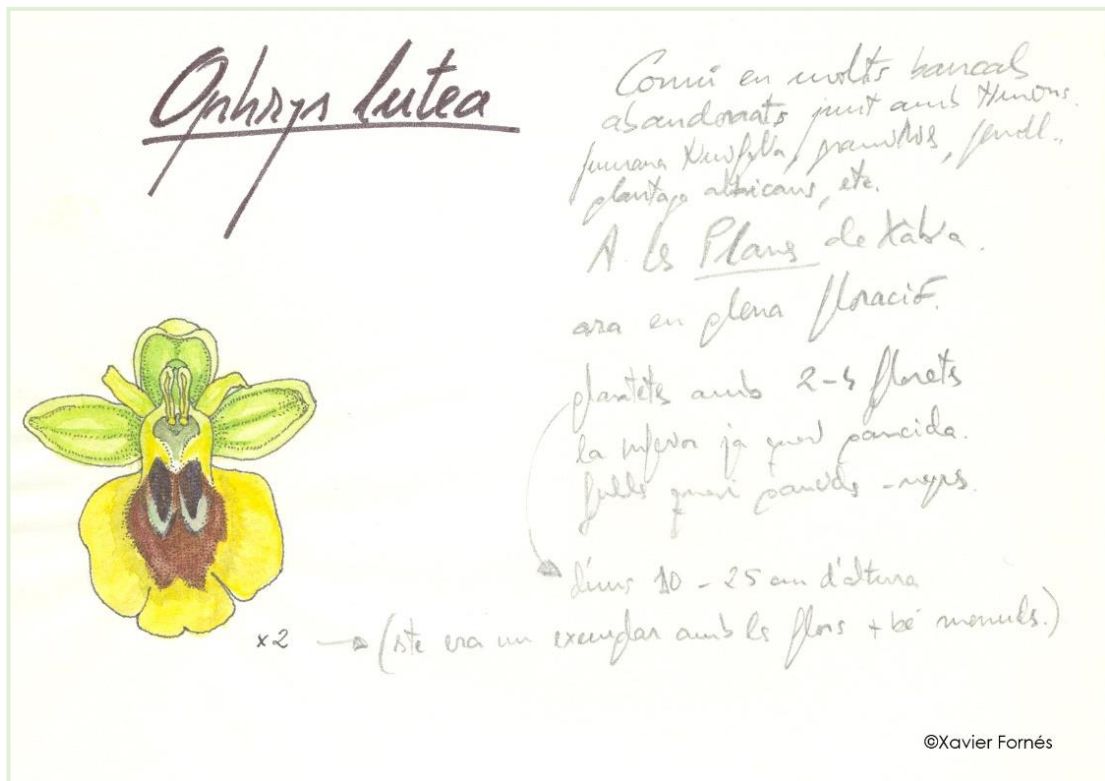


Orchids of SE Spain

Monitoring Orchid Populations in the Marina Region



EXPEDITION GENERAL BRIEFING

ORCHIDS OF SE SPAIN

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1. THE PROJECT

Title

MONITORING ORCHID POPULATIONS IN THE MARINA REGION (SOUTH EAST OF SPAIN)

The aim

Orchids, probably the most diverse group of plants of the plant kingdom, are surprisingly of very recent appearance (15 million years ago in the European continent). They have reached the highest complexity in their floral nature and co-evolution with pollinators. The modification of the flower parts has led to an attraction of the pollinators by visual, tactile or even scent mimesis from a specific group of insects or even a specific species of insects. That led externally to beautiful shapes and very complex ecological patterns.

Orchid populations in the Spanish Mediterranean coast have a high diversity of species due to the sharp variation of habitats in a relatively small geographical area. Many different environments can be found from sea level up to more than 1.000 m of altitude.

In the Marina Region, in the Alicante province (Valencian Community, Spain) there are about 30 species of orchids. Most of them live in endangered areas due to the increasing urban development.

In recent decades, the dramatic changes in land use have had an impact on the populations of orchids. However, the specific impact, whether a positive or a negative one, is yet to be examined thoroughly.

Ecocultouring.com is launching a project aimed at monitoring the evolution of the orchid populations and we would like you to join in our experience.

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2. PURPOSE OF THE EXPEDITION

We will be searching for orchid populations in several places, counting and measuring them, taking photographs, and searching for pollinators. Furthermore, in some places we will mark specimens to be “rescued” and transplanted in the summer, specimens that are endangered by imminent massive urban developments in their habitats.

We will visit specific “hot spots” where several species live together and, also, we will walk in slopes, hills and different areas looking for information which will be later entered in a database.

3. DESTINATION-EXPEDITION AREA

This sixth edition of the *ORCHIDS OF SE SPAIN* expedition will be held in the Marina Region, in the Alicante province, in south east of Spain, in western Mediterranean.

We will visit several typically Mediterranean mountains and valleys in the countryside, from the coastline towards the inland. We will observe many different plant landscapes. Littoral garrigues, thickets, abandoned farming terraces, rocky slopes, and mountain tops will be our typical field-work environments.

Mountain ranges (known as *sierras*), many of which are over 1.200 meters, deep valleys and coastlines with breathtaking cliffs make up the dramatic scenery of the Marina Region where this exciting expedition will take place.

About the area

The Marina Region is a very mountainous territory. It is located in the ancient Iberian Eastern Contestania. Presently it belongs to the north of the Alicante province, in the Region of Valencia, Spain.

The Marina Region is divided in the Marina Alta and the Marina Baixa subregions (Upper Marina & Lower Marina). These were historical districts within the Christian Kingdom of Valencia after the end of the Muslim domination. They conform an East-to-West chain of mountains and valleys with a huge biodiversity and amazing landscapes.

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4. VOLUNTEER PROFILE

Who can join us?

No experience or formal qualifications are necessary for this expedition. You will work as part of a team with people from all over of the world who have something in common: a passion for orchids and a commitment to do something in order to protect and learn about our orchids.

If you are an expert scientist or orchidologist, maybe you can teach us about different orchid-related aspects.

If you are passionate about orchids, here is a chance to see them with your own eyes, take pictures and get the data you want.

If you are a nature photographer, this is a good opportunity to take new photographs not only of orchids, but also of many others plants which will be blossoming at the time when the expedition will take place.

If you are a student, this expedition is a good opportunity for you to learn more about this special group of plants.

If you are an enthusiastic traveler, here is the chance to enjoy a special area of the Ibero-Mediterranean region.

Special skills

No special skills are required to achieve the field work. The researcher(s) and field staff will teach you everything you need to know once you arrive. The majority of tasks are simple, and you will quickly master them.

Language

English will be the official language of the expedition, but the leaders are Spanish and know other languages.

Volunteer age

All volunteers for this project should be over the age of 18 at the time of the expedition. There is no upper limit of age, we only ask you to be realistic regarding your health and fitness.

Fitness

This expedition is suitable for every fitness level; no special fitness is required except from normal conditioning in order to be able to achieve a working day in the field: walk in mountainous slopes (although walks won't ever exceed 4 hours).

We will be moving from altitudes ranging from sea level to 1.400 m, the humidity will be low, the temperature range will be from 15 °C to 27 °C and the expected rainfall medium or low.

5. DURATION AND DATES

General period for organising field trips for groups:

- From April the 15th to May the 30th

Ask for the current volunteering weeks to info@ecocultouring.com

The expedition will last from minimum 7 days up to four weeks. The first and the last day are scheduled for possible arrivals and departures respectively. We are flexible for other durations according to group needs.

6. MEETING POINT

In the arrival day, the meeting point will be the Alicante International Airport (Spain). We will be waiting for you when you arrive.

7. TENTATIVE PROGRAM

Volunteers should be aware that schedules can and do fluctuate. Weather and work conditions can affect the daily schedule. Should this situation arise, your cooperation and understanding are appreciated.

	FIELDWORK
Day 1	Meeting at the Alicante International Airport and transportation to the familiar house or hotel. First introduction briefing.
Day 2	Field work monitoring orchid populations in littoral mountains.
Day 3	Field work looking for new records in inland mountains.
Day 4	Field work looking for new records in littoral areas. Free time after lunch. Optional cultural activities.
Day 5	Field work monitoring orchid populations in high inland mountains.
Day 6	Free time. Optional cultural and leisure activities will be available. Time for touristic visits, shopping, resting, sports, wrap-up dinner, etc.
Day 7	Departures day for those who have to leave. Transportation to the International Airport of Alicante. For the other volunteers there will be a Biogeographic & Cultural one-day excursion.

A final and more detailed program will be sent to the volunteers later on. The final programme could change depending on the flowering periods and the number of participants.

8. ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation will be in a familiar house or rural hotel out of the typical tourist destinations. The idea is to enjoy the traditional and natural features of the area. So, it will not be a luxury hotel, but a comfortable, discrete, charming, and rural guesthouse or small hotel.

The rooms will be shared with other volunteers and will include hot showers. Volunteers will have time for relax and varied healthy meals.

9. FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION

Volunteers can chose between the following options:

1.250 € one week / **2.250 €** two weeks / **3.450 €** three weeks / **4.600 €** four weeks

It includes:

- Transport to and from the Alicante airport
- Accommodation
- Expedition trips and outings (transport to and from the field work areas, documentation, materials and guiding staff)
- Cultural and touristic support for free time
- 24 h assistance and cover
- Local insurance
- Certificate of Attendance for those who need it
-

It does not include:

Any other item not specified above

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10. WHERE YOUR MONEY GOES?

Each of the volunteers that signs-up for this expedition not only contributes essential funds that help to cover the research costs, but also through their inspiration and effort provides the manpower without which our project simply couldn't be carried out.

Your contribution covers:

- The cost of the field research, including field equipment
- Food, accommodation and transport on the project
- On-site training and orientation in the field
- Processing data and publishing results after the expeditions
- Summer rescue of the endangered orchids marked during this expedition

11. NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

No more than 12 volunteers will be accepted per field work team. For more people coming at the same time we will split the group in small field work teams up to 12 people, since bigger teams there would be a risk of stepping on the orchid populations which we will be visiting.

12. GROUPS

If you are a group of more than 4 people, we can arrange particular dates that are convenient for you. Just send us an e-mail at: info@ecocultouring.com

Even though the main aim of this volunteering project is to monitor orchid populations in the Marina Region, we are open to suggestions from groups with particular interests, groups such as University students, researchers, clubs, or others. We could strike a balance between our interests and your group's interests and thus organize a special expedition.

13. INSCRIPTION

Those interested can send an e-mail to info@ecocultouring.com with personal details as follows:

- *name and surname*
- *post address*
- *e-mail address*
- *telephone-fax*
- *occupation*
- *level of knowledge on expedition topic*
- *number of weeks*
- *anything you want notify*

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Once received your mail, we will send information about the paying method.

14. LEADERS & ORGANIZERS. WHO WILL BE GUIDING THE EXPEDITION?

Volunteers will be guided and assisted by Antoni Barber Vallès (Toni), Nicolás Moity Martín (Nico), Sergio Girona Guillén and Teresa Bou Soler (Tere) All of them are biologists, young researchers, and very knowledgeable about the expedition territory. They are the organizers of this volunteering project that is promoted by Ecocultouring.com.



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Tere Bou
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15. EMERGENCIES IN THE FIELD

Proximity to medical care

The expedition area has very good services for ambulances and a developed road net. Hospitals can be found easily.

16. WHAT TO BRING

Do not bring more luggage than you can carry and handle on your own. We recommend that you pack a carry-on bag with an extra set of field clothing and personal essentials in the event that your luggage is lost and/or takes several days to catch up with you. Either backpack or luggage is suitable. Volunteers will not need to carry their luggage during this expedition.

Clothing for Fieldwork

- Sturdy long trousers for the field work (Mediterranean vegetation has some spiny species and woody shrubs)
- Comfortable walking boots well broken in (waterproof preferably in case of snow or rain up in the mountains)
- Water-proof raincoat or poncho in case a few squally showers are encountered
- Sun hat or cap, the sunshine can be strong

Clothing for Leisure

- Comfortable clothing (for evening in town and on excursions)
- Swimming costume, in case we visit the beach and it is not too chilly!

Field Supplies

- Small daypack (for carrying extra clothes, camera and snacks in the bush)
- Drybag or plastic sealable baggies (good for protecting equipment such as camera from dust, humidity, and water)
- Water bottle(s)
- Torch (flashlight) and spare batteries and/or headlamp
- Sunscreen lotion with SPF 30 or higher (in case of very sunny days)

Personal Supplies

- Personal toiletries (we recommend bringing biodegradable soaps and shampoos)
- Personal first aid kit (anti-diarrhoea pills, antibiotics, antiseptic, itch-relief, pain reliever, bandages, moleskin, etc.)

Miscellaneous

- Spending money. Credit cards are widely used in Spain, but it is important to have some cash as well (for incidentals). Currency can be changed at the airport and banks.
- Camera, extra camera battery, etc.
- Favourite snack foods
- Field guides, books, journals, etc.

17. HELPFUL RESOURCES

- Lonely Planet travel guidebooks and online travel site:
<http://www.lonelyplanet.com>
- Cheap flights worldwide:
<http://www.travelix.com> or <http://www.discountair.com>
- Airport codes worldwide:
<http://www.logisticsworld.com/airports.asp>

- Country information from around the world:
<http://www.countryreports.org>
- National Geographic map machine:
<http://plasma.nationalgeographic.com/machine>
- Travel Health:
<http://www.travelhealth.com>
- U.S. State Department:
<http://www.state.gov>
- UK Foreign Office travel advice:
<http://www.fco.gov.uk/travel>
- World Time with GMT/UTC:
<http://www.worldtimeserver.com>
- Currency converter:
<http://www.xe.com/ucc/>
- Unit Conversions:
<http://www.onlineconversion.com>
- World Wide Weather:
<http://www.worldweather.com>; <http://www.wunderground.com>
- ATM Locator:
http://visaatm.infonow.net/bin/findNow?CLIENT_ID=VISA

18. ORGANIZED BY



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