and the Huntington Orchid Show (San Marino, CA, October 17-19). Our tables were staffed by our board members: Ron Kaufmann, Peter Tobias, Ashley Grable, Mary Gerritsen and Jack Lothrop. We also appreciate volunteer help! At the Pacific Orchid Exposition, Paul Juberg and Sarina Mohanty stepped up to staff the booth and Paul also helped with the Orchids in the Park booth. The OCA can send membership materials to your orchid society, if you would like to help promote our activities. Let us know!

info@orchidconservationalliance.org

Speakers Bureau

It was also a busy year for our Speakers Bureau. Speaker fee donations came to \$2,450. Special thank you's go to Carrie Buchanan, Mary Gerritsen, Paul Juberg, Scott McGregor, Karen Olson, and Peter Tobias. More information about our Speakers Bureau is [here](#).

Please consider an end-of-the-year donation to help us fund the purchase of additional orchid habitat and reserve support. Donations can be made directly through our website: orchidconservationalliance.org/donate/ or by mailing a check payable to the Orchid Conservation Alliance to:

Mary Gerritsen
President, Orchid Conservation Alliance
541 Parrott Drive
San Mateo, CA 94402

You also can renew your membership through our website:

orchidconservationalliance.org/membership/

or by mailing a check to Mary Gerritsen (see above). All donations and memberships may be tax-deductible, as the OCA is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

Orchids in the Wild Tours

The OCA has been offering our Orchids in the Wild tours for 20 years. We initially started with just one tour per year, but over time we have dramatically increased the number of tours and the diversity of our destinations. While these are important fundraisers, the tours are also excellent educational opportunities. Our participants see firsthand how fragile our remaining orchid-rich forests are and how devastating the effects of human activities can be on the very survival of not only the orchids, but the entire ecosystem. When feasible, we try to include visits to conservation projects and meet with the local organizations involved in habitat protection and related activities. Our tours also are wonderful ways to meet new people, make new friends, and learn about other cultures and cuisines. We have many repeat travelers, some of whom have been on more than 5 of our tours! I hope you will consider joining us on one of our scheduled tours in 2026. We have a fantastic lineup planned...and for 2025, let's review the wonderful tours that we had!

Orchids of Rhodes

March 30-April 6



Anacamptis pyramidalis

The Orchid Conservation Alliance's 2025 Rhodes trip brought participants to one of the richest orchid regions in the Dodecanese, guided by Jon Dunn and Sarah Cuttle. Over eight days, the group recorded **50 orchid species**—including numerous local varieties, color forms, and several hybrids—across habitats ranging from olive groves and phrygana scrub to pine forest and mountain slopes.

The opening day around Embonas introduced classic Rhodian bee orchids: large colonies of *Ophrys ferrum-equinum* alongside *O. sicula*, *Orchis anatolica*, and towering *Himantoglossum robertianum*. The highlight was the dramatically dark *Ophrys reinholdii*, seen in exceptional numbers—one of Rhodes' signature species.

Day 2, after a cultural morning in Rhodes Old Town, the afternoon focused on hillside and riverside orchid sites. Massive displays of *Orchis italica* ("Naked Man Orchid") were accompanied by *Serapias bergonii* and *Anacamptis papilionacea*, including a bee actively pollinating one plant. New finds included *Ophrys lucis* and the first *O. cornutula*, *O. regis-ferdinandii*, and a hybrid *O. × kalteiseniana* (*ferrum-equinum* × *reinholdii*).





Serapias carica

Day 3's strategy of heading south to avoid island-wide storms paid off. In vast ruderal fields near Kattavia, the group encountered thousands of orchids—particularly *Ophrys cretica*, *O. lutea*, *O. speculum*, *O. regis-ferdinandii*, and their hybrid *O. × butleri*. They found *O. rhodia*, *O. umbilicata*, a rare *cretica × mammosa* hybrid, and a chlorotic ghost-form *O. rhodia*. Afternoon phrygana added *Serapias carica*, *Anacamptis pyramidalis*, *A. coriophora*, and diminutive *Ophrys parvula*.

Day 4 began with superb tall *Ophrys calyptus* in an olive grove, including a yellowish *flavescens* form and a bizarre fused-lip lusus. After exploring Lindos with Nektaria, the group visited a sunlit grove packed with *Ophrys blitopertha*, the rare *O. attaviria*, and three plants of *O. lindia*, one of Rhodes' scarcest endemics.



Ophrys cretica



Ophrys lindia

Day 5 centered on Profitis Ilias mountain. Pine woods produced *Ophrys oreas*, *Orchis provincialis*, abundant *Orchis anatolica*, white and pink *Neotinea maculata*, *N. lactea*, *Anacamptis morio*, and *Ophrys omegaifera*. Later sites delivered *Ophrys mammosa*, *O. polyxo*, *O. sitiaca*, *O. persephona*, and the first *Serapias politisii*. Tiny *O. bombyliflora*, compared humorously to Ewoks, appeared in numbers.

Day 6's excursion to high Windmill Hill sought late-season species. The group eventually located fresh *Ophrys korae* and *O. leochroma*, as well as a pristine Rhodes Peony (*Paeonia clusii* ssp. *rhodia*). Lunch brought the first *Ophrys halia*, followed by a rare *halia flavescens* form—worthy of a celebratory “Jon Happy Dance.”

On Day 7, a pre-Kamiros stop produced two final additions: the scarce *Ophrys sancti-isidorii* and *Serapias parviflora*, bringing the week's total to **50 species**. Higher on Mt Attaviros, abundant *Ophrys candica* provided a colorful finale, toasted with local white wine overlooking the sea. The last flourish was a wild two-lipped *Ophrys polyxo* found near Embonas.





Front row (L-R): Kathryn Doolin, Cindy Unwin, Brian Unwin, Karen Olsen
Back Row: Margery Mayer, Jon Dunn, Sarah Cuttle, Peter Doolin, Paul Juberg



Orchids of Sikkim

April 1-15, 2025

Arachnis cathcartii





The tour began in New Delhi where the group met up, flying from there to Bagdogra (Bengal), the closest airport to Sikkim. In Bagdogra, the group was met by our drivers and 4WD vehicles, and we proceeded to drive north into Sikkim. Soon the first orchids were spotted: blooming *Dendrobium aphyllum* scattered along the Teesta River. All through this river valley evidence of the catastrophic 2023 glacial-lake-outburst flood was apparent—destroyed bridges, dams, damaged buildings, landslides, and thick layers of sediment that would shape much of the group's travel throughout the region.

Entering Sikkim required multiple permits and checkpoint stops. The road up to Gangtok was steep and winding, but finally we reached our hotel for the next few days. The Hidden Forest Retreat offered gardens filled with *Coelogyne stricta*, *Coelogyne flaccida*, *Chiloschista parishii*, *Dendrobium* spp., and many blooming *Hippeastrum* hybrids. There was also an extensive library of Sikkim botanical literature.

We visited the Sikkim Orchid Research Center in the morning. Although the majority of the collection were hybrid cymbidiums, we did find an orchid species house with some local orchids. After our visit we traveled to the home of our host, Saliesh Pradhan. Along the road we stopped to photograph large plants of *Dendrobium nobile*, numerous flowering *Dendrolirium (Eria) lasiopetalum*, and *Mycaranthes floribunda*. At Saliesh's estate, we photographed more *Dendrobium nobile* and *Coelogyne flaccida*. We toured the garden, admiring Saliesh's impressive citrus collection.

After leaving Gangtok, the group traveled north toward Mangan, spotting abundant *Dendrobium nobile* and *Dendrolirium lasiopetalum* in the roadside forests. A walk through old terraced farmland revealed abundant orchids: enormous clumps of *Dendrobium nobile*, more *Dendrolirium*, *Mycaranthes floribunda*, a few *Bulbophyllum*, *Coelogyne flaccida*, several *Otochilus* species, a *Luisia* species, and a non-flowering *Calanthe*. Farther down the slope, *Goodyera procera* and the jewel orchid *Goodyera hemsleyana* were found, along with *Coelogyne elata*.

The journey from Mangan to Lachung was long and arduous due to flood-destroyed roads. As the elevation increased, orchids gave way to rhododendrons and *Arisaema* species.



Luisia trichorrhiza



Dendrolirium lasiopetalum



Paphiopedilum venustum



Coelogyne flaccida

The next morning brought clear views of the high Himalayas as the group traveled through the Shingba Rhododendron Sanctuary. Although orchids here bloom later in the season, the valley is known for *Cypripedium tibeticum* and *Cypripedium himalaicum*, which flower in June.

Leaving Lachung early the following day, the group crossed a temporary bridge and descended down a badly damaged road. A thrilling discovery soon appeared: a magnificent *Cymbidium eburneum* high in a tree. In the same area were at least ten more *Cymbidium eburneum*, large *Coelogyne stricta*, and carpets of *Arisaema costatum*. Farther downroad, more blooming *Dendrobium aphyllum* and *Cymbidium bicolor* were found.

After returning south through Mangan, the group reached Ravangla. Behind the hotel, Buddha Park held many plants of *Pleione praecox* on rock walls, though not in bloom, and higher on the hill were more *Pleione praecox* and *Cymbidium hookerianum*.

Continuing on to Yuksom, the group stopped at an unusual monastery before arriving at a hotel with extensive grounds. Here, large blooming *Coelogyne cristata* and *Epigeneium rotundatum* grew in the trees, and a collared owlet perched above. The next morning's visit to a local garden revealed more orchids salvaged from fallen trees and roadwork: blooming *Epigeneium rotundatum*, *Bulbophyllum umbellatum*, and *Esmeralda cathcartii*.





L-R: (top row) Jan Anderson, Fred Anderson, Gary Yong Gee, Kay Klumb, Mary Gerritsen, Gerald Verens, Helene Wee, Venk Reddy, Michael Scuito, Maryetta Scuito, Ross Bicknell, Rick Burian, Neelam Basnett (senior guide). Lower row, Samjay Chetteri, Sanjok Rai, Sameer Garumg (junior guide), Sonam Bhutan and Deepak Lepcha

A short hike near a waterfall became one of the botanical highlights of the entire tour. On cliffs above the road were enormous, cascading *Coelogyne cristata*—dozens of plants, many decades old, in full bloom. Interspersed among them were *Epigeneium rotundatum*. At the waterfall, more *Arisaema costatum* grew in abundance.

Later that afternoon, some group members found several *Dendrobium heterocarpum* in bloom in the village. The following day's travel from Yuksom toward Pelling included stops for more *Dendrobium heterocarpum*, large *Dendrobium nobile*, and a lone road-bank *Arundina graminifolia*. At an old bridge over the Rathong Chu River, several *Dendrobium nobile* and a blooming *Chiloschista parishii* were seen high in the trees.

From Pelling, the group continued to Kalimpong, stopping at the forest ruins of Sikkim's second historic capital where dozens of *Cymbidium lancifolium* (not flowering) grew along one of the trails. Descending into West Bengal, there were more blooming *Dendrobium aphyllum* and a striking clump of *Dendrobium fimbriatum* var. *oculatum*.

Kalimpong offered a fitting end for orchid lovers. The lodge, Holumba Haven, had a fantastic collection of orchids in the gardens and shade houses. The group visited the well-known nursery, Nursery International, with an excellent selection of orchid species and the promise of future group orders. One last monastery visit and a final Nepali lunch completed the journey before the group made its way back to Bagdogra and onward to New Delhi.



ORCHIDS OF SICHUAN

June 21-July 3



Cypripedium calcicola

The Orchid Conservation Alliance's 2025 Sichuan expedition brought six participants to some of the most orchid-rich landscapes of the Hengduan Mountains, guided by Wenqing Perner and OCA representative Mary Gerritsen. Over a period of nearly two weeks, the group explored travertine valleys, high grasslands, deep gorges, Tibetan villages, and prime panda habitat—encountering an extraordinary array of *Cypripedium*, *Hemipilia* (*Ponerorchis*), *Oreorchis*, *Calanthe*, and alpine flora.

Arrival & Ascent to Huanglong

After staggered arrivals in Chengdu, the group drove toward Huanglong, stopping for *Lilium regale*, Qiang watchtowers, yak photo-ops, and botanizing at a 13,000+ ft pass where the first orchids appeared—*Hemipilia* (*Amitostigma*) *monanthum*, *Cypripedium amesianum*, and *Hemipilia crenulata*. They settled into the Seercuo Hotel for a three-night stay.

Huanglong National Scenic Area

One of the tour's botanical high points, the climb through Huanglong's forested trail immediately produced *Cypripedium bardolphianum*, *Cyp. flavum*, and *Cyp. tibeticum*. Higher up along the wooden boardwalk, orchid diversity exploded: *Cyp. calcicola*, *Calypso bulbosa*, *Platanthera chlorantha*, and dozens of *Oreorchis nana*. The group also encountered carpets of *Pedicularis artselaeri*, *Meconopsis* poppies, *Corydalis*, and primulas—set against Huanglong's iconic turquoise travertine pools.



Flood-altered Landscapes

Overnight cloudbursts transformed the Fujiang River in the Danyun Gorge into a torrent, blocking access to several target orchid sites. The group photographed towering *Cardiocrinum giganteum*, searched unsuccessfully for *Cyp. sichuanense* and *Cyp. micranthum*, but found a new *Oreorchis* (for the tour) species and extensive *Pedicularis* colonies. Crossing another high pass brought more *Meconopsis* and *Incarvillea*.

Shenxianchi Scenic Area

A dramatic mountain road of 28 switchbacks led to Shenxianchi—another travertine valley with blue pools and forested slopes. Highlights included *Cyp. calcicola*, *Cyp. flavum*, *Cyp. shanxiense*, *Calanthe delavayi*, and *Hemipilia chusua*. The group also enjoyed the many *Paeonia veitchii*, *Fritillaria*, and rhododendrons.

Toward Wanglang (June 26).

A detour to the Golden Snub-Nosed Monkey Reserve revealed a still-closed facility, but nearby forests yielded *Hemipilia flabellata*, *Arisaema*, saxifrages, and *Lilium davidii*. After passing through orchards and a major landslide zone, the group reached a Tibetan-style guesthouse near Wanglang.

Wanglang Panda Reserve (June 27).

Perhaps the richest orchid day of the tour: *Cypripedium flavum*, *Cyp. tibeticum*, *Cyp. calcicola*, *Cyp. guttatum*, *Cyp. bardolphianum*, and the rare *Cyp. farreri*, along with *Galearis roborovskii*, *Calanthe delavayi*, *Gymnadenia conopsea*, *Hemipilia chusua*, *Hemipilia amplexifolia*, *Platanthera minutiflora*, *Malaxis monophyllos*, *Oreorchis* spp., *Risleya atropurpurea*, and *Cyp. palangshanense*. A film crew documented our visit for a Chinese TV program.





Cypripedium guttatum

Aba Grasslands

Crossing onto the eastern Tibet–Qinghai Plateau, the group explored sweeping alpine meadows filled with *Iris*, *Meconopsis*, *Pedicularis*, *Fritillaria*, *Cremanthodium*, *Ajuga*, and *Dactylorhiza hatagirea*. Wildlife included black-necked cranes and large flocks of Himalayan griffons.

Kalong Valley

Storm damage had scoured the valley, washing away many orchids, yet the group still found extensive *Cyp. guttatum* colonies, plus *Cyp. calcicola*, *Cyp. shanxiense*, *Oreorchis nana*, and white forms of *Paeonia veitchii*.

Return to Chengdu

The return featured *Lilium regale* in bloom, a Tibetan village marketplace, the Erina castle, and a memorial to the 2008 Sichuan earthquake. Final days included a Sichuan opera performance, a visit to Hengduan Biotech's nursery, lotus fields, a silk museum, and a farewell dinner—ending just ahead of major flooding that later shut down Chengdu.



Cypripedium flavum
Photo by Ron Parsons



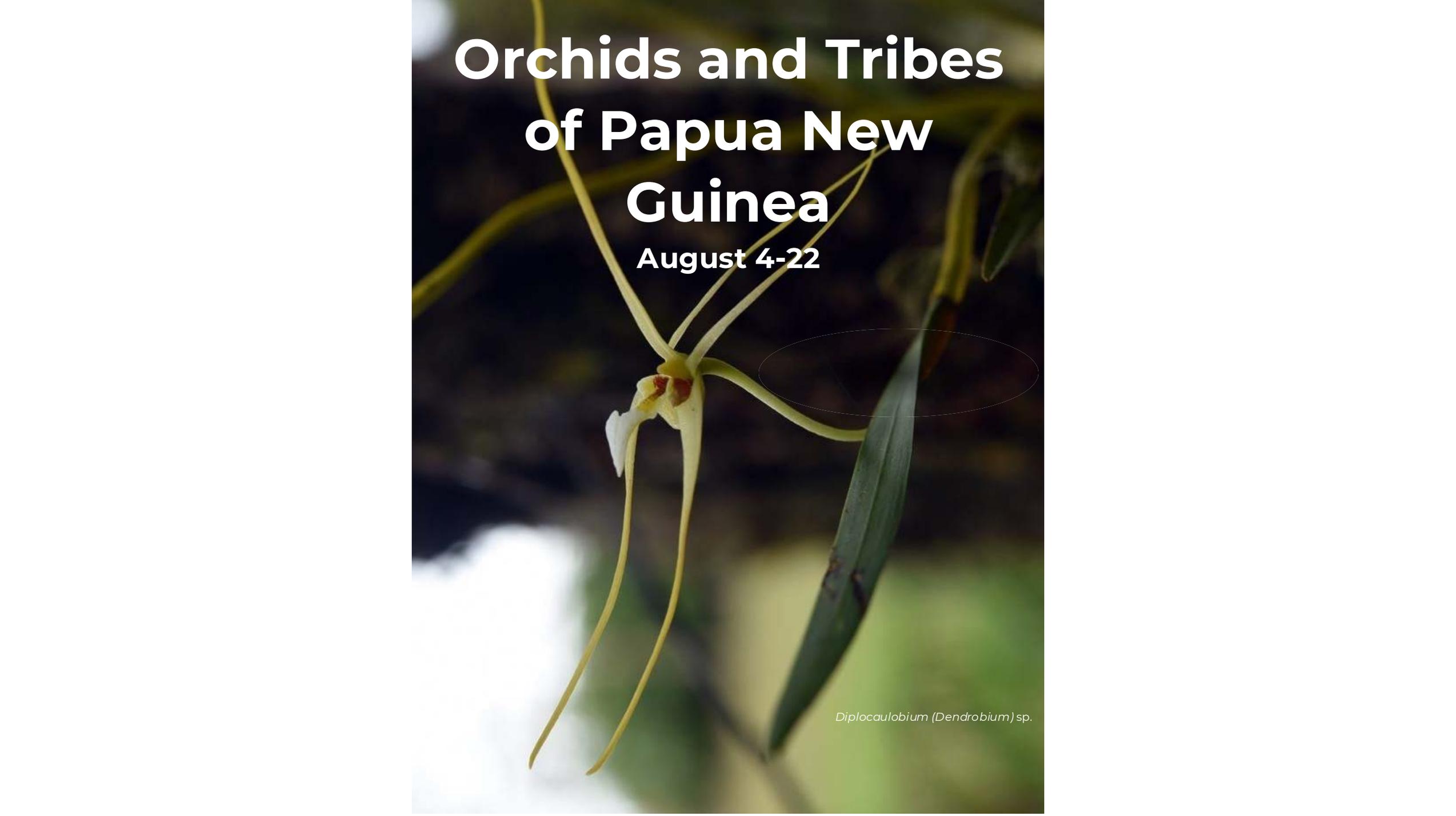
Meconopsis integrifolia



Hemipilia crenulata



L-R: Tom Parks, Sara Hedean, Shahla Butler, Mary Gerritsen, Wenqing Perner, Val Cinege, Peter Madders and two of the Wanglang Park Staff



Orchids and Tribes of Papua New Guinea

August 4-22

Diplocaulobium (Dendrobium) sp.

The 2025 expedition brought six participants to Papua New Guinea for a combined orchid-focused and cultural journey across the Western Highlands and Mt. Wilhelm regions. After meeting up at the airport in Brisbane, Australia, the group arrived in Port Moresby and enjoyed a day visiting the fish market and the Nature Park, featuring birds of paradise, cassowaries, flying foxes, and antelope-type *Dendrobium* orchids.

A long airport delay marked the start of the Mt. Hagen leg, but the trip quickly picked up with visits to the bustling Mt. Hagen market and the extravagant lodge at Rondon Ridge. The group toured the lodge's extensive orchid collection guided by expert Joseph Tano, seeing *Mediocalcar*, *Bulbophyllum*, *Coelogyne fragrans*, *Dendrobium cuthbertsonii*, *D. subclausum*, and others. This was followed by a steep ridge walk and a visit to Paul Yafisi's community orchid garden, revealing additional treasures such as *Dendrobium (Cadetia) sp.*, *D. vexillarius*, *D. masarangense*, *D. alaticaulinum*, *D. sulphureum*, and the unusual *Bulbophyllum tricanaliferum*.

Visits to several private gardens followed: Stephen Mur's beautifully arranged tree-fern-mounted orchid collection—including giant *Coelogyne fragrans* and the whimsical moss-haired "Bossman", Avi Vincent's lush tropical garden, home to *Dendrobium finisterrae* and *D. crispilinguum*, and the finale, the incredible collection of Max Mal, where nearly every orchid was grown to CCE quality.

Relocating to Magic Mountain Lodge dramatically improved the wildlife experience. From the balcony, the group observed Ribbon-tailed and Stephanie's Astrapias, Brown and Black Sicklebills, Princess Stephanie's Bird of Paradise, lorikeets, and an introduced Blyth's Hornbill. Full bird lists appear in the trip report's final pages.



Dendrobium sulphureum



Dendrobium alaticaulinum

Back at Magic Mountain, the group undertook a rope-assisted descent into the forest to explore the orchid-rich slopes, locating *Dendrobium vexillarius*, *D. alaticaulinum*, *Glomera*, *Ceratostylis*, *Epiblastus montihageni*, and the leafless *Taeniophyllum robustum*. Later, a visit to Israel Joseph's village offered another forest orchid garden and encounters with *Balanophora*, a rare parasitic plant.

The cultural portion of the trip featured the Paiya Village Cultural Show and the much larger Mt. Hagen Cultural Festival. The latter featured over 80 different tribal groups in elaborate feathered headdresses, body paint, mudmen masks, and shell jewelry, with excellent dance performances. The trip report (see website) includes extensive photo-graphs of tribes from Enga, Huli, Asaro, Chimbu, Tambul, Morobe, and more.



Dendrobium habbemense



Dendrobium nardooides



November 4th, 2024

Tambul tribesmen



Huli Wigmen



Mediocallcar sp.

The final segment took the group to Betty's Lodge near Mt. Wilhelm after a difficult 4WD ascent. Days there included garden and trout-farm tours, forest walks revealing *Dendrobium cuthbertsonii*, *D. habbemense*, *Corybas*, *Calanthe*, and *Bulbophyllum*, and a botanical trek up the Mt. Wilhelm summit trail, where *D. sulphureum*, *D. aurantiroseum*, multiple *Epiblastus*, *Habenaria*, *Liparis*, and large colonies of *Corybas* were found.

The trip ended with long travel days and another lengthy airport delay—but with extraordinary orchid, wildlife, and cultural encounters throughout.



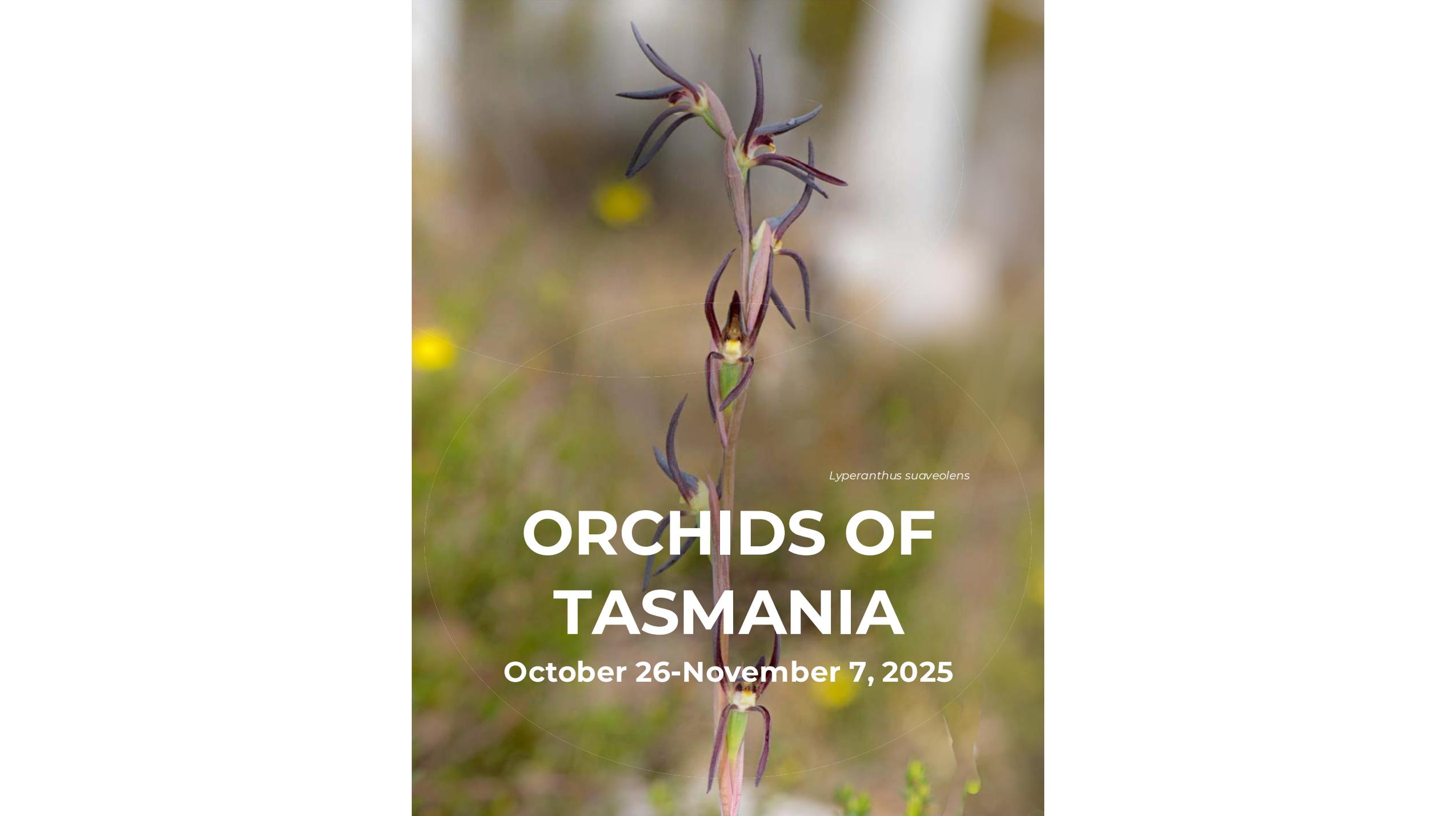
Epiblastus montihageni



Phreatia sp.



L-R: One of our drivers, Beth Huning, Ann-Taft-Miller, Zoe Bejar, Claire Garrett, Mary Gerritsen, Betty Higgins and Joy Orlich



Lyperanthus suaveolens

ORCHIDS OF TASMANIA

October 26-November 7, 2025

This Orchids in the Wild adventure kicked off in the charming city of Hobart, the capital of Tasmania. A few of us arrived early, giving us the perfect excuse to spend a full day exploring Maria Island, once home to a historic penal colony. Although we didn't find any orchids there, the boat ride across was beautiful, and the island greeted us with plenty of wildlife—Bennett's Wallabies (*Notamacropus rufogriseus rufogriseus*), the Tasmanian pademelon (*Thylogale billardierii*), sulfur-crested cockatoos (*Cacatua galerita*), and yellow-tailed black cockatoos (*Zanda funerea*). We also spotted non-native kookaburras (*Dacelo novaeguineae*) and yellow-throated honeyeaters (*Nesoptilotis flavicollis*). Wombats (*Vombatus ursinus*) remained elusive, but their distinctive cube-shaped droppings and foraged vegetation were everywhere.

Over the next several days, we explored southern Tasmania with local orchid experts Malcolm Wells and colleagues Eddie and Ruth Gall. They introduced us to a conservation project at Hobart's Royal Tasmanian Botanic Gardens (HRTBG), gave us an inside look at orchid-sniffing detection dogs at the Landscape Recovery Foundation, and guided us through some wonderful sites around the city. Our explorations continued through Freycinet National Park, the Tasman Peninsula, Fort Chimo at Oyster Cove, and a number of local reserves. In our Hobart area explorations, we photographed an outstanding variety of orchids, including *Caladenia anthracina* (HRTBG), *Caladenia atrata*, *Caladenia carnea*, *Caladenia caudata*, *Caladenia clavigera*, *Caladenia cracens*, *Caladenia filamentosa*, *Caladenia saggicola* (HRTBG), *Calochilus robertsonii*, *Chiloglottis triceratops*, *Dendrobium striolatum* ssp. *chrysanthum*, *Diuris sulphurea*, *Glossodia major*, *Lyperanthus suavedens*, *Microtis unifolia*, *Paracaleana minor*, *Paraprasophyllum apoxychilum*, *Paraprasophyllum concinnum*, *Pterostylis melagramma*, *Pterostylis pedunculata*, *Pterostylis ziegeri* (HRTBG), *Thelymitra ixioides*, and *Thelymitra silena*.





One of the standout moments came when we drove up Mt. Wellington (4,170 ft). From the summit, we were rewarded with a 360-degree views of southern Tasmania. On the way back down, we walked one of the mountain trails and discovered numerous blooming colonies of *Corybas diemenicus*. Our final stop in the region was Bonorong Wildlife Sanctuary, where we met Tasmanian devils (*Sarcophilus harrisii*), Tiger Snakes (*Notechis scutatus*), Fred the talkative sulfur-crested cockatoo, and a rare lutina Yellow-Tail Black Cockatoo (*Zanda funereal*). We fed kangaroos (*Macropus giganteus tasmaniensis*) and even shared a conversation of sorts with Jerry, a mischievous emu (*Dromaius novaehollandiae*).

L-R: Zoe Bejar, Sasha Winter, Patricia Black-Decima, Garth Smith, Amy Cheun, Sarah Bodary-Winter, Mary Gerritsen, Heidi Arno, Jean Hollebhone, Ron Parsons, Aden Dudman, Dorothy Black, Barry Dudman

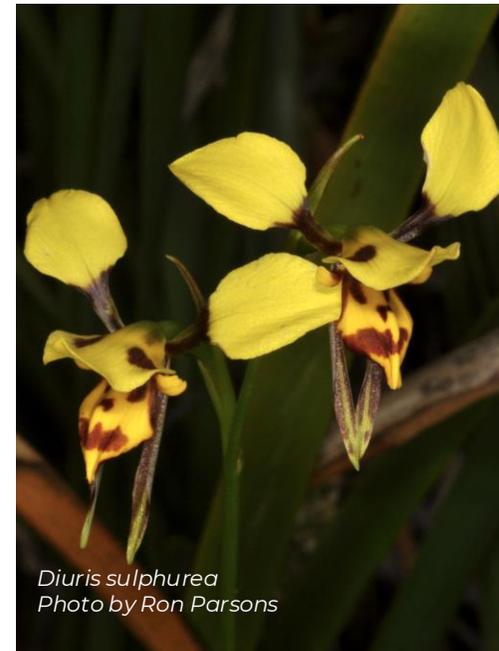


As we traveled north toward the Midlands, we wandered through several small towns, each with its own charm. Oatlands stood out for its beautifully preserved sandstone buildings—carved and constructed by early prisoners—and for its excellent local gin distillery. Nearby reserves and cemeteries provided fresh orchid encounters, including) *Diuris pardina*, *Prasophyllum brevilabre*, *Prasophyllum tunbridgense*, and *Thelymitra pauciflora*. Eventually we reached Launceston, Tasmania's second-largest city, where we met Barry Dudman, our guide for the northern half of the trip.

On our way toward Bridport, we stopped at a cemetery to admire *Caladenia patersonii* (*echidnochila* form then continued to a coastal wildflower reserve, where two sun orchids, *Thelymitra ixiooides* and *Thelymitra rubra*, were in bloom alongside lots of *Diuris sulphurea*. Later that afternoon we found even more *Thelymitra pauciflora*. Barry introduced us to Garth Smith—another orchid enthusiast whom Malcolm Wells had contacted to help with our explorations—who welcomed us onto his property. There he showed us several *Caladenia atrochila* as well as a few epiphytic *Sarcochilus australis*.

Our northern travels took us to Rocky Cape National Park, the postcard-worthy town of Stanley, the rugged Arthur River region, and the vast Arthur-Pieman Conservation Area. With Garth and Barry's expert help, we found still more orchids: *Burnettia cuneata*, *Caladenia atrochila*, *Caladenia pusilla*, *Caladenia transitoria*, *Caladenia cornuta*, *Calochilus herbaceus*, albinistic *Calochilus paludosus*, *Chiloglottis gunnii*, *Chiloglottis cornuta*, *Prasophyllum abblittiorum*, *Prasophyllum rostratum*, *Pterostylis tasmanica*, and additional *Sarcochilus australis*.

Miki, the orchid sniffing cocker spaniel with her trainers at the Landscape Recovery Center, Hobart.





Burnettia cuneata

There were plenty of adventures beyond orchids, too—a night walk to watch Fairy Penguins (*Eudyptula minor*) shuffle ashore, a windswept visit to the “Edge of the World” at Gardiner Point on the island’s far west coast (where the next landmass to the west across the ocean is Argentina), a serene wander beneath the colossal tree ferns of Trowutta Arch, and unforgettable hikes in Cradle Mountain National Park.

By the end of our travels, Tasmania had given us everything we could have hoped for: orchids, wildlife encounters, dramatic coastlines, misty forests, and the warm company of fellow orchid enthusiasts. It was a journey as wild and remarkable as the island itself.



Caladenia atrata



Calochilus herbaceus
Photo by Ron Parsons

2026 ORCHIDS IN THE WILD ECOTOURS

Upcoming Orchids in the Wild Tours:

We have an exciting lineup of tours for 2026. Here are the destinations and dates. More information can be found on the Ecotours webpage [here](#).

- **Rhodes, Greece.** March 17-24, 2026. This tour is specially planned to immediately precede the World Orchid Conference in Dresden (Germany). This will be the OCA's third tour of Rhodes, led by experts Jon Dunn and Sarah Cuttle.
- **Gargano Peninsula, Italy.** April 13-20, 2026. Springtime in the Gargano Peninsula is wonderful, and this adventure won't disappoint. Enjoy the scenery, orchids and magnificent wildflowers! This tour also will be led by Jon Dunn.
- **Rio Negro, Brazil.** May 22 – June 2, 2026. Our most popular trip - already full! Peter Tobias will be leading this tour.
- **Northern Yunnan, China.** June 14 - 28, 2026. Well known for its plant diversity, Yunnan alone has over 400 different orchid species, many endemic to the region. Enjoy incredible scenery, the old town of Lijiang, many different species of flowering rhododendrons, as well as paeonies and too many alpine flowers to count. This tour will be led by Wenqing Perner and Mary Gerritsen.

2026 ORCHIDS IN THE WILD ECOTOURS

Upcoming Orchids in the Wild Tours continued:

- **Colombia** July 22 – August 6, 2026. Join the OCA on an unforgettable 16-day journey through Colombia's breathtaking landscapes. This expertly curated trip is designed for orchid enthusiasts and nature lovers, offering a rare opportunity to explore some of Colombia's most diverse orchid habitats and stunning national reserves. From the highland ecosystems of Chingaza National Park to the misty cloud forests of Yarumal and the orchid-rich reserves near Jardín, you'll encounter a dazzling array of orchid species—*Telipogon*, *Dracula*, *Miltoniopsis*, *Odontoglossum*, Pleurothallids, and many more—in both their natural habitats and in world-renowned collections. Led by Sebastian Vieira and Ron Kaufmann, this tour will include a visit to the world-famous Feria de las Flores show in Medellín.
- **Nepal: Orchid Trail Tour** November 9-17, 2026. This tour is planned to immediately precede the V International Orchid Symposium in Kathmandu. Led by author of *The Orchids of Nepal*, Bhakta Bahadur Raskoti, this tour will take you to various locations in central Nepal with the opportunity to see up to 50 different orchid species in bloom and enjoy the spectacular scenery and culture of the region. The OCA rep on this tour will be Mary Gerritsen.
- **Nepal: Orchids and Wildlife of Chitwan National Park** November 21-24. This tour follows the V International Orchid Symposium in Kathmandu and features one-horned rhinos, elephants, exotic birds, and other wildlife, in addition to the abundant orchids in the park. This tour will be led by members of the Annapurna Research Center.

EcoMinga Updates

Conservation Wins for Ecuador's Llanganates–Sangay Corridor

On July 31, 2025, Ecuador signed two significant pieces of legislation into law:

1. Machay Reserve declared a Refugio de Vida Silvestre

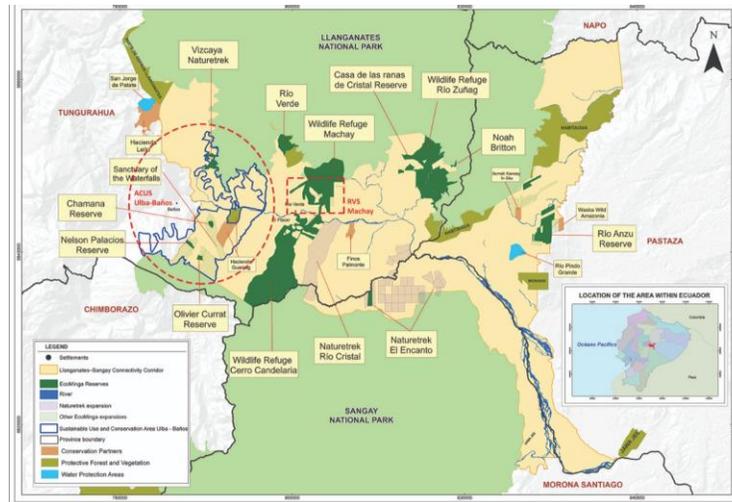
The Ministry of Environment, Water, and Ecological Transition (MAATE) formally declared Machay Reserve a Refugio de Vida Silvestre (Wildlife Refuge), incorporating it into the National System of Protected Areas (SNAP) under its private sub-system. This declaration safeguards 1,165 ha of pristine montane forest, home to orchids found nowhere else in the world, more than 17 species of amphibians (over seven of them newly described), 27 species of mammals, and hundreds of bird species, many threatened and endemic.

Machay sits between Llanganates and Sangay National Parks, and its protection is a crucial step in securing an unbroken ecological corridor between them.

2. ACUS Ulba–Baños officially created

The Área de Conservación y Uso Sustentable Municipal (ACUS) Ulba–Baños de Agua Santa was also created through unanimous approval by the Baños Municipal Council.

Overcoming significant challenges—including the absence of any municipal precedent for an ACUS—took determination and strong alliances. The result was worth the effort: The ordinance officially declaring the ACUS was approved in its final reading; the protected area was expanded to 8,905.52 ha; a dedicated municipal budget line and additional support from the Ulba Parish Council were secured for the initial implementation phase; and there is a clear roadmap to guide management and implementation in the years ahead.



Merging of Agencies in Ecuador

On July 24, 2025, the Ecuadorian government issued Decree No. 60, ordering the merger of the Ministry of Environment with the Ministry of Energy and Mines. The move has raised concerns among conservation groups, which argue that combining the two ministries undermines the independence of environmental governance and heightens the exposure of protected ecosystems to extractive activity.

According to environmental organizations, the measure places at risk roughly 26 million hectares (about 19% of Ecuador's land area) that are currently protected under the National System of Protected Areas. Critics say the merger also weakens institutional safeguards for the country's constitutional Rights of Nature and contravenes the principle of non-regression in environmental policy.

New Wildlife Refuge

EcoMinga officially declared a fourth wildlife refuge within Ecuador's National System of Protected Areas (SNAP): the Río Manduriacu Wildlife Refuge.

On October 29, 2025, the Ministry of Environment and Energy of Ecuador formally recognized 901.94 hectares of cloud forest in the Manduriacu Valley as the Río Manduriacu Wildlife Refuge, through Ministerial Agreement No. MAE-MAE-2025-0041-AM. This new protected area is now part of the national network of protected areas, and it has been designated as Wildlife Refuge No. 80 of Ecuador.

The Río Manduriacu Wildlife Refuge is located in Imbabura province, in the Chocó–Andes region, one of the most biologically rich and threatened places on Earth. The Ministry has granted Fundación EcoMinga the responsibility to manage and administer this refuge. Over the coming months, EcoMinga will develop the official Management Plan and zoning together with the Ministry's National Directorate of Protected Areas. This declaration is also a victory for landscape connectivity. Río Manduriacu strengthens a living corridor between Cotacachi–Cayapas National Park, Bosque Protector Los Cedros, and El Cebú. This corridor helps maintain genetic flow for species, protects water sources used by nearby communities such as Villaflores and Cielo Verde, and defends one of the last intact Andean–Chocó transition zones in northwestern Ecuador.

This Refuge protects:

- Critically threatened amphibians, including glass frogs that live along mountain streams, and the toad *Rhaebo olallai*, which was rediscovered here after decades without a single confirmed sighting.
- *Magnolia chiguila*, a white-flowering magnolia tree that grows only in these forests and nowhere else on Earth.
- Several *Dracula* orchids (“monkey-face orchids”), whose strange and beautiful flowers hang in the constant mist.
- Large mammals of the cloud forest such as jaguar, puma, and Andean spectacled bear.
- Threatened primates, including the brown-headed spider monkey (*Ateles fusciceps*), the mantled howler monkey (*Alouatta palliata*), and the white-fronted capuchin (*Cebus albifrons*).
- One of Ecuador's rarest birds, the banded ground-cuckoo (*Neomorphus radiolosus*), a Chocó endemic that depends on intact forest corridors.



La Florida Expansion

In 2025, the Orchid Conservation Alliance completed the funding of an expansion of the Los Magnolios Nature Reserve (administered by Corporación SalvaMontes). This new parcel has an area of approximately 72 hectares (178 acres) and is adjacent to a sector called La Florida, covering an elevation range of 1700-2000 m. La Florida has high orchid diversity, with at least 170 known in the region. Rare endemic species include *Lepanthes alcicornis*, *L. oscilifera*, *L. pterygion*, *Masdevallia cacodes*, *M. macrura*, *Pleurothallis orthostachys*, and *Pseudolepanthes bricenoensis*. Other threatened species in this area include trees (*Magnolia guatapensis* and *Magnolia polyhypsophylla*), birds (*Bangsia melanochlamis*), and frogs (*Andinobates opisthomelas*, *Pristimantis lemur*, *Rhinella macrorhina*). Camera traps have spotted various rare mammals, among them jaguar, jaguarundi, ocelot, puma, and western mountain coati. The habitat was threatened by human activities (avocado plantation), and the expansion brings the total area of the Los Magnolios Reserve to ~700 hectares (1730 acres). An aerial photo-video overview of the region is [here](#)



Pleurothallis orthostachys

OCA Supports Orchid Conservation in Tasmania Using an Orchid Detection Dog to Survey Threatened Leek Orchids in the Tasmanian Midlands

The graveside leek orchid (*Paraprasophyllum taphanyx*) is among Tasmania's most threatened plants, known from a single site with fewer than three individuals. Recovery of this species depends on locating new populations or propagating material for future translocations. Despite targeted searches, no additional populations have been found, likely due to the species' cryptic nature, grassland habitat, and infrequent emergence.

This project proposes a new extension-survey method: using an orchid detection dog to detect leek orchids at the genus level. Because *P. taphanyx* is too rare to provide sufficient training material, training a dog to recognize the broader scent profile of leek orchids allows the use of related species, *P. olidum*, *P. incorrectum*, and *P. tunbridgense*, as proxies. Detection of these species is itself of significant conservation value.

The Landscape Recovery Foundation and Canines for Wildlife have jointly trained **Miki**, Australia's first leek-orchid detection dog. Miki has been trained using cultivated specimens of *P. incorrectum*, *P. olidum*, and *P. tunbridgense*, and has recently completed field validation. He successfully located wild golfers and Tunbridge leek orchids, including individuals previously missed by traditional survey methods, such as seedlings hidden in grass tussocks, thereby extending known population boundaries.

The OCA Tasmania Orchids in the Wild tour participants had the opportunity to see this training and were very impressed. To help this conservation effort, The OCA is providing an additional year of support for the orchid training of Miki, the orchid orchid detection dog! See the photo of Miki and her trainers on page 29 of this newsletter.

Thank you to our impactful* donors whose generosity facilitates our successes:

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*donations greater than the basic membership

Thank you also to the following Orchid Societies and Foundations: Amherst Orchid Society, Benevity, Carmel Orchid Society, Dotort Foundation, EcoStudio Foundation, Genesee Region Orchid Society, Greater Las Vegas Orchid Society, Greater Philadelphia Orchid Society, Marin Orchid Society, Oregon Orchid Society, San Francisco Orchid Society, Società Felsinea di Orchidofilia APS, Sonoma County Orchid Society, and Southeastern Pennsylvania Orchid Society

Please consider making an end of the year donation to the Orchid Conservation Alliance