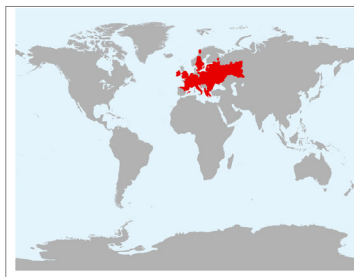




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Geographical range

Amazing Species: Fly Orchid

The **Fly Orchid**, *Ophrys insectifera*, is listed as 'Least Concern' on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™. It is mainly a Central European species, but it occurs from Ireland to the Ukraine and from central Scandinavia to northern Spain.

The *Ophrys* group are a wonderful example of how orchid flowers can imitate insects in order to ensure pollination. Not only have they evolved to look like an insect, but they mimic sexual pheromones to attract the male of the species which pollinate the flowers as they attempt to mate with them. Predominantly favouring open woodlands, some populations of the Fly Orchid can be found in more open habitats. Although widespread, this species is declining in many countries; threats include clearance of woodlands, changes in forest management, draining and agricultural modification.

Currently, the main conservation measure for this orchid is habitat protection, but more specific and targeted protection will be required if population sizes decline further. Since the Fly Orchid relies on the sexual deception of digger wasps for its pollination, effective conservation will also be assisted by a biological understanding of the complex interaction between the two species.

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