

***IN-SITU* CONSERVATION OF *EPIPACTIS PALUSTRIS* (L.)  
CRANTZ IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA**

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The research of rare species is included both in the stipulations of national laws and strategies, as well as in the international obligations of the Republic of Moldova, and the protection of threatened species under *in-situ* conditions is a priority objective, included in the Biodiversity Conservation Strategies. Thus, the limiting factors can be quickly identified and urgent and effective measures taken to stop the decline of populations of species threatened with extinction and their conservation. The present study refers to *Epipactis palustris* (L.) Crantz (Orchidaceae family), critically endangered species, protected by law, included in the Red Book of the Republic of Moldova. Beyond the borders of the republic, it is spread across Europe, the Caucasus, Turkey, Iran and Central Asia. Included on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species under the category of „Least Concern” and in Annex II of CITES. In the framework of the study, the population of the species under study reported in the „Codru” Reserve, was investigated, the degree of threat was estimated and the category of endangerment was established, according to the requirements of the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the limiting factors were identified and protection measures were proposed.

In the flora of the Republic of Moldova, according to data from the literature, during the last 50 years the state of the population has fluctuated considerably. Although in some publications, *E. palustris* is mentioned in two locations: Răciula village, Călărași district and Lozova commune (Străseni), currently the presence of the species in the first one remains uncertain, because neither concrete data nor herbaceous material has been found from this site. At the end of the 70<sup>s</sup> of the last century, it was mentioned that the species had not been found in the field for several years in a row and probably had even disappeared. Thus, as a result of field research in recent years, the population reported in the proximity of Lozova commune, from the „Codru” Scientific Reserve, was evaluated, the first collections here dating back to 1952. In the summer of 2023, the population of the *E. palustris* species covered an area of about 56 m<sup>2</sup> with ± 100 phytoindividuals, predominantly mature, flowering specimens that reach 30-60 cm in height.

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