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METALEPTEA

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ORTHOPTERISTS' SOCIETY

President's Message

By FERNANDO MONTEALEGRE-Z
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Dear Society members.

Early this year, from March 8-12, 2026, we had our 15th International Congress of Orthopterology (ICO) in Patagonia at San Martín de los Andes, Neuquén Province, Argentina. We had an amazing meeting with a remarkable diversity of research topics on Orthoptera, great food, and a beautiful town and countryside. I want to highlight the effort and astonishing job of María Marta Cigliano, Hector Medina and the rest of the organising team in Argentina, for such a successful event.

Historically, the Orthopterist's Society (OS) has held the congress alternating between the Old World and the Americas. Despite our 2023 meeting being held in Mérida, Mexico, the board members made an exception to have the 2026 ICO in the Americas again since San Martín de los Andes holds special historical significance as the birthplace of the OS. In 1976, pioneering orthopterists from across the Americas gathered to form the Pan American Acridological Society, which eventually became the OS. Thus, the 2026 ICO commemorated the 50th anniversary of the Society's foundation.

During our Congress, I had the great honour of becoming President of the OS. I want to express my sincere thanks to the Society's board for nominating and electing me to this role, and to my predecessor, Axel

Hochkirch, for his invaluable guidance as I step into these responsibilities. For me, this moment carries a deep personal meaning. It has been a long journey, from my childhood in Colombia through my early days discovering the world of Orthoptera to now serving as President of the society that shaped so much of my career. I also want to acknowledge the generosity of my Ph.D. supervisor, Prof. Glenn Morris, who gifted me a student membership to the Society back in 1996. I have kept that membership ever since and it has been a constant thread throughout my professional life.

Part of the success of the OS is the fact that many of our past Presidents, like María Marta Cigliano, David Hunter, Michel Lecoq, Axel Hochkirch, and others, including administrative members, have remained on the governing board of the OS. Their

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expertise contribution is enormous and their constant effort to motivate the young students to develop their careers as orthopterists is exceptional. In this *Metaleptea* issue you will find the report of the Board Meeting we held on the 10th of March during our recent ICO.

The congress in San Martín de Los Andes was a real success. It became a vibrant space for networking, exchanging ideas, and diving into many of the current topics shaping orthopterology. The range of keynote talks, symposia, plenaries, presentations, posters, and workshops reflected just how active and diverse our community has become. For a fuller overview of the meeting, I encourage you to read the regional report prepared by Martina Pocco since she captures the details beautifully.

The *Journal of Orthoptera Research* (*JOR*) has enjoyed remarkable momentum over the past few years, a rise that likely reflects the efforts of our editor, Tony Robillard, and the boost that came with its first Impact Factor (IF). With the IF now at 1.2, we're seeing a steady increase in high-quality submissions, a welcome challenge that prompted us to renegotiate our publishing agreement with Pensoft. Thanks to the generous support of the OS, the new contract gives *JOR* far more flexibility. We can now publish an unlimited number of pages and papers, with no article publication charges (APCs) for authors, while remaining fully open access, which maintains our diamond open access status.

Under this new agreement, OS pays a fixed annual fee covering up to 450 pages (or 37 papers). Beyond that, OS pays a per page supplement, and we collectively agreed to allow *JOR* to publish up to about 600 pages per year, or roughly 50 papers. This arrangement removes rigid quotas while ensuring we don't overpay in years with fewer submissions, a balanced and sustainable model for a growing specialist journal. The growth is already visible: the first issue of 2026 is larger than everything published in 2025, and even surpasses the combined output of 2023 and 2022. In June 2026, we'll receive the new IF; we'll soon see whether it climbs beyond 1.2 or stabilises.

The administrative side of the OS has also gained remarkable impetus, and we are deeply grateful to Pamm Mihm, Arianne Cease, and Mira Ries for their dedicated work in strengthening our recent administrative developments and financial management. Their efforts have played a key role in modernising our operations and ensuring the society continues to run smoothly. Their work has been instrumental in strengthening our operations, from improving our financial management to implementing a far more user-friendly interface for board communication and the membership database. Their dedication has made a real difference in how smoothly the society functions.

Finally, as many of you know, my expertise lies in bioacoustics and in the biophysics of singing and hearing in Orthoptera. But my roots go back to taxonomy and systematics, that was my first scientific language. Over the years, I've found a niche where these fields meet, and I've encouraged my students to explore that same interdisciplinary space. As President of the OS, one of my priorities is to strengthen the connection between museum collections and the research areas I've embraced. I see this integration as a way to open new research pathways for the next generation while keeping our collections active, relevant, and scientifically alive.

15th International Congress of Orthopterology: A Brief Recap

By MARTINA E. POCCO
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The 15th International Congress of Orthopterology (ICO2026) was held in Patagonia, Argentina, from 8–12 March 2026. The meeting brought together 169 participants (**Fig.1**) from 33 countries across five continents (**Fig. 2**). Latin America was strongly represented, with 86 attendees from South America, Central America, and Mexico, highlighting the region's growing contribution to Orthoptera research. Of the total participants, most were professionals and 20% were students (**Fig. 2**).

The congress took place in San Martín de los Andes (Neuquén) (**Figs. 3a, b**), a site of special historical significance as the birthplace of the Orthopterists' Society in 1976. Fifty years ago, this region hosted the meeting where the Pan American Acridological Society, later renamed the Orthopterists' Society, was founded. Returning to this location for its Golden Jubilee provided a meaningful opportunity to reflect on five decades of scientific progress and international collaboration.

Figure 1. Group photo. ICO2026 - San Martín de los Andes, Argentina. March 2026. Photo: Fernando Principi

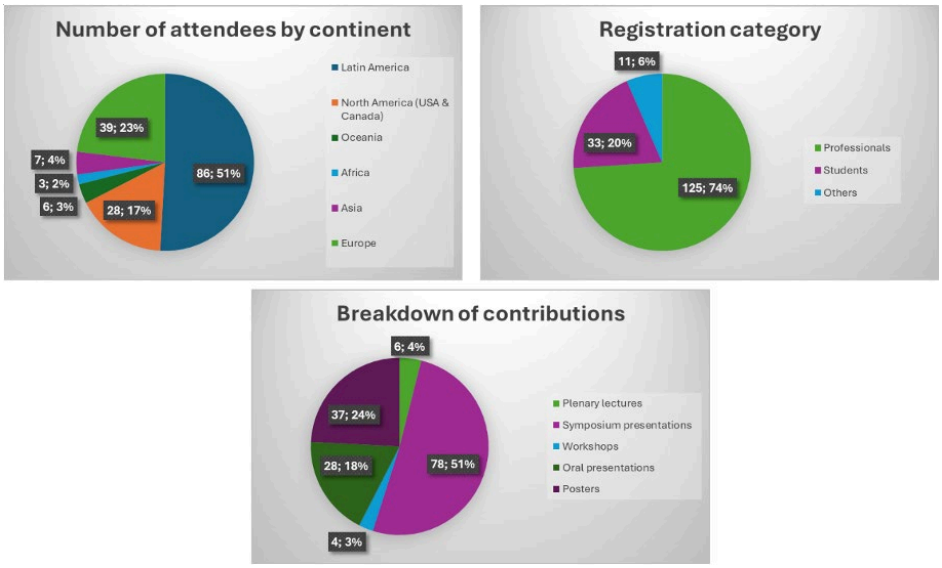

Figure 2. Number of participants (top left), registration categories (top right), and breakdown of scientific contributions (bottom) at ICO2026.

In this opportunity, the congress was organized by María Marta Cigliano (Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas, CONICET) and Héctor E. Medina (Servicio Nacional de Sanidad y Calidad Agroalimentaria, SENASA), together with a team of researchers from CONICET, Universidad Nacional de La Plata, and Universidad de Buenos Aires, in collaboration with professionals from SENASA. This joint effort highlighted the importance of integrating basic and applied research.

Activities began on Sunday, 8 March with registration, followed by a welcome cocktail at Le Village Hotel (**Figs. 4-10**). This informal gathering fostered a relaxed atmosphere, allowing colleagues to reconnect and establish new collaborations in a setting rich in historical significance for the Society.

The official opening took place on Monday, 9 March at the Centro Cultural Cotesma, where all scientific sessions were held. The opening ceremony included remarks by representatives of the organizing institutions, including María Marta Cigliano, Héctor E. Medina, Axel Hochkirch, and representatives from SENASA and the Province of Neuquén (**Fig. 11**).

Framed under the theme *"50 Years Advancing Orthoptera Research and*

Figure 3a. San Martín de los Andes, Lago Lakar. Photo: Michel Lecoq

Figure 3b. View of San Martín de los Andes. Photo: Michel Lecoq

Figure 4. Registration desk at Le Village Hotel. Photo: M.Laura De Wysiecki

Figure 5. Buffet table during Welcome Cocktail at Le Village Hotel. Photo. Claudia Hemp

Figure 6. Members of the Argentine team during the welcome cocktail.

Figure 7. Participants from Brazil and Italy during the welcome cocktail. Photo: Fernando Principi

Figure 8. María Marta Cigliano, Daniel Otte, Claudia Hemp and Andreas Hemp during the welcome cocktail. Photo: M.Laura De Wysiecki

Figure 9. Participants from Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico during the welcome cocktail. Photo: M.Laura De Wysiecki

Figure 10. Young orthopterists wearing their amazing Orthoptera-themed T-shirts! Photo: Larissa Lima de Queiroz

Figure 11. Opening Ceremony at COTESMA. From left to right: Hector E. Medina (Vice president ICO2026), Axel Hochkirch (President Orthopterist´s Society), María Marta Cigliano (President ICO2026), Pilu Giraudo (President SENASA), Diego García Rambeaud (Secretary of Production and Industry for Neuquén). Photo: Paolo Fontana.

Collaboration," the congress showcased advances across a broad range of topics, including systematics, genomics, evolution, ecology, behavior, physiology, bioacoustics, conservation, and pest management.

The scientific program featured six plenary lectures delivered by distinguished researchers. A particularly moving opening lecture was given by Daniel Otte (Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University, USA) (**Figs. 12, 13**), one of the founders present at the Society's first meeting in 1976, who returned after 50 years with an inspiring talk titled *"Orthopteran Species Discovery: Planning for the Future."* The remaining plenaries were presented by Nathan Bailey (University of St Andrews, UK) (**Fig. 14**) on orthopteran comparative genomics; Cyril Piou (FAO, Italy) (**Fig. 15**) on modeling locust population dynamics; Koutaro Ould Maeno (JIRCAS, Japan) (**Fig. 16**) on adaptive reproductive strategies in desert locusts; Yanina Mariottini (Universidad del Centro–CONICET, Argentina) (**Fig. 17, 18**), who addressed long-term dynamics of grasshopper communities in the Pampas, and Martin Husemann (Natural History Museum Karlsruhe, Germany) (**Fig. 19**), who explored the evolution of band-winged grasshoppers.

These plenary lectures were complemented by 78 presentations across 10 symposia, 28 oral presentations, 37 posters, and four workshops. The program covered key thematic areas such as systematics and phylogenetics, behavior and communication, biodiversity and biogeography, ecology and conservation, global change, pest management and control, and genomics.

Ten symposia addressed a wide range of topics, including species divergence and biogeography, phylogeny, conservation, locust population modeling, bioacoustics, locust phase polyphenism, sustainable pest management, and cultural aspects of Orthoptera research (**Table 1; Figs. 20-24**). Of particular regional relevance was the symposium *"Latin American Taxonomy and Systematics of Orthoptera,"* organized by Daniela Santos Martins Silva and Salomón Sanabria-Urbán (**Fig. 25**), which brought together contributions on Neotropical diversity and evolution. Presentations included advances in phylogenomics, taxonomic revisions, species delimitation using genetic data, and biogeographic analyses across multiple orthopteran groups. This symposium highlighted the strength and diversity of current research in Latin America.

Latin American researchers were

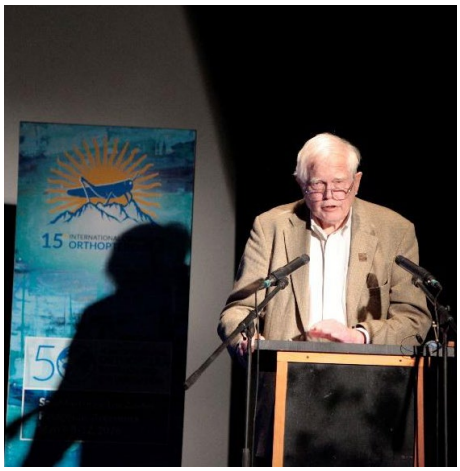

Figure 12. Daniel Otte (USA) delivering the first plenary lecture of the congress. The talk, titled "Orthopteran Species Discovery: Planning for the Future," was highly inspiring. Photo: Fernando Principi

Figure 13. Warm standing applause following the plenary talk of Daniel Otte at the Auditorio Room (COTESMA). Photo: Fernando Principi

actively involved throughout the program, contributing to symposia, workshops, oral sessions, and posters. Beyond formal sessions, the congress fostered a collaborative environment that strengthened regional networks and encouraged new partnerships across countries and career stages. The program also included four workshops (**Table 1**) focused on the Orthoptera Species File (OSF) (**Fig. 26**), international cooperation in locust management (**Fig. 27**), bioacoustic analysis using R, and ecological modeling using NicheMapR (**Fig. 28**). These sessions promoted hands-on learning and in-depth discussion of emerging methodologies. The poster

Figure 14. Nathan Bailey (UK) delivering a plenary conference on orthopteran comparative genomics. Photo: Fernando Principi

Figure 15. Cyril Piou (Italy) delivering a plenary lecture on modeling locust population dynamics. Photo: Fernando Principi

Figure 16. Koutaro Ould Maeno (Japan) delivering a plenary lecture on adaptive reproductive strategies in desert locusts. Photo: Fernando Principi

Figure 17. Yanina Mariottini (Argentina) delivering a plenary lecture, on long-term dynamics of grasshopper communities in the Pampas. Photo: Fernando Principi

Figure 18. Yanina Mariottini receiving a gift from Carlos E. Lange, her former mentor, after delivering the plenary lecture. Photo: Fernando Principi.

Figure 19. Martin Husemann (Germany) delivering a plenary lecture on the evolution of band-winged grasshoppers. Photo: Fernando Principi

Table 1. List of symposia and workshops presented at ICO2026

Symposium Title	Organizer(s)
MODELING LOCUSTS AND OTHER ORTHOPTERAN PEST POPULATIONS	Bob Srygley & Lucile Marescot
BIOACOUSTICS OF ORTHOPTERA – EVOLUTION, COMMUNICATION, AUDITION, AND ECOLOGICAL APPLICATIONS	Fabio A. Sarria-S & Fernando Montealegre-Z
LATIN AMERICAN TAXONOMY AND SYSTEMATICS OF ORTHOPTERA	Daniela Santos Martins Silva & Salomón Sanabria-Urbán
CULTURAL ORTHOPTEROLOGY	Ricardo Mariño-Pérez & Salomón Sanabria-Urbán
TESTS OF SPECIES DIVERGENCE HYPOTHESES TO UNDERSTAND THE FACTORS DRIVING THE DIVERSIFICATION AND BIOGEOGRAPHY OF THE HYPERDIVERSE MELANOPLINAE	L. Lacey Knowles
LOCUST MANAGEMENT ACROSS FIVE CONTINENTS	David Hunter, Mohamed Abdellahi Ould Babah, & Hector E. Medina
ORTHOPTERA CONSERVATION	Axel Hochkirch
PHYLOGENY, PHYLOGEOGRAPHY, AND EVOLUTION OF ORTHOPTERA	Claudia Hemp & Martin Husemann
FROM SOLITARY TO SWARMING: ADVANCES IN THE STUDY OF LOCUST PHASE POLYPHENISM	Bert Foquet & Spence Behmer
TECHNOLOGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE LOCUST SURVEILLANCE AND CONTROL	Shoki Al Dobai, Mohamed Lemine Hamouny, Mamoon AlSarai AlAlawi, & Hector E. Medina
Workshop Title	**Organizer(s)**
EXPLORING THE ORTHOPTERA SPECIES FILE: DATA FILTERING, COLLECTION, DIGITIZATION, AND KEY CONSTRUCTION IN TAXONWORKS	M. Marta Cigliano, M. Belén Cabrera, & Holger Braun
NEXT STEPS TOWARD ENHANCING INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN LOCUST MANAGEMENT	Rick Overson, Héctor E. Medina, Mira Word Ries, & Arianne Cease
BIOACOUSTIC ANALYSIS OF ORTHOPTERA SOUNDS IN R	Francisco J. Rivas Fuenzalida
MODELLING MICROCLIMATES, HEAT BUDGETS AND WATER BALANCES OF ORTHOPTERA WITH NicheMapR	Michael Kearney

Figure 20. L. Lacey Knowles, organizer of the symposium "Tests of Species Divergence Hypotheses to Understand the Factors Driving the Diversification and Biogeography of the Hyperdiverse Melanoplinae." Photo: Fernando Principi

Figure 21. Symposium speakers and organizers of the symposium "Phylogeny, Phylogeography, and Evolution of Orthoptera." Photo: Fernando Principi

sessions also featured highly interesting presentations and stimulating discussions (**Figs. 29, 30**).

The congress also held symbolic importance through the participation of past Presidents of the Orthopterists' Society, including Daniel Otte, Michel Lecoq, María Marta Cigliano, and David Hunter (**Fig. 32**), as well as organizers of previous congresses (Daniel Otte, Michel Lecoq, Marcos Lhano, and Mario Poot Pech).

An Orthopterists' Society Board Meeting (**Fig. 33**) was also held during the congress, providing updates on Society activities and regional representation.

The final day included the closing ceremony, with remarks by María Marta Cigliano, Héctor E. Medina, and Axel Hochkirch (President of the Orthopterists' Society), followed by the presentation of Orthopterists' Society awards (**Figs. 34-37**).

María Marta Cigliano and Hector E. Medina and all the Organizing Committee of ICO2026 (**Figs. 38, 39**)

Figure 22. Speakers and organizers of the symposium "From Solitary to Swarming: Advances in the Study of Locust Phase Polyphenism." Photo: Fernando Principi

Figure 23. Speakers and organizers of the symposium "Technologies for Sustainable Locust Surveillance and Control." Photo: Fernando Principi

Figure 24. Tony Robillard giving a talk at the symposium "Bioacoustics of Orthoptera – Evolution, Communication, Audition, and Ecological Applications." Photo: Fernando Principi

Figure 25. Speakers and organizers of the Symposium "Latin American Taxonomy and Systematics of Orthoptera." Photo: Fernando Principi

Figure 26. M. Marta Cigliano giving the workshop "Exploring the Orthoptera Species File: Data Filtering, Collection, Digitization, and Key Construction in TaxonWorks." Photo: Fernando Principi

Figure 27. Hector E. Medina, Rick Overson, Arianne Cease and Hojun Song during the workshop "Next Steps toward Enhancing International Cooperation in Locust Management." Photo: Fernando Principi

Figure 28. Michael Kearney and Koutaro Maeno during the workshop "Modelling Microclimates, Heat Budgets and Water Balances of Orthoptera with NicheMapR." Photo: Fernando Principi

Figure 29. Authors presenting their posters. Photo: Fernando Principi

Figure 30. Discussions during poster sessions. Photo: Fernando Principi Daily lunches at Le Village Hotel provided a great opportunity to catch up and continue discussions after the sessions (**Fig. 31**).

Figure 31. Lunch at Le Village Hotel. Photo: Claudia Hemp.

Fig. 32. David Hunter at the symposium "Locust Management Across Five Continents." Photo: Fernando Principi

Figure 33. Orthopterists' Society Board Meeting at Le Village Hotel. Photo: Claudia Hemp.

were very pleased with the success of the congress.

The congress concluded with a gala dinner at El Segundo Remanso Hall, where participants enjoyed traditional Argentine asado and cultural performances, including local dances and music (**Figs. 40-49**).

As is traditional in ICO meetings, the hat exchange ceremony took place during the dinner. The new Orthopterists' Society president, Fernando Montealegre-Z, received an Argentine *boina gaucha* (**Fig. 47**), after which he sang a salsa song (**Fig. 48**) and danced with María Marta Cigliano (**Fig. 49**). He was also challenged to dance with a professional salsa

Figure 34. Hector Hugo Quiroga (SENASA, Argentina) receiving the Sir Boris Uvarov Award from the Orthopterists' Society President, Axel Hochkirch, at the closing ceremony. Photo: Fernando Principi

Figure 35. Bert Foquet receiving the "Ted Cohn Award for Excellence as a Young Professional Orthopterist" from the Orthopterists' Society president, Axel Hochkirch, at the closing ceremony. Photo: Fernando Principi

Figure 36. Raphael Aquino Heleodoro receiving the "Ted Cohn Award for Excellence as a Young Professional Orthopterist" from the Orthopterists' Society President, Axel Hochkirch, at the closing ceremony Photo: Fernando Principi

Figure 37. María Marta Cigliano and Hector E. Medina receiving presents from the Orthopterists' Society President, Axel Hochkirch, at the closing ceremony. Photo: Fernando Principi

Figure 38. Organizing Committee of ICO2026. Photo: Fernando Principi

Figure 39. Members of the Organizing Committee at Lago Lakar, after the group photo. Photo: M. Laura De Wysiecki

dancer. Videos of his performances, recorded by Claudia Hemp, are available on our shared drive.

Post-congress excursions offered participants the opportunity to explore the Patagonian landscape, including visits to Volcán Lanín and Lago Huechulafquen, the Ruta de los Siete Lagos, and Bosque de Arrayanes. Additional excursions were organized for accompanying persons during the congress week.

Beyond the scientific program, the meeting fostered a strong sense of community. The combination of academic exchange and informal interaction created an environment that encouraged collaboration across disciplines, regions, and generations. Held in the birthplace of the Orthopterists' Society, this anniversary congress not only celebrated past achievements but also reinforced a shared commitment to future research and collaboration in the study of Orthoptera.

Figure 40. "Asado a la estaca," the main dish served at the gala dinner. Photo: Michel Lecoq

Figure 41. Welcome reception for the gala dinner. Photo: Julio Rolando Gonzalez

Figure 42. Traditional Argentine "picada" served during the welcome reception for the gala dinner. Photo: Julio Rolando Gonzalez

Figure 43. Welcome reception for the gala dinner. Photo: Julio Rolando Gonzalez

Figure 44. Carlos E. Lange, María Marta Cigliano, and Michel Lecoq during the welcome reception for the gala dinner. Photo: Fernando Principi

Figure 45. Current and past recipients of the "Ted Cohn Award for Excellence as a Young Professional Orthopterist" during the gala dinner. From left to right: Bert Foquet and Raphael Aquino Heleodoro (ICO2026, Argentina), Lucas Denadai Campos (ICO2023, Mexico), Martina E. Pocco and Ricardo Mariño-Pérez (ICO2016, Brazil).

Figure 46. Traditional Argentine *malambo* performed by the Albricias group. Photo: Fernando Principi

Figure 47. Hat exchange ceremony during gala dinner. Fernando Montealegre-Z, the new President of the Orthopterists' Society, receiving an Argentine *boina gaucha*. Photo: Fernando Principi

Figure 48. Fernando Montealegre-Z singing a salsa song. Photo: Fernando Principi

Figure 49. María Marta Cigliano and Fernando Montealegre-Z dancing at the gala dinner. Photo: Fernando Principi

The 2026 Theodore J. Cohn Research Fund Recipients

By MICHEL LECOQ
Chair, Theodore J. Cohn Research Fund Committee
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Dear Fellow Orthopterists,

Once again, the Orthopterists' Society's Theodore J. Cohn Research Fund has attracted an impressive and diverse set of research proposals, highlighting the continued vitality of orthopteran and related insect studies worldwide. On behalf of the Orthopterists' Society, I am pleased to share the results of the 2026 call.

This year, 17 proposals of high scientific quality were submitted. Owing to limited funds, 10 projects were selected for support following a highly competitive evaluation process. The five-member jury warmly acknowledges the originality and excellence of all submissions.

The jury selected the following recipients (listed in alphabetical order):

1. **Almeida, Lucas** (Brazil) – Phylogeny and biogeography of Perlidae (Insecta: Plecoptera).
2. **Eckert, Hannah** (USA) – Immune response as a measure of hybrid fitness in a *Gryllus* system.
3. **Lopez-Mora, Ulises** (Mexico) – Systematics of the genus *Pseudosermyle* Caudell, 1903 (Insecta: Phasmatodea: Diapheromeridae: Diapheromerini).
4. **Subedi, Madan** (Nepal) – Integrative taxonomy of the genus *Skejotettix* Subedi, 2022 (Tetrigidae: Tetriginae).
5. **Melander, Scott** (USA) – Variable fertilization barriers in hybridizing field crickets.
6. **Simeu Noutchom, Alain** (Cameroon) – In situ reproductive period of *Brachytrupes bapaensis* using calling song analysis in Cameroon.
7. **Tett, Carolyn** (USA) – Changes in host–parasite ecological dynamics in a natural multi-host assemblage.
8. **van der Heide, Wout** (USA) – Uncovering the genetic basis of pulse rate variation in *Laupala*.
9. **Zhao, Ella** (USA) – The role of sperm precedence patterns in the evolution of elaborate nuptial feeding behavior.
10. **Yin, Zixi** (China) – Phylogeny and diversification of *Atlanticus* Scudder, 1894 (Orthoptera: Tettigoniidae) in the Qinling–Daba Mountains of China.

The jury extends its warmest congratulations to all awardees and wishes them every success in their research. We also commend all applicants for the high quality of their proposals and encourage them to apply again in future calls.

A brief note for future applicants: Careful adherence to the guidelines, particularly regarding project length and budget limits, is essential. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to read carefully both the specific objectives of each Society grant and the submission guidelines before applying. One proposal this year, although of interest, fell outside the scope of the Cohn Fund and was therefore redirected toward the Orthoptera Species File (OSF) Grants, for which it was better-suited, and the applicant was invited to resubmit it in response to a future call for proposals.

Following the most recent Board meeting of the Society during our recent congress in Argentina, it was decided to significantly increase the value of the grants. I hope to have the pleasure of confirming this excellent news soon and announcing the new amount. The next call will open toward the end of 2026, with a submission deadline of March 31, 2027.

We look forward to following the progress of these projects and to sharing their results with the community in the months to come.

Update on the Singing Insects of North America (SINA) Website

By TERESA YAWN
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I added more information to the *Aglaothorax* species pages. On the last update, the species pages had links to their associated map pages, songs with waveforms, and links to literature and the Orthoptera Species File. Now, for each species, on their species page, I added song description, identification (with a link to a key to the *Aglaothorax* species), range, habitat, and season. For some, I added name derivation and remarks. I will be adding remarks to more of the pages. I also created an *Aglaothorax* genus page which, at present, only has the key to *Aglaothorax* species. I will be adding more information to the genus page about *Aglaothorax*, in general, and the three species groups: *Ovatus*, *Morsei*, and *Diminutiva*. The key has many plates and figures associated with it; at present, I am in the process of adding the plates and figures to SINA and creating links to them on the key. I have begun creating the image pages for each species and sorting the images associated with the pages. Once the *Aglaothorax* genus page and the image pages are completed, along with additional remarks to the species pages, the addition of the *Aglaothorax* species to SINA, from the 2025 *Aglaothorax* revision (Cole et al. 2025), will be completed.

Male of *Agalothorax ovata tinkhamorum*, Cactus Flat Trail, Riverside County, California. Photograph by Jeff Cole, University of Kansas, used by permission. (https://orthsoc.org/sina/291pmti2.htm)

Invitation to Contribute to the Special Issue

"Innovations in Acridid Pest Surveillance and Control"

By ALEXANDRE V. LATCHININSKY
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Dear Colleagues,

I hope this message finds you well.

I am serving as the Guest Editor for the Special Issue "Innovations in Acridid Pest Surveillance and Control" in the journal *Insects* (ISSN 2075-4450, IF 2.9). Given your expertise and contributions in this field, I would like to invite you to submit a manuscript to this Special Issue.

This Special Issue aims to address innovative approaches and technologies for acridid pest surveillance and control worldwide. Papers will be published on an ongoing basis upon acceptance following peer review. You are also welcome to send a tentative title or abstract in advance. Please note that submissions should not be under consideration elsewhere.

Insects (ISSN 2075-4450) is an international, peer-reviewed, open access journal published under the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0), ensuring that your work is freely accessible to the global research community. An article processing charge (APC) of 2600 CHF applies to accepted papers. Discounts may be available if you have reviewed for MDPI previously or if your institution participates in the Institutional Open Access Program (IOAP).

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I sincerely hope you will consider contributing to this Special Issue. Please feel free to contact me or the Editor, Mina Chen (mina.chen@mdpi.com), if you have any questions.

Regional Reports - What's happening around the world?

Northern, Western, & Central Africa

By JEANNE AGRIPPINE YETCHOM FONDJO
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ALAIN CHRISTEL WANDJI, CHARLY OUMAROU-NGOUTE, ROLAND CHRISTOPHE ZINGA KOUMBA, ALFIERY LAUREL NKWALA, & MARCELLE MBADJOUN NZIKE

Rainforests are the most diverse environments found in the tropics. This also applies to Africa's rainforests, although they have received less research attention than other tropical regions. But more lately, Orthoptera research has finally been led by a new generation of West African scientists. Cameroon has more established and active orthopteran experts than other West and Central African nations, and they continue to advance species taxonomy, discovery, conservation, and biodiversity study in the region. In order to thoroughly examine as many ecosystems as possible, we have established a few teams. Jeanne Agrippine, Alain Christel, Charly and his pupils, Alfiery Laurel, and Marcelle are among the teams.

In September 2025, Charly and his pupils began evaluating the conservation, habitat characterization, and distribution of *Parapterotiltus bamboutos*, a little and lovely grasshopper found on Mount Bamboutos; the project is still underway. Christel, Jeanne, Laurel, and Marcelle are currently working in the Manengouba Mountain, the Bangoulap and the Fotouni Sacred Forests, and the Babone highland, assessing the biodiversity, taxonomy, and conservation of orthopteran insects in these poorly studied areas. Over the past several months, numerous new Orthoptera species, mainly from the genera *Apoboleus*, *Odontomelus*, *Parapterotiltus*, *Pterotiltus*, *Paraserpusia*, and *Serpusia*, have been found thanks to our combined efforts. It seems that every new habitat found in Tropical Africa appears to be associated with at least one new species.

All the teams conduct monthly fieldwork, which enables us to have an overview of the current distribution of species. One important example is *P. bamboutous*, which was found in the Babone highland and the Fotouni holy forest, expanding the species' range. We also plan community education programs on each field trip to educate the local population, including farmers and students in elementary and secondary schools about the effects of forest disturbances and land use on threatened orthopteran species, plus the need to preserve their habitats. In this sense, we want to instigate a conservation mindset in every community.

Since August 2025, Marcelle has been studying the diversity of edible katydids and short-horned grasshopper species in Cameroon's far north region, aiming to improve the country's food security. She interviewed the local residents using a questionnaire and found that the residents of this region of Cameroon enjoy eating

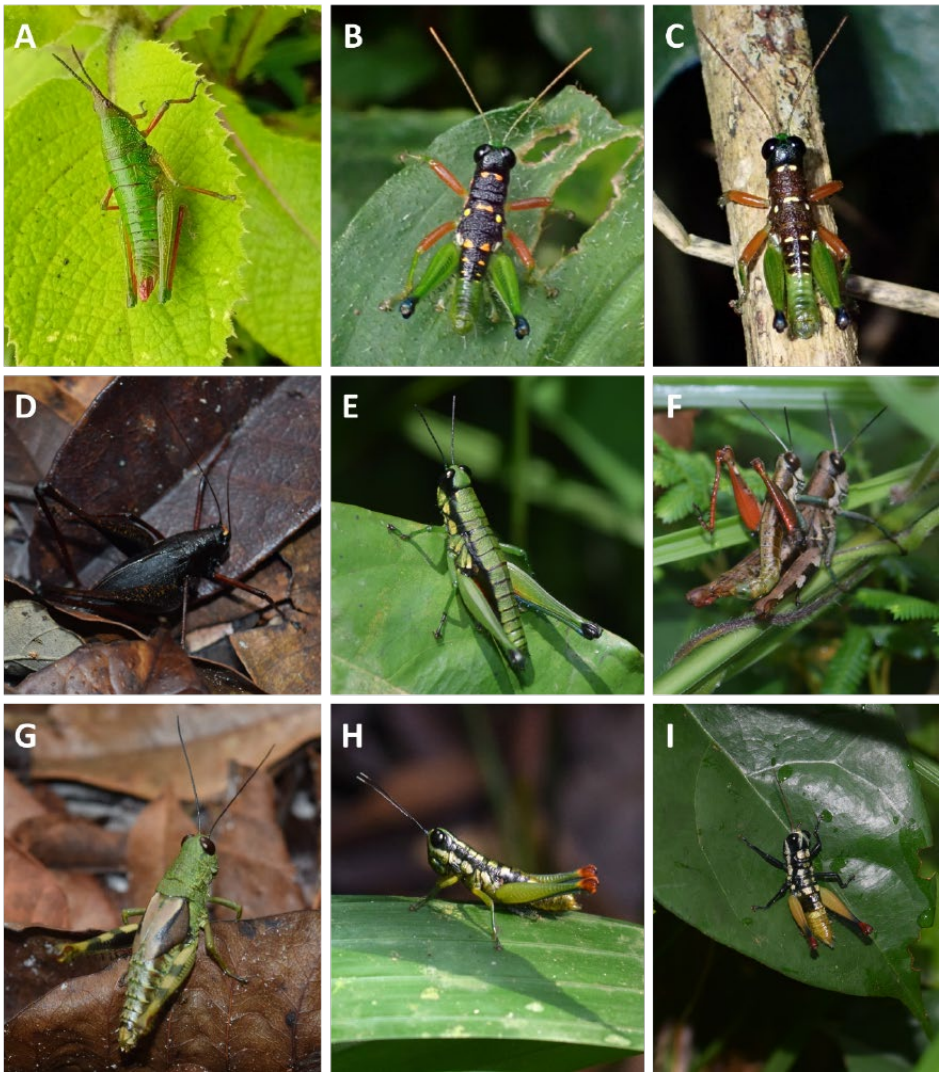

Figure 1. Some of the orthopterans collected during our recent fieldwork. A: *Occidentosphena uvarovi*; B: *Parapterotiltus bamboutos*; C: *Parapterotiltus minimoides*; D: *Macroscirtus kanguroo*; E: *Digentia viridissima*; F: *Pteropera karschi karschi*; G: *Apoboleus* sp. nov.; H: *Pterotiltus* sp. nov.; I: *Pterotiltus* sp. nov.

Figure 2. A: Dr. C. Oumarou-Ngoute and his students (Mr. Tchapda, Mr. G. Kameni, Mr. M. Nohen), identifying plants in *P. bamboutos* habitats; B: Dr. M. Mbadjoun searching for tetrigids in the Manengouba mountain; C: Dr. M. Mbadjoun Nzike assessing the grasshopper diversity in a Sorghum field in Kousseri; D: Dr. J.A. Yetchom Fondjo photographing *Mazaea granulosa* in the forest; E: Dr. M. Mbadjoun Nzike, Dr. A. C. Wandji, and Dr. A. L. Nkwala marking a *P. bamboutos* specimen in the Fotouni sacred forest; F: Prof. R.C. Zinga Koumba and Jeanne at the Arboretum of Sibang (Gabon) entrance; G: Jeanne in the Arboretum Raponda Walker station; H: Group photo at the Arboretum Raponda Walker, Gabon; I: Prof. R.C. Zinga Koumba searching for tetrigids in the Arboretum of Sibang.

the desert locust, *Schistocerca gregaria*, as well as *Acanthacris ruficornis* and *Cyrtacanthacris aeruginosa*.

Recently, in January 2026, Prof. R.C. Zinga Koumba invited Jeanne to Gabon to assist with research on the Gabonese Orthoptera fauna. Compared to other nations like Cameroon and the Republic of the Congo, Gabon's insect diversity is still poorly studied, so this was a fantastic opportunity. As of right now, Gabon has no thorough research on these insects' biodiversity inventory, community structure, systematics, molecular phylogeny, or conservation initiatives. So, locations in the Libreville National Parks and protected areas, including the Arboretum Raponda-Walker, the Arboretum of Sibang, and Ndouaniang forest were the subject of field assessments by Prof. R. C. Zinga Koumba, his Ph.D. students, and Jeanne.

Figure 3. A: Group photo in the Nguila degraded forest; B: Dr. A.C. Wandji, Dr. M. Mbadjoun, and a field assistant in the Bangoulap sacred forest; C: Community education with students and teacher of the Nguila secondary School; D: Dr. C. Oumarou-Ngoute and his students conducting awareness campaigns in villages around Mt. Bamboutos; E: Drs. M. Mbadjoun and A.C. Wandji conducting an environmental education class at Bangoulap Primary School; F: Dr. A.C. Wandji educating the people of Bangoulap village about environmental protection.

During the five days of research, the crew saw several Orthoptera species, including new records for the nation, such as the greenish grasshopper, *Digentia viridissima*, which was only known from Cameroon prior to the Gabon mission. This species is frequently found in wetland areas, often hidden among blade-grasses. We also saw new species of *Apoboleus* and *Odontomelus*, as well as several lovely new species of moisture-loving grasshoppers from the genus Pterotiltus, which are currently being described. The team saw the striking camouflage of the stocky and blackish ensiferan *Macroscirtus kanguroo* (Mecopodinae), which is frequently associated with the leaf litter in the arboretum of Raponda-Walker National Park, the most intact of the three national parks we visited.

Despite our current achievements, there is still more work to be done in this biodiversity hotspot of Tropical Africa in the areas of inventory, faunistics, conservation, and taxonomy. We are gradually forming successful, long-term partnerships with other orthopterists throughout North Africa, Central Africa, and the West. This will aid in the inventory tasks and give a general picture of the actual biodiversity of these areas.

Acknowledgments

We would also like to express our gratitude to the Cameroonian Ministry of Scientific Research and Innovation (MINRESI) for granting the required research licenses (research permit: N°00075/MINRESI/B00/C00/C10/C13). We also acknowledge the close and crucial cooperation of the National Park rangers of Libreville and the Institute for Research in Tropical Ecology (IRET-CENAREST) of Gabon.

Western Europe

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ASCETE is an association founded in 1995 with the aim of bringing together orthopterists and entomocenoticians in France, and generating scientific knowledge. Every year, it publishes a naturalist and scientific journal entitled *Matériaux Orthoptériques et Entomocénotiques*, available in print by subscription. All relevant information about the association can be found on our website.

On 28 and 29 March 2026, a National Orthopteran and Entomocenotic Conference was held in Montpellier. During these two days, nearly 100 people attended lectures presenting the results of scientific studies. The topics covered were varied: restoration projects, translocation, acoustic studies, field trip reports, development of technical tools, and networking. Discussions also took place with Patrinat and the French Committee of the IUCN to develop a national Red List of Orthoptera accredited by the IUCN. To give you a clearer idea of the event contents, the session booklet is available on our website, along with the programme. Another prospect: hosting the European Orthoptera Symposium in 2028 - to be followed-up and discussed together!

ASCETE will hold its annual general meeting on 12 and 13 September 2026 in the Basque Country.

Theodore J. Cohn Research Fund Reports

Assessing distribution and conservation status of species of the genera *Serpusia*, *Mazaea*, and *Gemeneta* (Orthoptera: Catantopinae) in the Bangoulap Sacred Forests (West-Cameroon)

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Like many other sacred forests in western Cameroon, the Bangoulap sacred forests are located in a high-altitude area. Widely recognised for their remarkable biodiversity and high level of endemism these forests are considered as biodiversity hotspots. In landscapes that are increasingly being transformed by human activities, sacred forests often represent some of the last remaining fragments of natural forest ecosystems (Byers et al. 2001).

Despite their ecological importance, the Bangoulap sacred forests are currently under intense anthropogenic pressure, which could ultimately lead to their degradation or disappearance (Tiokeng et al. 2019). These pressures pose a significant threat to wingless orthopteran species (e.g. those in the genera *Gemeneta*, *Mazaea*, *Serpusia*, etc.), including endemic species from Cameroon, such as *Apoboleus degener* and H*intzia squamiptera*. These species are specialised in the herbaceous undergrowth of the forests, and have very limited dispersal capacity and a restricted geographic distribution. Given the rapid rate of habitat degradation in the study area, populations of these species may become increasingly fragmented and could decline at an alarming rate, potentially leading to their local extinction.
This study aimed to assess the population status of the target species in the Bangoulap sacred forests in order to develop conservation management strategies.

Figure 1. Sampling methods used during field surveys. (a-b): Principal investigator and local guide using sweep net to capture grasshoppers; (c): principal investigator photographing a target species in its natural habitat; (d): principal investigator and field assistants marking the target species.

Specifically, the study aimed to:

- Estimate the population size of the target species and map their distribution within the Bangoulap Sacred Forests and adjacent habitat
- Produce high-quality photos of each target species in their natural habitats in order to enriched TaxonWorks database
- Identify and document the main threats affecting these species in the study area

Methods

Field surveys were conducted every two months in several sacred forests within the Bangoulap area. Over a nine-month period (from July 2025 to March 2026), grasshoppers were sampled using sweep nets (Launois, 1979) (Fig. 1ab). Sampling was carried out for 60 minutes per survey day between 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m (Yetchom-fondjo et al. 2020). All target species encountered were photographed in their natural habitat using a digital camera (OM SYSTEM TG-7) (Fig. 1c). Five fresh specimens per species were collected and preserved in pre-labelled boxes for further examination. The other specimens collected were identified in situ using a portable stereomicroscope and appropriate taxonomic identification keys. After identification, these individuals

were marked and released (Fig 1d). The geographical coordinates of each sacred forest were recorded and used to generate distribution maps using QGIS software. During field surveys, anthropogenic activities observed within each sacred forest were also documented. The GPS coordinates of each identified threat were recorded using a GPS (Garmin brand).

From July 2025 to March 2026, field investigations were conducted in the Bangoulap Sacred Forests. In addition to the main study site, supplementary field surveys were conducted in several locations in Cameroon (Baboné and Fotouni in the West Region, Mt. Manengouba in the Littoral Region, and Nguila in the Centre Region) to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the distribution of the target species. This was facilitated by institutional support from the University of Yaoundé.

Result

Population size of the target species

A total of 247 individuals belonging to three target species were collected during the study. *Serpusia opacula* was the most abundant species, with 121 individuals representing 48.99% of all individuals observed. This was followed by *Gemeneta terrea* with 74 individuals (29.96%). *Mazaea granulosa* was the least abundant species with 52 individuals representing 21.05% of the total number of specimens recorded (Table 1). It is notable that none of the individuals marked during previous sampling sessions were recaptured in any subsequent session.

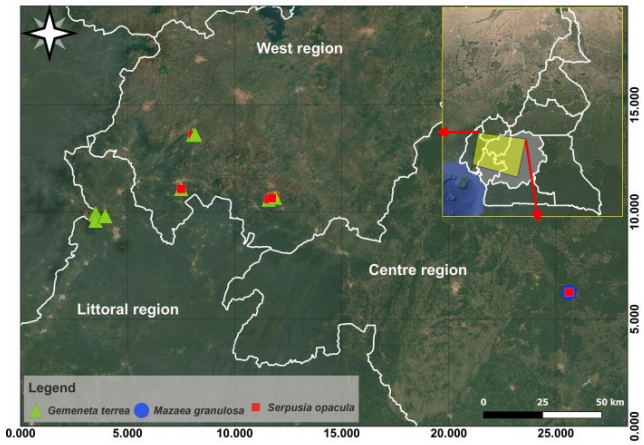

Figure 2. Distribution map of the target species in the study area.

Table 1. Abundance of the target species recorded in the study area.

Site	Sex	Species		
		Gemeneta terrea	*Mazaea granulosa*	*Serpusia opacula*
Baboné Sacred Forest	Male	4	0	1
	Female	2	0	3
Bangoulap Sacred Forest	Male	23	0	60
	Female	13	0	45
Fotouni Sacred Forest	Male	5	0	1
	Female	1	0	0
Mt. Manengouba	Male	15	0	0
	Female	11	0	0
Nguila secondary forest	Male	0	32	6
	Female	0	20	5
	Total	**74**	**52**	**121**

Table 2. Additional grasshopper species recorded in the Bangoulap sacred forest.

Subfamily	Species	Female	Male	Total
Acridinae	*Odontomelus kamerunensis* Ramme, 1929	2	5	7
	Roduniella insipida (Karsch, 1896)	8	12	20
Catantopinae	*Abisares viridipennis* (Burmeister, 1838)	0	1	1
	Apoboleus Degener Karsch, 1891	9	13	22
	Phaeocatantops signatus (Karsh, 1891)	2	3	5
	Oxycatantops spissus (Walker, 1870)	21	30	51
	Pteropera descampsi Donskoff, 1981	17	18	35
Coptacrinae	*Hintzia squamiptera* Ramme, 1929	52	53	105
Eyprepocnemidinae	*Eyprepocnemis plorans* (Charpentier, 1825)	0	1	1
Oxyinae	*Parapterotiltus minimoides* Oumarou Ngoute, 2024	17	29	46
Pyrgomorphinae	*Atractomorpha acutipennis* Bolivar, 1884	0	2	2
	Dictyophorus griseus (Bolivar, 1894)	3	1	4
	Parapetasia femorata Bolivar, 1884	3	11	14
	Taphronota sp.	0	2	2
Thericleinae	*Bunkeya congoensis* Bolivar, 1914	2	0	2
	Total	**136**	**181**	**317**

Distribution of the target species

Serpusia opacula and *Gemeneta terrea* were the most widely distributed species, being recorded in four different localities. These two species were generally observed occupying the same habitats. However, *S. opacula* was not recorded at Mount Manengouba, while *G. terrea* was absent from Nguila. In contrast, *M. granulosa* was restricted to a single locality (Fig. 2).

Photographic documentation of the target species

High-resolution photographs of all target species and additional grasshopper species encountered during the surveys were taken in their natural habitats. These images will be uploaded to the TaxonWorks platform in order to enrich the Orthoptera database.

The other grasshopper species collected in the Bangoulap sacred forest are listed in Table 2.

Potential threats to the target species

Several anthropogenic pressures affecting the target species were identi-

Figure 3. Target species recorded in the study area. (a): *Gemeneta terrea*, (b): *Mazaea granulosa*, and (c): *Serpusia opacula*.

Figure 4. Major threats observed in the study area. (a): agricultural practices, (b): use of pesticides, (c): tree cut, and (d): pastoralism.

fied during field surveys. The main activities contributing to forest degradation and potentially impacting the populations of these species include agricultural expansion, pesticide use, tree cutting, and pastoralism (Fig. 4). These activities contribute to habitat loss and fragmentation, which may severely affect the wingless grasshoppers targeted in this study.

Discussion

This study assessed the distribution and conservation status of grasshopper species belonging to the genera *Serpusia*, *Mazaea*, and *Gemeneta* in the Bangoulap Sacred Forests and some adjacent habitats. A total of 247 individuals representing the three target species were recorded during the sampling period. These results highlight the ecological importance of sacred forests as refuges for insect biodiversity in human-dominated landscapes. Sacred forests in tropical regions frequently serve as biodiversity reservoirs, safeguarding species linked to forest understory habitats, and sustaining ecological processes that are increasingly being lost in surrounding agricultural areas (Bhagwat & Rutte 2006; Dudley et al. 2014).

A notable outcome of this study was the absence of any recaptured individuals during two consecutive sampling sessions. This may be explained by several ecological and methodological factors. Firstly, a two-month interval is sufficient for significant demographic changes to occur within grasshopper populations, including mortality, dispersal, and the recruitment of new individuals (Begon et al. 2005). Such movements could reduce the probability of recapturing marked individuals within limited sampling areas. Secondly, marking may affect the survival of marked individuals, making them more vulnerable to predation (Narisu et al. 1999). Consequently, although mark-release techniques are valuable for estimating population dynamics, they may sometimes underestimate population persistence when recapture probability is low.

Another important finding is the restricted occurrence of *Mazaea granulosa* in the locality of Nguila, in the Centre Region, and its complete absence from Bangoulap Sacred Forests, in the West region. This pattern can be explained by environmental factors, such as altitude, climate, and vegetation composition, which play a critical role in determining the appropriate habitat for this species. Consequently, the absence of *M. granulosa* in Bangoulap could be indicative of ecological specialization or climatic preferences that confine the species to lowland tropical forest environments (Hodkinson 2005).

The present study identified several human activities that could endanger grasshopper populations in the study area. These include agricultural expansion, pesticide use, tree cutting, and pastoralism. Agricultural expansion around sacred forests can lead to habitat fragmentation and reduction of natural vegetation, thereby limiting the availability of suitable habitats for many insect species. Habitat loss and fragmentation are widely recognized as major causes of declines in insect populations worldwide (Dirzo et al. 2014). Furthermore, the use of chemical pesticides in agricultural landscapes can indirectly affect non-target insect species by contaminating nearby habitats or reducing food resources. Tree cutting alters forest structure and microclimatic conditions, which may affect the availability of shade, humidity and host plants required by species associated with forests. Similarly, livestock grazing can reduce vegetation cover, dam-

Appendix 1. Some grasshopper species recorded in Bangoulap sacred forest. a): *Parapetasia femorata*, b): *Apoboleus degener*, c): *Parapterotiltus minimoides* (male), d): *Parapterotiltus minimoides* (female), e): *Parapterotiltus* sp., f): *Hintzia squamiptera*.

age understory plants, and disrupt natural regeneration processes. These disturbances can significantly impact grasshopper communities, particularly those adapted to stable forest microhabitats (Samways et al. 2026).

Despite these threats, sacred forests remain important conservation areas as they often contain relatively undisturbed habitats within landscapes that have been heavily modified by human activity. In many parts of Africa, for example, they have historically been protected by traditional cultural practices and local belief systems, contributing to biodiversity preservation (Bhagwat & Rutte 2006). However, increasing anthropogenic pressures may undermine these traditional protections, emphasizing the need for integrated conservation strategies combining community participation, sustainable land use and scientific monitoring.

Conservation implication

Overall, these study's findings contributed to improving our understanding of the distribution and conservation status of *Serpusia*, *Mazaea* and *Gemeneta* species in Cameroon. To ensure the long-term conservation of these species and the ecological integrity of the Bangoulap Sacred Forests, continued monitoring of these populations will be essential, combined with habitat protection and raising awareness among local communities.

Conclusion

This study provided new insights on the distribution and conservation status of grasshopper species belonging to the genera *Serpusia*, *Mazaea*, and *Gemeneta* in the Bangoulap Sacred Forests and surrounding landscapes. A total of 247 individuals representing the three target genera were recorded during the sampling surveys, confirming their presence in the study area. This highlights the ecological importance of sacred forests as habitats for insect biodiversity. The restricted occurrence of **Mazaea granulosa** in the locality of Nguila, in the Centre Region, and its absence in the Bangoulap Sacred Forests, highlights potential ecological differences between regions that could influence species distribution. This finding emphasizes the need for broader geographical surveys to improve our understanding of the ecological requirements and distribution patterns of these taxa across Cameroon. The study also identified several human activities that could threaten grasshopper populations and their habitats such as agricultural expansion, pesticide use, tree cutting, and pastoralism. These activities contribute to altering vegetation structure and reducing plant diversity. They also affect the availability of food resources and microhabitats required by the target species. Given the sensitivity of many insect communities to environmental disturbance, continued habitat degradation could lead to population declines and reduced biodiversity.

Recommendation

Based on these findings, the following conservation measures are recommended. Firstly, the protection of the Bangoulap Sacred Forests should be strengthened by reinforcing traditional management systems and promoting

Appendix 2. Some grasshopper species recorded in Bangoulap sacred forest (continued). g): *Odontomelus kamerunensis*, h): *Pteropera descampsi*, i): *Oxycatantops spissus*, j): *Acanthacris ruficornis*, k): *Dictyophorus griseus*, l): *Taphronota* sp.

community-based conservation initiatives. Secondly, the use of pesticides should be reduced and vegetated buffer zones maintained around forest fragments to encourage sustainable agricultural practices in surrounding areas. Thirdly, regulations should be implemented to control tree cutting and livestock grazing within the forests to prevent further habitat degradation and maintain suitable ecological conditions for insect communities. Additionally, a long-term ecological monitoring program should be established to track population trends of *Serpusia*, *Mazaea* and *Gemeneta* species. Expanding surveys to other regions of Cameroon would also help to clarify the broader distribution patterns of these species and identify potential conservation priorities.

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our gratitude to the Orthopterists' Society, via the Theodore J. Cohn Research Fund, for financing this study. We thank the University of Yaoundé for the institutional support and the Minister of Scientific Research and Innovation for granting us the necessary permit (Permit N°000042/MINRESI/B00/C00/C10/C12). We are also grateful to the local communities, particularly the chief of the village of Bangoulap, for giving us access to their sacred forest. We would also like to thank our field assistants, Dr. Mbadjoun Nzinké Marcelle, Dr. Djomnang Nkwala Alfiery Laurel, and our field guides, Mr. Stéphane and Abdoulaye.

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Speedy Runners in The Desert: Determining Diversity in *Litaneutria* (Insecta: Mantodea)

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Perhaps one of the most abundant, yet infrequently encountered, predators in the southwestern United States are the ground mantises (Mantodea) in the genus *Litaneutria* (**Fig. 1**). Belonging to the Amelidae, these incredibly speedy, active hunters almost seem to teleport across the ground, taking advantage of chapparal, deserts, dry forests, savannahs, and other xeric regions in North America. These mantises are entirely flightless in the females, as are many males, with wing length being variable in different localities of the same presently recognized species. Currently, there are 11 recognized species, up from just one in 2018, stemming from a recent taxonomic treatise that solely used external morphology, suggesting our current understanding of the genus may still be too shallow (Anderson 2021). The goal of this project is to test this hypothesis by incorporating genitalic and molecular characters to examine population structure and test for hidden diversity.

To start, I chose Skinner's ground mantis, *Litaneutria skinneri* Rehn, 1907. This relatively robust species has its type locality in Carr Canyon, in the Huachuca Mountains of Arizona. Its range extends westward as far as Ruby, Arizona and eastward into west Texas before being replaced by the more well-known minor ground mantis, *Litaneutria minor* Scudder, 1872, in the great plains. Arizona is a favorite collecting locale of mine, and what began my journey into mantodean alpha taxonomy in 2024 with the description of *Stagmomantis clauseni* Garikipati.

In July of 2025, I went to southern Arizona and collected in 8 localities (**Fig. 2**). *Litaneutria* are incredibly challenging to capture, and even more-so as juveniles, as was the case in July. Adults, encountered from August-onwards, top out at 4 centimeters, and the juveniles during the field season were just about 1 centimeter. Colored identically to the substrates of their respective locales, these mantises dart for cover before you can get close, let alone even see them (try to find the mantis in **Fig. 3**!). So, why collect this time of year if sampling is challenging? Well, early July is still early in the monsoon season, and, thus, ground cover is sparse, minimizing refugia for these nimble predators. Additionally, as juveniles, they are far more abundant than as adults. *Litaneutria skinneri* distribution is patchy and suitable habitats may only contain just a few individuals within a few dozen

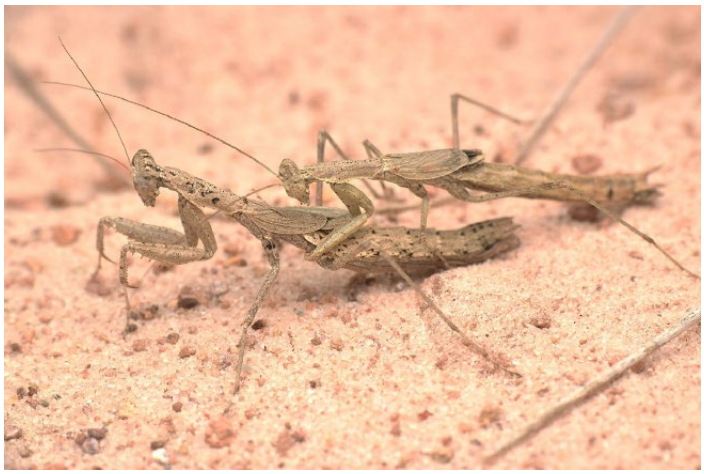

Figure 1. *Litaneutria* habitus.

Figure 2. *Litaneutria* samping localities in Arizona.

Figure 3. Hidden *Litaneutria*.

Figure 4. Wilcox Playa.

Figure 5. Carr Canyon in the Huachuca Mountains.

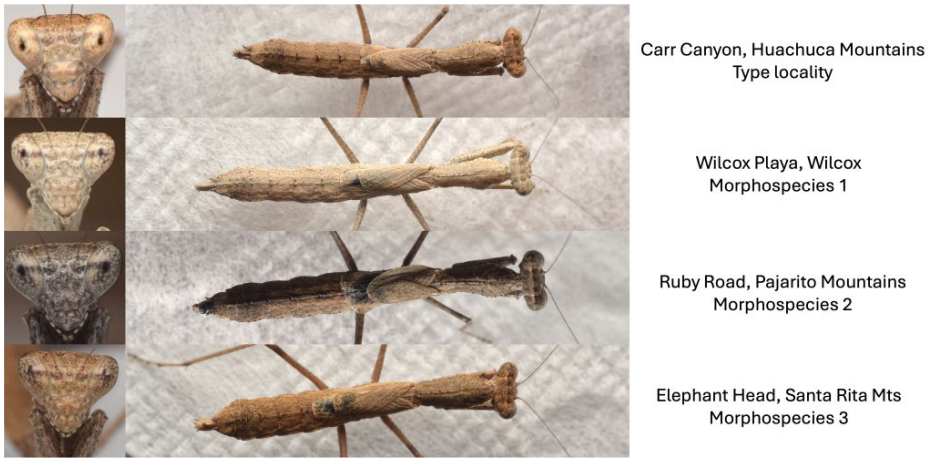

Figure 6. Females of *Litaneutria* from different localities.

square meters, but drive or walk down the road and you might hit a patch with several dozen individuals. Collection was an incredible success, with individuals being found within an hour of visiting collection sites. This collection effort yielded over 60 specimens of *L. skinneri*, and around 40 of other mantis species (*Yersiniops, Stagmomantis, Bistanta,* and, luckily, 1 *Pseudovates arizonae* Hebard, 1935), providing valuable fresh material in ethanol for obtaining molecular data. Additionally, the collected GPS coordinates will allow for finer-scale geographical comparison.

The molecular and morphological data will be analyzed this summer as part of a Research Experience for Undergraduates (NSF REU), with my colleague Kate Montana and advisor Jessica Ware. We will use two markers, COI (mitochondrial) and 28S (nuclear) to assess population structure, generate haplotype networks, and, with comparative morphological data, determine whether any of these populations should be recognized as new species. I also reared a group of juveniles from four localities to adult to obtain adult series for morphological and genitalic comparison. In addition to the type locality, Carr Canyon (Huachuca Mts), samples from Wilcox Playa, Ruby Road (Pajaritos Mts), and Elephant Head Trail (Santa Rita Mts) were reared.

Of particular note is Wilcox playa (**Fig. 4**), a vast sandy expanse interspersed with dune grasses and short mesquites, which resembles Tatooine (the desert planet from Star Wars) and has minimal insect life besides the dominant residents: ants. The only other insects observed were tiger beetles, what appeared to be small ephydrids (Diptera), and a singular *Pantala flavescens* (Fabricius, 1798) (Odonata). In this locality, *L. skinneri* were particularly gracile and pale in color compared to the type locality, likely due to their psammophilic nature. Additionally, they were largely absent near water habitats, likely due to competition with tiger beetles. While the adults and subadults are large and fast enough to predate on the beetles, the juveniles we collected would, in return, be suitable prey for the beetles, indicating an intraguild predatory relationship.

In contrast, the type locality in Carr Canyon in the Huachuca Mountains (**Fig. 5**) is a classic Madrean oak and mixed conifer-aspen forest, with dense ground cover, with different and more abundant insect fauna. The specimens here are extremely robust and, with their striped patterning, blend in well to the leaf litter and grasses on the forest floor. Such ecological differences will be valued as well in potential species delimitation. As noted, *Litaneutria*, are noted to exhibit variable wing lengths in the males of the same species with macropterous and micropterous populations co-occurring (Anderson, 2021). I observed the contrary, however, with males of a given population all exhibiting the same wing type. Meanwhile, the females of different localities (**Fig. 6**) show clear proportional and color pattern differences suggesting the presence of potential cryptic species. If *Litaneutria* proves to be microendemic taxa, a hypothesis supported by their largely flightless populations, great efforts will be needed to sample this genus thoroughly and additionally raises grave conservation concerns. Of course, we must begin somewhere to solve this knowledge gap, and,

therefore, I am extremely grateful to the Orthopterists' Society's Theodore J. Cohn Research Fund for making this thesis chapter possible to explore!

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Interim report on understanding the biogeography and phylogeny of four sympatric tree crickets (Genus: *Oecanthus*) in India

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Among the Indian tree crickets, the genus *Oecanthus* is represented by four reported species: *Oecanthus henryi*, *O. indicus*, *O. rufescens*, and *O. bilineatus* (Metrani & Balakrishnan 2005). Despite exhibiting only subtle morphological and acoustic differences, these species occur sympatrically in moist–dry shrubland habitats. In this study, I aimed to construct a phylogenetic framework for Indian *Oecanthus* species and integrate it with the global phylogeny of *Oecanthus*. This will enable the inference of evolutionary relationships and divergence times, thereby providing insights into their historical biogeography.

Workplan:

Very little information is currently available on the distribution of these species, except for *O. indicus*, which is considered the most widely distributed among the four. To account for intraspecific genetic variation arising from geographic separation, I plan to undertake extensive field surveys and specimen collection between June 2025 and March 2028 across major bioregions of the Indian subcontinent. Following specimen collection, my objective is to construct a robust phylogenetic framework. In addition to molecular data, I intend to incorporate variation in morphological characters and acoustic call parameters into multivariate analyses to better-understand divergence patterns among species.

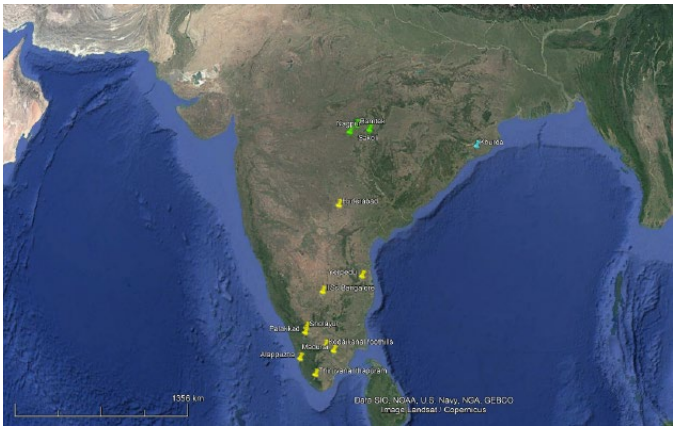


Figure 1. 12 sampling sites for the *Oecanthus* spp. across India.

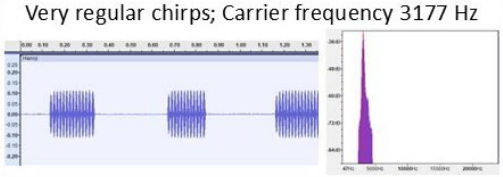
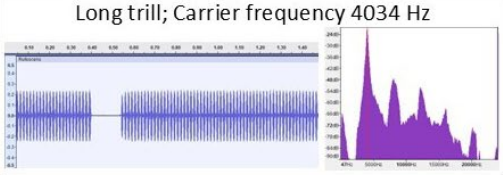
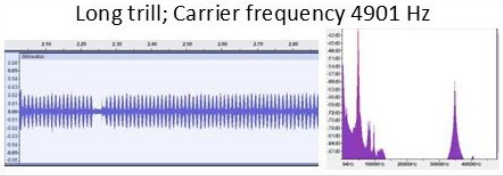
Work done so far:

To date, I sampled 12 locations across southern India (**Fig. 1**). Using the existing distribution records of *O. indicus* as a reference, I surveyed for all *Oecanthus* species. In addition to the previously reported locations, I recorded *O. bilineatus* from central India, *O. henryi* from southern, eastern, and central India, and *O. rufescens* from eastern India. Individuals were collected during the evening based on their species-specific call characteristics. Following collection, morphological features were examined at the field station using the diagnostic criteria described by Metrani & Balakrishnan (2005) to ensure accurate species identification (**Table 1**). Hind legs were dissected from each specimen for DNA extraction and preserved in 100% molecular-grade ethanol. In addition, calls from a few representative individuals were recorded for verification, and their temporal and spectral characteristics were visually analysed using Audacity (**Table 1**).

Future Plans:

1. To conduct surveys across the remaining bioregions of the Indian subcontinent for comprehensive specimen collection.
2. To extract DNA from the collected leg samples and perform Sanger sequencing to construct a robust phylogenetic framework.
3. To carry out multivariate analyses incorporating molecular, morphological, and acoustic data for species delimitation.
4. To compile and submit a comprehensive final project report upon completion of the study.

Table 1. Call characteristics, morphological features, and host plants of different *Oecanthus* spp.

Species	Call characteristics	Morphological features	Found on
Oecanthus henryi	Very regular chirps; Carrier frequency 3177 Hz 		 *Hyptis suaveolens*
Oecanthus indicus	Very regular chirps; Carrier frequency 2905 Hz 		Diverse shrublike plants like *Hyptis suaveolens*, *Chromolaena odorata*, *Lantana camara*, *Cucumis sp.*
Oecanthus rufescens	Long trill; Carrier frequency 4034 Hz 		 Mission grass (*Pennisetum sp.*)
Oecanthus bilineatus	Long trill; Carrier frequency 4901 Hz 		 Tall trees like teak

Acknowledgements:
I am deeply grateful to the Orthopterists' Society for the Theodore J. Cohn Research Fund. The grant supported all travel expenses associated with the project, as well as the researcher's subsistence during the fieldwork.

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Contributed Articles

In the Field in Andean Patagonia: Excursions and Discoveries from the 50th Anniversary Congress of the Orthopterists' Society

By **MICHEL LECOQ**
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The congress celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Orthopterists' Society, held in San Martín de los Andes (March 8-12), Argentina, provided not only a stimulating setting for scientific exchange but also an opportunity to explore *in situ* a region of remarkable ecological and scenic richness. Following the Society's tradition, several post-congress excursions were organized to offer a brief overview of the region and, if desired, to continue scientific discussions in a field-based context. Northern Andean Patagonia is indeed a region of major interest for naturalists. Dominated by the Andes mountain range, it is characterized by a wide diversity of habitats: temperate *Nothofagus* forests, steppes, wetlands, and volcanic environments, which support an entomofauna that remains only partially explored. The

Figure 1. In Junín de los Andes, the Chimehuín River originates from Lake Huechulafquen (left) and view of Lanín Volcano from the southern shore of Lake Huechulafquen, with its snow-covered cone dominating a glacial lake landscape typical of Andean Patagonia (right).

Figure 2. A scenic view of Lake Huechulafquen and the surrounding mountains.

excursions described below allowed participants to investigate a mosaic of remarkable ecosystems, such as glacial lakes, ancient temperate forests, and volcanic landscapes, while also addressing cultural and historical dimensions closely linked to the visited territories.

Excursion 1

From San Martín de los Andes, the first excursion (March 13) followed the iconic National Route 40 (RN40), one of the most emblematic roads in Argentina. Stretching over 5,224 km, it runs from La Quiaca (on the Bolivian border) to Río Gallegos in southern Patagonia, making it the longest road in the country and one of the longest in the world. Weather conditions were excellent, with clear skies and abundant sunshine. A brief stop was made in Junín de los Andes, located about 40 km to the north. This initial segment of the journey revealed a marked landscape transition, from humid Andean forests to the more open formations of the Patagonian steppe, illustrating a pronounced ecological gradient.

Upon arrival in Junín de los Andes (**Fig. 1**), a short visit highlighted the town's main cultural features. The parish church, Santuario Nuestra Señora de las Nieves y Beata Laura Vicuña, stands out for its blend of Andean and European architectural influences and serves as a major pilgrimage site in Patagonia. The local handicraft market provided insight into regional production, particularly Mapuche craftsmanship (textiles, carved wood, and silver jewelry). Beyond its cultural value, the town lies at the interface of several ecological units, including Andean forests, riparian zones, and semi-arid steppes.

The excursion then entered the Lanín National Park, dominated by the imposing Lanín Volcano (3,776 m). The route followed Provincial Road 61 (unpaved), leading to Boca del Chimehuín, the outlet of the river originating from Lake Huechulafquen. From the lakeside viewpoint (**Fig. 1**), the exceptional clarity of the water and the striking landscape were observed; the area is also renowned for fly fishing.

For approximately 30 km, the itinerary followed the lake and crossed forests of *Araucaria araucana*, rem-

Figure 3. *Araucaria araucana* trees in Lanín National Park (left), and the volcanic shoreline of Lake Paimún with the Paimún Chapel in the background (right).

Figure 4. At Bahía Mansa (near Villa La Angostura), the embarkation point for the catamaran excursion across Lake Nahuel Huapi toward the Quetrihué Peninsula and the Arrayanes forest.

Figure 5. A small lodge nestled within Los Arrayanes National Park on the Quetrihué Peninsula (left) and trunks of *Luma apiculata* in the park, notable for their distinctive orange coloration (right).

nants of ancient ecosystems dating back to the Mesozoic. A lunch stop was made at a small restaurant (Rayen Co), offering scenic views of the lake and surrounding mountains (**Fig. 2**). Some participants sampled trout, a regional specialty associated with the cold, well-oxygenated waters of the Chimehuín River basin.

The journey then continued to the closest accessible viewpoint of the volcano. Conditions were ideal for observing and photographing the summit, whose southern face is adorned with a striking glacier. The day concluded on the shores of Lake Paimún (**Fig. 3**), where the picturesque María Auxiliadora del Paimún Chapel reflects a harmonious blend of local and European architectural influences. Nearby, a small grove of araucarias provided a quiet setting. Among the time-sculpted trunks stood a modest rustic café, both charming and discreet, slightly precarious, yet inviting relaxation. We enjoyed a hot drink while admiring the reflection of the mountains in the lake and the movement of birds among the branches. As clouds gradually obscured the summit, the day ended in a peaceful atmosphere before returning to San Martín de los Andes.

Excursion 2

A second excursion (March 14) followed the scenic Seven Lakes Route, linking San Martín de los Andes to Villa La Angostura. This route crosses a succession of forested and lacustrine landscapes of great diversity. Although the weather was overcast and threatening, it did not detract from the quality of the excursion. The route initially follows Lake Lácar before entering dense forests dominated by several *Nothofagus* species (*N. pumilio*, *N. antarctica*, *N. obliqua*, *N. dombeyi*).

Notable features glimpsed along the route included the Pil-Pil viewpoint, offering panoramic views of Lake Lácar and the Chapelco range, as well as the Arroyo Partido, a hydrological curiosity where waters divide into two distinct oceanic basins. The route continued past a series of lakes, Machónico, Villarino, Falkner, Escondido, and Correntoso, before reaching the vicinity of Villa La Angostura. Due to weather conditions, the visit to El Mesidor residence, the early 20th-century summer residence of the governor of Neuquén Province, was cancelled. The excursion then continued with a catamaran trip across Lake Nahuel Huapi, departing from Bahía Mansa (**Fig. 4**).

After approximately 12 km of navigation, we reached the Quetrihué Peninsula and accessed the Arrayanes forest (**Fig. 5**). This site is characterized by the dominance of *Luma apiculata* (arrayán), forming a dense and nearly monospecific forest, a rare phenomenon. The smooth, cinnamon-colored trunks and the advanced age of some individuals (up to 500–600 years) contribute to the uniqueness of this ecosystem. Wooden walkways protect the fragile root systems. The atmosphere is striking and almost unreal. The return journey took place under deteriorating

Figure 6. The Lanín National Park Museum in San Martín de los Andes and the statue of Francisco Pascasio Moreno.

Figure 7. Bandurrias viewpoint trail, featuring several scenic viewpoints overlooking Lake Lácar and San Martín de los Andes.

weather conditions.

Excursion 3

During the final two days (March 15-16), the third excursion to Villa Pehuenia had to be cancelled due to adverse weather conditions. With only six participants remaining, we took the opportunity to further explore the cultural and historical heritage of San Martín de los Andes and its immediate surroundings.

The Lanín National Park Museum (**Fig. 6**) provides a valuable entry point for understanding the processes of exploration, land use, and conservation in the Andean region. Its permanent exhibition retraces the major stages of scientific and geographic exploration in northern Patagonia, with particular emphasis on Francisco Pascasio Moreno (known as "Perito Moreno," meaning "the expert"). A naturalist, explorer, and pioneer of conservation in Argentina, Moreno, whose statue stands in front of the museum (**Fig. 6**), played a key role in the establishment of the national park system, notably through land donations that contributed to the creation of Nahuel Huapi National Park.

The Municipal Museum of San Martín de los Andes offers a complementary, diachronic perspective on human occupation. Archaeological collections document the long-standing presence of Indigenous populations, particularly the Mapuche, whose ways of life were closely tied to forest and lacustrine resources. The transition to a modern town is illustrated through documents, objects, and photographs depicting colonization, infrastructure development, and the growth of tourism.

The La Pastera Museum, also known as the Che Guevara Museum, adds a political and Latin American dimension to this cultural itinerary. Housed in a former outbuilding ("pastera") used during Guevara's stay in 1952, it retraces the journey of the young Ernesto Guevara across the continent, famously undertaken on his motorcycle *La Poderosa*, prior to his revolutionary engagement. The exhibition highlights the social conditions he encountered during this formative journey, as well as the gradual development of a political consciousness shaped by inequalities across Latin America.

In a garden in the town center, near the COTESMA cultural center where the congress was held, a commemorative plaque marks the passage of the renowned Chilean poet Pablo Neruda, who fled political persecution in the late 1940s and crossed the Andes under difficult conditions, arriving in San Martín de los Andes under a false name. Along the lakeshore, a statue pays tribute to Miguel Andrés Camino, a regional poetic figure whose texts were set to music and performed by several artists, including Carlos Gardel, an iconic figure of tango and one of the most renowned singers in Latin America.

Finally, a hike along the Bandurrias viewpoint trail (**Fig. 7**), overlooking both the town and Lake Lácar, provided a pleasant conclusion to this post-congress stay—despite a return to San Martín under heavy rain.

Jurassic Orthoptera Featured in Netflix Series

By CHARLIE WOODROW
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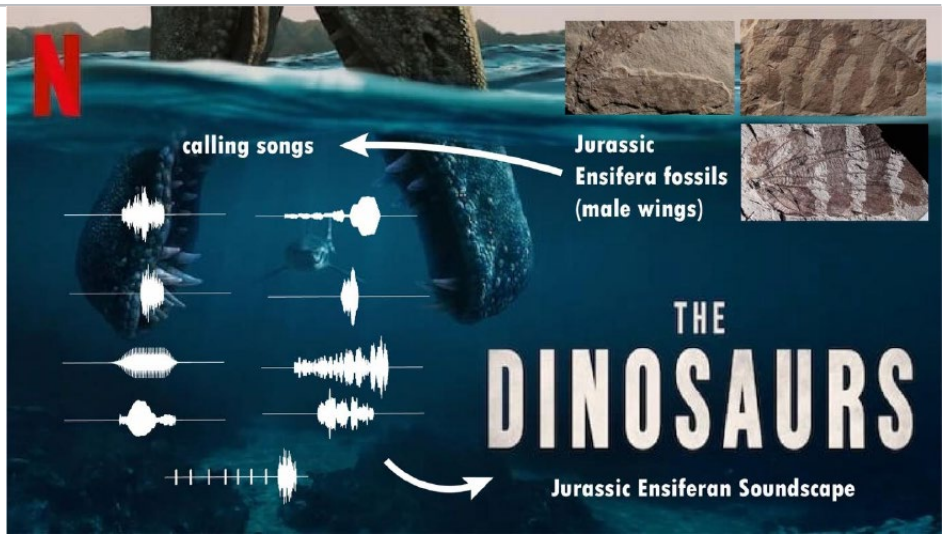
A long-term project led by Prof. Fernando Montealegre-Z's group, in collaboration with Chinese orthopteran palaeontologists, Prof. Jun Jie Gu and Prof. Dong Ren, and the Orthoptera phylogenomics lab of Prof. Hojun Song and his graduate student Jackson Linde, examined 20 exceptionally preserved male wings (representing nine species) of Jurassic Ensifera (Hagloidea) from a single locality in the Jiulongshan Formation, Inner Mongolia, China. The study integrated fossil wing anatomy with molecular systematics of extant species to generate phylogenetically informed predictions about the acoustic capabilities (e.g., carrier frequency) of these ancient insects. Using mathematical modelling and machine-learning, the team reconstructed wing vibration patterns, basic syllables, and full call repertoires of all nine species. One of the major findings of the study was that some of these ancient ensiferans were already capable of producing ultrasonic calling songs, contrasting the hypothesis that bats were a major driver of ultrasound evolution in the Ensifera.



The paper associated with this work is currently in review at the journal *PNAS*, but a pre-print can be found here. Authors of the paper had the opportunity to serve as scientific advisors and audio designers for the new Netflix series *The Dinosaurs*, produced by Steven Spielberg and narrated by Morgan Freeman, where the reconstructed ensiferan sounds are featured to bring a more accurate Jurassic soundscape to TV screens.

In Memoriam: Dr. Thomas Jefferson Walker (1931 – 2026)

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Dr. Thomas J. Walker (**Fig. 1**), also known as Tom, passed away on 8 April 2026. This is a tribute to Tom, in remembrance of a humble genius, a kind and generous man, and a lover and protector of the natural world. Several friends and colleagues have contributed memories and reflections about Tom, which are woven into this memoriam. Contributors include Brandon Woo, David Weissman, Fernando Montealegre-Z, Glenn Morris, Jeffrey Cole, Ken Prestwich, Kevin Judge, Nancy Collins, Timothy Forrest, Wilbur Hershberger, and myself (in the Acknowledgements, the contributors state their relationship with Tom). Common themes run through our collective stories, such as Tom's experience growing up on his family's farm in Tennessee, where he learned talents and lessons that guided him throughout his life. His dedication as a professor at the University of Florida (UF), where he was much loved and admired by his students. How he extended his knowledge and guidance to those with curiosity and a desire to learn. How he embraced new technology and was a staunch advocate for open access to scientific literature. How he was an active and

Figure 1. Tom Walker in 2020. *Photograph by Teresa Yawn*

Figure 2. Tom Walker in January 2010 in the part of the NATL upland longleaf pine area that took 15 years to restore. *Photograph by Ken Prestwich*

passionate conservationist.

Tom and I often met at his home to work on his website, Singing Insects of North America (SINA); he was editor and I was webmaster. When you entered through his front door, just inside, across from the entrance and hanging on the wall, was a picture of a matador engaging with a bull. One day, Tom showed me a large photograph of his mother and father. He said, "I don't know why I have a picture of a bullfighter on this wall. I think I'd rather have a picture of my parents." He asked if I knew a good framer who could frame the photograph. I gave him a name and, a few weeks later, he opened the door to let me in. In place of the bullfighter was the portrait of his mother and father. They were a handsome couple. They appeared honest, down-to-earth, hard--working. I could sense their connection to Tom. I said, "that looks much better" and he agreed.

Tim and Ken understood how Tom's upbringing sculpted him into the man he became. Tim wrote, "Tom's rural upbringing and time as an Eagle Scout gave him humility and an incredible work ethic. He never sought the limelight or sought praise, yet he was one of the first to offer his labor to the scientific community." Ken noted, "I have never seen one person accomplish so much, much with his own hands, and especially manage to remain down to earth (still that farm boy), kind and friendly." Tom's time on the farm also instilled a love of nature in him and in 1953, he received a BA in Zoology and Botany from the University of Tennessee. In 1957, he graduated from Ohio State University with a Ph.D. in Entomology.

After receiving his Ph.D., Tom began teaching at the Entomology and Nematology Department at UF. Over a period of 40 years, he taught many courses, including biology, systematics, insect ecology, and information in techniques in research. He touched the lives of many people, often directing them on new trajectories and continuing to be there for them throughout their journeys. Tim, a former student of Tom's, wrote, "Tom was a true empiricist who always thought about experimental methodology to answer questions about the natural world. We often discussed experimental design, and he frequently proposed a bet (a hamburger!!) on the outcome of experiments. It was his lighthearted way of challenging me to defend my thought processes. I soon realized these interactions were clearly (cleverly?) meant to develop my critical thinking. He didn't expect me to always be right; he wanted me to be rigorous. Oh, and yes, I bought him quite a few hamburgers over the years.

Tim added that "Tom always enthusiastically supported and encouraged me, and many others, to pursue our curiosity. When I began my MS degree at UF, I had my first experiment studying mate choice in mole crickets. I often searched for calling crickets to see if I could locate and observe them. After one night in the field, I was talking with Tom about my experiment and showed him a tree cricket I collected while it called in a field of sunflowers. I asked, 'Do they always call in a hole in a leaf?' Tom's eyes grew wide with surprise because he had seen similar behavior of tree crickets in the Caribbean. The next night, we were out in the field snapping pictures of male tree crickets calling in leaf baffles. His enthusiasm was infectious and he encouraged me to investigate what was happening and why. The subsequent investigations into the baffling behaviors of crickets became a major part of my doctoral dissertation. Like he did for so many others, Tom continued to support and encourage my research and teaching throughout my career. I am truly grateful for his kind generosity of time and knowledge during our collaborations."

Ken wrote, "Tom was always a gentleman and an excellent mentor. When I was in graduate school in zoology with rather different interests than his, he got me interested in measuring the energetics associated with calling in ensiferans. He took me out to watch them call, asked the right questions, and he got me fascinated in what became a major part of my

Figure 3. Tom Walker putting up a fence at NATL. *Photograph by Ken Prestwich*

Figure 4. Tom Walker, working on the failed but notable bobwhite experiment at NATL. *Photograph by Ken Prestwich*

research after leaving UF. He was an excellent facilitator and was constantly sought out for ideas and advice. I greatly enjoyed lunches in the summer with him and Jim Lloyd, a firefly systematist and behavioral ecologist, when we would discuss biology."

Fer recalled a story of Tom's far-reaching kindness toward others: "I never met Tom in person, but I still have a great deal to say about him. Back in the early 1990s, when I was an undergraduate student at Universidad del Valle in Cali, Colombia, I was enrolled in the Entomology programme, which, at the time, was a rigorous five-year degree with a full year dedicated to a research thesis. There was no way to access scientific literature online, no PDFs, no digital archives. If you needed a classic work, you had to find someone who owned it. I contacted Tom Walker by email, asking whether he might be able to share copies of several old publications, works such as Palisot de Beauvois (1819), Redtenbacher (1891), and Karny (1907). These were not simple journal articles but entire monographs or books. Tom responded immediately and positively. He took the time to photocopy these materials from his own collection and from the special collections at the library in Gainesville, and then mailed them to me in Colombia. This act of generosity meant a great deal to me. It not only allowed me to complete my diploma dissertation, but that dissertation ultimately shaped the direction of my scientific career. Tom's willingness to help a young student on the other side of the world, at a time when accessing historical literature was nearly impossible, is something I have never forgotten."

Brandon wrote, "although I only met Dr. Walker in person once, I feel as though I knew him for far longer. As a high school student interested in Orthoptera, the SINA website quickly came to my attention and I began using it extensively, starting in 2011. The detailed range maps, sound recordings, photos, keys, and descriptions of identification and natural history information, based on Walker's own experience, were invaluable to me as I learned the North American cricket and katydid fauna. In addition, Walker's foresight in providing free access to PDFs of most of the systematic literature gifted me with a treasure trove of secret knowledge which I eagerly pored over during meals and between classes. Thus, for nearly seven years, Dr. Walker was teaching me everything he knew about North American Ensifera without even knowing."

Nancy wrote, "Dr. Thomas J. Walker was my mentor and my friend. He alone is responsible for my journey as a Citizen Scientist as an Amateur Oecanthinist. It started from an email I sent to him in 2006 to ask about a curious observation I made of an apparent tree cricket, and four or five holes in the leaves of a sunflower plant next to my bird feeder. I had no entomological background, but plenty of curiosity. The only 'bug' history I had was as a child, collecting caterpillars and raising them to butterflies. So imagine my surprise when he not only answered my email with an explanation of baffle holes and *Neoxabea bipunctata*, but he subsequently asked for my assistance in recording *Oecanthus forbesi* in very warm temperatures. I suspect he recognized my curiosity and overlooked my lack of training because I lived in Wisconsin, where *O. forbesi* occurs.

Nancy continued, "well…having an actual scientist who was a world expert in crickets ask me for some assistance moved my curiosity to an obsession. When Laurel Symes, then a PhD candidate from Dartmouth, asked Dr. Walker for tips on identifying and collecting tree crickets, he referred her to **ME**! Laurel and I ended up finding a species that Dr. Richard D. Alexander had recorded in the 1960s, but we thought it was a frog because of its unrecognizable song. Dr. Walker knew what it was immediately because he had analyzed Alexander's recordings at the start of

Figure 5. Tom Walker during a controlled burn at NATL. *Photograph by Ken Prestwich*

Figure 6. Tom Walker and his colleagues during a controlled burn at NATL. *Photograph by Ken Prestwich*

his own entomological career – in the 1970s! The highest honor of my life was being added as a co-author on the description paper for *O. alexanderi* T. Walker 2010."

Wil wrote, "I met Tom Walker in the early 2000s while I was working on a book project with Lang Elliott about the crickets and katydids of the eastern United States. Tom was excited about our project and incredibly generous with his time and expertise. He quickly agreed to serve as the science advisor for our book and to write the foreword. When Lang and I visited him at UF, he took us out to the Natural Area Teaching Laboratory. Lang had brought along one of the SongFinder instruments that he helped develop. The device is a stereo-listening tool that pitch-lowers the sounds in the environment 1 to 3 octaves. When Tom placed the SongFinder headphones on and started to hear the sounds of singing insects that he hadn't heard in years, we all had tears in our eyes. Seeing the smile that hearing these sounds brought to Tom's face was priceless, making our project even more important to us to complete. Tom continued to provide technical assistance to make our Songs of Insects book a success. In subsequent years, I had the pleasure of interacting with Tom over the phone, getting his opinion regarding data that I had collected on several different cricket species. He was always ready and willing to help. He instilled in me a deep passion for these tiny singers and their amazing variety, which will always live on in my heart."

Ken wrote, "Tom Walker was an enthusiastic adopter of early internet systems focused on the dissemination of scientific information. I think he was the first person I knew to make his publications freely available on the web (mid-1990s). Tom tirelessly advocated for making scientific publications openly accessible. He convinced the Florida Entomological Society to make their journal publicly accessible online." Ken also noted that Tom "oversaw the digitization of every issue of the journal going back to 1917 (over 20,000 pages!)." Tom mentioned, in his SINA profile, that the "cost of scanning, indexing, and optical character reading the 20,000 pages was less than $12,000." Tom's innovative ideas and projects were controversial at the time and he often had to convince people to see and understand his visions. Ken explained that "Tom generally won the day through a combination of good ideas (if ahead of the times) combined with patience and energy, and the ability to respond effectively to criticisms and to make adjustments when there were problems. He was great at pushing ideas in a forceful but yet somehow gentle and cooperative way. He had high expectations of others, but did not roll over people like so many try to do!" Tim noted that Tom "was a staunch advocate for making scientific data accessible, long before 'Open Access' was a common phrase."

I was impressed with Tom's great knowledge of Orthoptera and the neat, clean, and clear editing skills he used in building SINA. Also impressive was the sheer volume of information contained within SINA, notably the cricket and katydid songs. Tim wrote that Tom "moved recordings on reel-to-reel tape to digital recording and sound analysis. Indeed, the world is indebted to him for the tremendous amount of work to digitize so many tape recordings." Ken wrote, "Tom was keen to make the transition from analog to digital recording. Many of these formed the basis of the on-line SINA website, now curated by the Orthopterists' Society, and I think at least 6,500 of 9,000 recordings are preserved and available for study at Cornell's Macaulay Library of Natural Sounds." Tom also studied migration patterns of butterflies and led the initial stages of a biological control program to control invasive mole crickets in Florida, a program that was wildly successful. Tom has over 70 publications listed on SINA's reference page, most of which are linked to the publications.

Tim wrote, "Tom believed that the wonder of the natural world belonged to everyone." And Ken wrote, "Tom was an avid conservationist. He was active in local conservation efforts and he donated his small farm just outside of Gainesville to Alachua County to be a park named after his wife, Jane. Perhaps his crowning achievement was UF's Natural Area Teaching Laboratory (NATL). Located on the southwest corner of the UF campus, NATL features a restored longleaf pine forest, oak hammocks, wetlands and several plots that demonstrate ecological succession. Informative trails run through the area, including a popular boardwalk that crosses a wetland and a small 'roadside park' for picnics. Besides the general public, NATL is a place where classes come to do field work." Ken said that Tom was "the main force" behind NATL's development and that Tom would "do the hard work like what he had grown up doing on the farm, like chainsawing brush, girdling trees, marking trails, and spraying or

Figure 7. Pinetop. *Photograph by Kevin Judge*

pulling invasives (**Figs. 2, 3, and 4**). He participated in all the prescribed burns (**Figs. 5 and 6**). He developed a grid system to make research easier and documented the progress of the restoration. He continued all of this into his late 80s."

Ken related this story about NATL: "In the late 1990s, Yo-Yo Ma was supposed to perform at the Phillips Center for the Performing Arts in the evening. A burn had occurred earlier in the day at NATL, and we thought everything was out (after several hours of doing so). After everyone had gone home, smoke reappeared and some of it drifted to the Center (which is situated on the north boundary of NATL). Ma was on the verge of refusing to perform. Tom was notified and he rushed back and got things under control!" And Jeff recalled how "Tom enthusiastically imparted his detailed knowledge of Florida ecology on a walk through NATL: how succession proceeds, how humans have altered the environment, and, of course, which insect singers one may expect to find."

As he did with many others, Tom welcomed me to his home, which he referred to as Pinetop (**Fig. 7**), and every time before I left, Tom would offer me fresh fruit or a piece of pie. Jeff recounted the times he spent at Pinetop: "Tom put me up for two consecutive spring breaks at his home in Gainesville. In the relaxing atmosphere of his living room, with his characteristic hushed intensity, Tom assertively probed me about species concepts in flightless katydids, using Florida *Belocephalus* as an example. I explored the Orthoptera of his property while he boasted that his hammock was more intact than that of most Gainesville parks. After our conversations he would retire to his study to work on SINA."

Nancy wrote, "I visited Dr. Walker twice at Pinetop, the first time was to bring him the *O. alexanderi* holotype; the second time was to bring him a pair of *O. walkeri*, which Laurel and I discovered on our trip. I reluctantly called him Tom when speaking with him, but, to me, he will always be Dr. Walker. Despite his brilliance, he managed to discuss things with me in a language I could understand and I loved listening to his Tennessee accent. He gave me an important purpose in life and an actual legacy. Because of him, I am now included in what Arthur Conan Doyle (The Lost World) called the 'deathless roll of zoology'. For a person with no children, it means my name will still be encountered 200+ years from now."

Kevin shared this delightful story: "I was very lucky to spend a couple weeks staying at Tom's place collecting crickets back in the fall of 2010. I loved every minute and Tom was a wonderful and generous host. The trip made a big impression on me and I think back to the place and to Tom very often. I remember being so in awe of his agility and athleticism, which seemed to fit a man half his age (he had a satellite dish repairman on his roof one day and he couldn't hear what the guy was saying – from my vantage point in the living room I saw him scamper up the ladder onto the roof to talk to the guy).

Kevin continued, "I've got lots of photos from the trip, but I have one photo (**Fig. 8**) of a moment that really affected me. At one point after I first got to Tom's house, I took off my shoes before heading inside and noticed that we had the exact same type of hiker – same color and everything, except that my pair were much larger owing to our strongly divergent body sizes. But what struck me was this feeling that I somehow belonged, or that I was on the right path – I must be doing something right if I've chosen the same shoes as this giant of orthopterology! Seems silly now, but I can't deny the feeling of comfort that gave me, seeing that we had the same shoes. From the photo it's obvious which pair of shoes is Tom's, but I know that my size 15 feet will never fill them."

When Tom interviewed me to be webmaster for SINA, he arrived late and obviously not feeling well. His daughter attended him while Tom set me up to start working on SINA. Finally, though, his daughter convinced him to go to the hospital. One morning, a few weeks later, I was working in our office at UF when I heard a *clack, clack, clack* in the hallway. Tom came in, shuffling behind a walker, his daughter following behind him. Later that day, Tom told me, "I will not be using this walker for long. I refuse to use a walker!" It wasn't long before he graduated to a cane and, eventually, did well without the

Figure 8. Kevin Judge's shoes next to Tom Walker's shoes. *Photograph by Kevin Judge*

Figure 9. Painting of the river where Glenn Morris, Tom Walker, and Bill Walker had their magical river trip. *Painting by Glenn Morris*

cane. His daughter, Rose Ann, and his son, Bill, were instrumental in helping Tom recover from that illness and, several years later, providing him a safe and loving place to pass from this world. Tom was very proud of his children and often spoke of them.

For me, it was an honor to know and work with Tom and, now, to continue Tom's work by keeping SINA alive under the stewardship of the Orthopterists' Society. Brandon wrote, "I was fortunate enough to meet Dr. Walker in 2018 during a trip to Gainesville. Although long-retired by this point, he took the time to meet with me and chat about katydids for a couple of hours. I found him gracious and amiable, as willing and happy to share his knowledge in person as he was online. Dr. Walker will be well--remembered as one of the titans of North American Orthopterology and a champion of free access to scientific information. Through SINA, he will continue to teach and inspire future generations of orthopterists longer than he could ever have imagined."

Dave wrote, "many years ago, when I was a beginning scientist, I had an occasion to write to Tom with some questions. He immediately got back to me. I found that particularly encouraging because he was famous as an orthopterist and I was a nobody. I also took his behavior to heart and have always been certain to answer communications from other folks, regardless if they were known to me or not."

Glenn said, "in the 1970s, I spent a sabbatical year at UF in Tom Walker's lab. On one magical sunny day with Tom and his son Bill, we paddled a canoe down a river near Gainesville. Elderly trees with emergent support roots filtered the light of the sun. For some of the way the river banks were of white quartz sand, contrasting with the clear tannin-coloured water. Many years later, I created a painting of this event (**Fig. 9**). I cherish many memories like this of this fine field scientist and friend."

Jeff said, "strong memories of good company, insightful conversation, encouragement, and abundant singing insects."

Nancy added, "while walking with him through NATL I felt his pride. I heard often of his love and pride of his two grown children and grandchildren, and his late wife. He was a special person and I will miss him."

Tom endeavored to make the world a better place and he succeeded in his endeavors.

Acknowledgments: I am deeply grateful to everyone who shared their memories and reflections about Tom to create this tribute. The contributors are listed here again with a short statement, in their words, about their relationship with Tom Walker.

Brandon Woo: "Current Ph.D. student and fellow enthusiast of North American Ensifera."

David Weissman (Dave): "Research collaborator."

Fernando Montealegre-Z (Fer): "Fellow katydid enthusiast and former student from a developing country; last Ph.D. student of Glenn Morris; Chair Professor at the University of Lincoln (UK); current President of the Orthopterists' Society."

Glenn Morris: "An always approachable Tom led a newly doctored naive ultrasound enthusiast to attempt a comparative study of the species-diagnostic songs of *Orchelimum*."

Jeffrey Cole (Jeff): "Tom mentored me before and during graduate school, and I have contributed to SINA since 2002."

Ken Prestwich: "Mentee, then professional colleague, inspiration in using the internet to expand access to scientific knowledge, conservation co-worker and collaborator, friend."

Kevin Judge: "Fellow cricket researcher, one-time house guest, and lifelong admirer."

Nancy Collins: "Grateful mentee who felt honored to be his friend."

Timothy Forrest (Tim): "I was Tom's graduate student (M.Sc. 1979-1981, Ph.D. 1981-1986) and colleague."

Wilbur Hershberger (Wil): "Tom was my mentor and advisor. He was very generous with his time and talent."

Teresa Yawn: "I was webmaster to Tom's editorship of the website Singing Insects of North America (SINA) from 2018 to 2021. Since 2021, I have had the honor of being editor and webmaster of SINA."

Splinter
by Carl Sandberg

The voice of the last cricket
across the first frost
is one kind of good-by.
It is so thin a splinter of singing.

Minutes of THE ORTHOPTERISTS' SOCIETY BOARD MEETING ICO 2026

Le Village Hotel, San Martín de los Andes, Argentina

10 March 2026, 18:00

Compiled by AXEL HOCHKIRCH
Past President
Axel.HOCHKIRCH@mnhn.lu

1. **Welcome from Chair:** *Axel Hochkirch*

2. **Apologies:** Rohini Balakrishnan, Mohamed Abdellahi Ould Babah Ebbe, Pamm Mihm (attended virtually), Mira Ries (attended virtually), Nancy Morris

3. **Officers of the Orthopterists' Society:**

President	Axel Hochkirch (AH)
Incoming President	Fernando Montealegre-Z (FMZ)
President-Elect	Rohini Balakrishnan (RB)
Membership Database Officer	Mira Ries (MR)
Treasurer	Pamm Mihm (PM)
JOR Managing Editor	Tony Robillard (TR)
JOR Editorial Assistant	Nancy Morris (NM)
Metaleptea Editor	Hojun Song (HS)
Metaleptea Associate Editor	Derek A. Woller (DAW)
Webmaster	Derek A. Woller (DAW)
Orthoptera Network Officer	Arianne Cease (AC)
Officer, Species File Online, Past President	María Marta Cigliano (MMC)
Financial Advisor, Past President	David Hunter (DH)
Manager, Theodore J. Cohn Research Fund, Past President	Michel Lecoq (ML)

4. **Changes to the Constitution & By-Laws:** *AH*

The online ballot on the changes to the constitution and by-laws resulted in a broad approval. Only one member disagreed with one of the changes: the deletion of the role of an Executive Director. The member argued that the Executive Director has important responsibilities and one of the most important elements would be a kind of institutional memory or continuity over time, which isn't assured and even diminished by the turnover of the Board.

After some discussions in the meeting, the Board disagreed with this comment for the following reasons: first, DH explained that the former role of the Executive Director was mainly to serve as a deputy of the President in case the President is not available (e.g., due to fieldwork). In modern times, this situation hardly occurs anymore as Presidents are usually available by smartphone even during travel. Second, the work is now shared with other Board members and all major decisions are made with consent of the Board. Third, the Board concluded that institutional memory and continuity are also ensured by the presence of past Presidents on the board (currently: MMC, ML, DH).

Additionally, ML used AI to check the current constitution and by-laws for any legal issues. The report suggests that some further changes might be needed. Most importantly, the Society probably needs a United States address. PM commented that the current constitution and by-laws meet the requirements for nonprofit status under the U.S. law, so that no major changes are required.

Actions: PM/FMZ: To check if the final version of the new constitution and by-laws need any further modification from a legal point of view.

5. **Treasurer's Report:** *PM/DH*
DH gave an update on the current financial situation of the Society. The financial situation is generally very good. The endowment by Ted Cohn has increased from $1 million to ca. $2.1 million. The board discussed that the budgets for JOR, the Theodore J. Cohn Research Fund, and Travel Grants can be increased to account for inflation and promote young orthopterists.

Actions: PM/DH: To calculate how much money can be spent in the future on JOR, the Theodore J. Cohn Research Fund, Travel Grants, and a potentially new grant to promote fieldwork.

6. **Metaleptea:** *HS/DAW*
HS gave a report on the status of *Metaleptea*. The number of three issues per year will be continued, but it remains challenging to motivate members to submit articles. This is particularly mandatory for Theodore J. Cohn Research Fund awardees, OSF grant awardees and regional representatives. The board discussed potential ways to improve the situation, e.g., by paying a small amount of the grant after submission of a final report for *Metaleptea*. However, this idea was dismissed given the small grant amounts. Instead, it was agreed that regional representatives should reach out to awardees to collect articles. There was general agreement that awardees who have not sent a report will not be awarded further funding.

Actions: ML/MMC: To send contact details of awardees who have not sent reports to *Metaleptea* to the regional representatives.

7. **JOR:** *TR*
JOR has now an impact factor of 1.2, reflecting its special focus on Orthoptera and related genera. An increasing number of papers have been submitted to *JOR*, which has resulted in a delay in the publication process as the page limit covered by OS funding has already been reached. TR proposed three different options to overcome this situation: **(1)** OS increases the funding of *JOR* to enable the publication of more articles, which means that *JOR* would remain a diamond open access journal; **(2)** authors pay budget-friendly article processing charges (APC) and the OS covers a part of the APCs, which means that *JOR* would become a gold open access journal; **(3)** authors pay regular APCs and the Society covers waivers of a limited number of papers, which also means that *JOR* would become a gold open access journal. The board decided on a combination of option 1 and 3, i.e., regular APCs and Society covers a (higher) number of waivers.

In an e-mail discussion after the board meeting, it was decided to first double the funding for *JOR* to allow more papers (option 1) and observe the development during the next few years. If a plateau of articles is reached, option 1 would be continued. If a further increase of articles is observed, the OS would switch to option 3.

As a second issue, TR mentioned that the time to publication in *JOR* is long (10 months) because he engages in the correction of English. He decided to not engage in this anymore as NM is more experienced with linguistic corrections. To improve the review process, TR will ask for additional editors at the Congress.

Actions: TR: To liaise with PM and DH to increase the OS funding of *JOR*; TR: To approach members to become *JOR* editors.

8. **OS website:** *DAW*
DW gave a short overview of the status of the OS website. New changes (new constitution & by-laws, new board, new regional representatives) will be implemented after the Congress. The board also discussed the option to offer a members database. Due to the European GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation), it will not be possible to offer an open database. It was, therefore, decided to potentially offer access to the database using a login, most likely via HopperLink. This will also prevent misuse of personal information by scammers.

Actions: MR/DW: To potentially develop a login-based access to the members database for OS members.

9. **Feedback from Regional Representatives:**
A mix of old and new candidates for regional representatives have been confirmed by the online ballot. The new structure of regional representatives is as follows:
North America – Kathleen King
Western Europe – Luc Willemse
Latin America and the Caribbean – Martina Pocco
Eastern Europe/Central Asia – Dragan Chobanov
Western and Southern Asia – Swati Diwakar
Eastern and Southeastern Asia – Koutaro Maeno
Oceania – Michael Kearney
Northern, Western & Central Africa – Jeanne Yetchom Fondjo
Southern and Eastern Africa – Vanessa Couldridge

Additionally, Martina Pocco highlighted that payment of dues by Paypal is currently not possible from Argentina and DAW is investigating. Jeanne Yetchom Fondjo added that payment of dues is also difficult for students from West Africa. Michael Kearney highlighted that the number of orthopterists is increasing in Australia.

Actions: DW/PM: To sort out how to improve or diversify payment options.

10. **OSF:** *MMC*
OSF has new members on the Scientific Committee (Pedro Souza-Dias & Ming Kai Tan). The number of OSF grants in 2026 was lower due to the lower funds available caused by stock market fluctuations. MMC highlighted new functions in OSF. HS initiated a discussion on OSF grant proposals that are focused on funding for fieldwork rather than collecting primary information for OSF. The board discussed that a new fund for fieldwork might be needed. Ideally, this should always be associated with workshops to build orthopterological capacity in the target region. A strategic approach might be needed to prioritize regions with little orthopterological knowledge, but some initial interest (e.g., through contacts to universities or museums).

Actions: DH/PM: To discuss how much money would be available for an additional OS fund for fieldwork.

11. **Theodore J. Cohn Research Fund:** *ML*
ML presented his report, which he also published in *Metaleptea*. The maximum amount of funds needs to be increased to account for inflation. The geographical spread of grants is strongly biased towards the U.S.A.; mechanisms should be installed to improve funding in the global south. The criteria, therefore, need to be revised to support proposals from such regions. DH suggests setting aside a third of the fund to support proposals from the global south. AC offered to support these activities.

Actions: DH/PM/ML: To increase the funding available for the research fund (ideally doubling the funds available)

12. **Next OS Congress**
The board reached broad agreement that the next congress should take place in Europe (the last one in Europe was in Montpellier 2001) since the last two were in the Americas. There were general discussions about a feasibility to hold the congress in Hungary or Bulgaria, but due to a lack of institutional support in these countries, it was decided that it might be easier to organize the next congress in the UK. FMZ suggested we consider London or Cambridge as potential venues. Zurich, Switzerland would be possible as another option.

Actions: FMZ: To reach out to British orthopterists to clarify whether an organization of the congress in the UK would be feasible.

13. **Close**

Editorial

By HOJUN SONG
Editor, *Metaleptea*
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Being a part of the Orthopterists' Society is one of the most enjoyable things in my career. To me, our society is more than a scientific society. We are a group of people who are passionate about Orthoptera. We can talk for hours about catching grasshoppers or chasing crickets. We feel a sense of camaraderie because we fight locusts together. We are one of those weird people who bring microphones to the field to record wonderful sounds of singing orthopterans. When we talk about Orthoptera with each other, we instantly become friends and family. To me, each congress is an opportunity to affirm this sentiment. The 15th International Congress of Orthopterology (ICO) at San Martín de los Andes in Argentina was no exception. To me, this congress felt like a successful family reunion filled with joy, wonder, and laughter. This time, many of my former and present students were able to join (see photo), making the event even more memorable.

When I was a graduate student, there were not many people who studied Orthoptera in the U.S. In fact, I could not even find an advisor who studied Orthoptera (my Ph.D. advisor was a hymenopterist). I found it very frustrating because I had no orthopterist mentor who could help when I needed help. When I joined the Orthopterists' Society in 2001 and attended my first ICO in Montpellier, France, I felt like I had finally found my group of people. Meeting those experts whom I only knew from papers was amazing, and meeting other graduate students who studied Orthoptera from different parts of the world gave me a sense of belonging. I wanted to contribute to this society more meaningfully, so I took this Editor's position in 2009. The first issue I put together (Vol. 29 (2)) included a recap of ICO2009, held in Antalya, Turkey. I was a postdoc back then, unsure of where my career would take me. I knew that I wanted to have my own lab to study Orthoptera, although I was not sure how things would turn out. Since then, I was lucky enough to have a job where I could develop and expand my research program on Orthoptera and train many new orthopterists. Now, 17 years later, I am putting together my 51st (!) issue, which includes a recap of ICO2026 and this reminiscence. I continue to serve in this role because I believe there are still students who are passionate about Orthoptera and yearning for a sense of belonging. The world needs more

orthopterists, and if *Metaleptea* can help with this mission, I will gladly push on.

I want to thank our Associate Editor, Derek A. Woller, for his continued assistance in the editorial process.

To publish in *Metaleptea*, please send your contribution to hojun.song@asu.edu. The next issue will be published in September 2026.

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