OULU 2018 A 727

UNIVERSITATIS OULUENSIS

Sonja Hurskainen

THE ROLES OF INDIVIDUAL DEMOGRAPHIC HISTORY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS IN THE PERFORMANCE AND CONSERVATION OF NORTHERN ORCHIDS

UNIVERSITY OF OULU GRADUATE SCHOOL; UNIVERSITY OF OULU, FACULTY OF SCIENCE



ACTA UNIVERSITATIS OULUENSIS A Scientiae Rerum Naturalium 727

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Academic dissertation to be presented with the assent of the Doctoral Training Committee of Technology and Natural Sciences of the University of Oulu for public defence in Keckmaninsali (HU106), Linnanmaa, on 30 November 2018, at 12 noon

UNIVERSITY OF OULU, OULU 2018

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ISBN 978-952-62-2087-1 (Paperback) ISBN 978-952-62-2088-8 (PDF)

ISSN 0355-3191 (Printed) ISSN 1796-220X (Online)

Cover Design Raimo Ahonen

JUVENES PRINT TAMPERE 2018

Hurskainen, Sonja, The roles of individual demographic history and environmental conditions in the performance and conservation of northern orchids.

University of Oulu Graduate School; University of Oulu, Faculty of Science Acta Univ. Oul. A 727, 2018

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Abstract

A population growth rate is the sum of all individuals' reproduction and survival, which in turn depend on many external and internal factors, e.g. weather and individual reproductive history. In plants, for example, previous reproduction can deplete an individual's resources, resulting in trade-offs between demographic functions.

To understand these demographic processes, it is necessary to follow populations for many years. Such long-term studies are especially crucial for endangered species, as they can reveal the causes of population declines and provide information that is directly applicable for the management. In my thesis, I applied this approach to the study of rare orchids. Specifically, I analyzed long-term orchid monitoring data from two countries, Finland and Estonia, to assess the external and internal factors that affect the performance of these long-lived plants, which reproduce both sexually (via seeds) and vegetatively (via new ramets).

My research reveals that plant performance depends on both the demographic history and the environment of a plant. For example, although Finnish and Estonian populations of the lady's slipper orchid, *Cypripedium calceolus*, differed in direction and statistical significance of their responses to environmental factors, the two most-influential weather variables in both cases were spring snow depth and the temperature of the previous summer. However, the influence of weather on both flowering and vegetative growth was dwarfed by the effect of plants' own demographic histories: there was a trade-off between current and future reproduction which created asynchronous two-year cycles in reproduction and growth. Furthermore, in all three studied orchid species – the lady's slipper orchid (*C. calceolus*), the fairy's slipper orchid (*Calypso bulbosa*), and the dark-red helleborine (*Epipactis atrorubens*) – the probability of dormancy (a state in which the plant spends a year or more underground) and the demographic costs this state incurred with respect to size or future reproduction depended on a plant's size and whether it flowered prior to dormancy. In other words, dormancy had both absolute and relative costs in large, but not in small, individuals. Finally, I show here that environmental alteration via both seeds and ramets.

Keywords: canopy cover, dormancy, growth, individual history, life-history costs, Orchidaceae, reproduction, weather

Hurskainen, Sonja, Yksilöhistorian ja ympäristötekijöiden merkitys pohjoisten kämmeköiden menestykselle ja suojelulle.

Oulun yliopiston tutkijakoulu; Oulun yliopisto, Luonnontieteellinen tiedekunta Acta Univ. Oul. A 727, 2018 Oulun yliopisto, PL 8000, 90014 Oulun yliopisto

Tiivistelmä

Populaation kasvunopeus riippuu siitä, kuinka monta yksilöä populaatioon syntyy ja kuinka monta yksilöä kuolee. Yksilöiden lisääntyvyyteen ja elossa säilyvyyteen puolestaan vaikuttavat monet ulkoiset ja sisäiset tekijät, kuten sää ja yksilön oma lisääntymishistoria. Kasvilla on rajallinen määrä resursseja, joten sen pitää tehdä kompromisseja eri elintoimintojen, esimerkiksi kasvun ja lisääntymisen, välillä. Klonaaliset kasvit voivat myös lisääntyä usealla tavalla: joko suvullisesti siemenistä tai kasvullisesti tuottamalla uusia versoja.

Demografisten prosessien tutkimisessa pitkäaikaiset seuranta-aineistot ovat välttämättömiä. Pitkäaikaisseurannat voivat myös paljastaa uhanalaisen lajin populaation taantumisen syyt ja näistä seurannoista saatua tietoa voidaan soveltaa harvinaisten lajien, esimerkiksi kämmeköiden, suojelutoimien suunnittelussa. Tässä väitöskirjassa analysoin aineistoa kämmeköiden pitkä-aikaisseurannoista Suomesta ja Virosta. Tavoitteenani oli arvioida ulkoisten ja sisäisten tekijöiden merkitystä pitkäikäisten kasvien menestykselle.

Tulokset osoittavat, että kasvin menestys riippuu sekä yksilön omasta demografisesta historiasta että sen ympäristöstä. Eri säätekijöiden vaikutus tikankontin (*Cypripedium calceolus*) kasvuun ja kukkimiseen vaihteli Suomen ja Viron välillä, mutta lumen syvyys ja edellisen kasvukauden lämpötila nousivat merkittävimmiksi tekijöiksi molemmissa maissa. Tikankontin kasvu ja kukinta riippuivat kuitenkin säätä enemmän kasvin omasta demografisesta historiasta. Runsas lisääntyminen edeltävällä kasvukaudella vähensi lisääntymistä tulevalla kasvukaudella, mikä johti kaksivuotiseen jaksottaisuuteen tikankontin lisääntymisessä ja kasvussa. Tutkiessani dormanssia (lepotila, jossa kasvi ei tuota maanpäällistä versoa) kolmella kämmekkälajilla, tikankontilla, neidonkengällä (*Calypso bulbosa*) ja tummaneidonvaipalla (*Epipactis atrorubens*), havaitsin lisäksi, että todennäköisyys siirtyä dormanssiin riippui kasvin koosta. Myöskin tämän lepotilan aiheuttamat kustannukset olivat riippuvaisia kasvin aikaisemmasta tilasta. Isoilla kasveilla dormanssilla oli sekä suoria kustannuksia että kustannuksia suhteessa versomiseen. Pienillä kasveilla näitä kustannuksia ei ollut. Osoitan väitöskirjassani myös, että maltillisella puunpoistolla voidaan lisätä tikankonttipopulaatioiden siementuottoa ja versotiheyttä.

Asiasanat: demografiset kustannukset, dormanssi, kasvu, latvuspeittävyys, lisääntyminen, Orchidaceae, säätekijät, yksilöhistoria

To my family and friends

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all the people who have supported me during this PhD project. First of all, I need to thank my supervisors for all their advice, and for shaping of this thesis. When I first walked into Juha's office to ask if he had any open positions for a PhD student, I had no idea what I was in for. Still, thank you Juha for taking me on, becoming my supervisor and supporting me throughout this crazy journey. Thank you Anne for all the long hours you have spent in the field observing the orchid populations. This study really would not have been possible without the enormous amount of work you have done. Thank you Satu for all your invaluable help and advice with statistics and writing. Your careful, detailed and critical feedback really helped me to hone this thesis to its best. And thank you Laura for hopping in to take care of the official arrangements after Juha's retirement, and for ushering me along the final steps to get my thesis published.

I also wish to thank my follow-up group, Annamari Markkola, Kari Koivula and Arja Kaitala for support and guidance. I express my thanks to Prof. Jon Ågren and Dr. Maria Begoña García for pre-examing my thesis. I thank the University of Oulu Graduate School, the Department of Ecology and Genetics and my colleagues for providing me this pleasant and calm setting to study and conduct my research.

I owe my deep gratitude to Metsähallitus, as well as my co-authors Tiiu Kull, Marilin Mõtlep, Kirsi Alahuhta and Hilde Hens for sharing their orchid data with me. Veijo Kaitala and Richard Shefferson also gave the idea and first push for the two first papers. I wish to impress my thanks to the Oulanka research station for providing facilities and help for the field-work. Thanks also to my field assistants Elisabet Rams, Anna-Maria Borshagovski, Timo Hyttinen and Sakari Hautala!

Above all, I need to thank my parents for their love and support, and my friends for all the fun times we have had. I could not have done this without you.

This work was financially supported by the Jenny and Antti Wihuri Foundation, Societas pro Fauna et Flora Fennica, Oulun luonnonystäväin yhdistys and the Oulangan rahasto Fund.

25.09.2018

Sonja Hurskainen

List of original publications

This thesis is based on the following publications, which are referred throughout the text by their Roman numerals:

- I Hurskainen, S., Jäkäläniemi, A., Kaitala, V., Kull, T., Mõtlep, M., Ramula, S., & Tuomi, J. (2017). Temporal cycles and spatial asynchrony in the reproduction and growth of a rare nectarless orchid, *Cypripedium calceolus. Botanical Journal of the Linnean Society*, 183(2), 316-326.
- II Hurskainen, S., Alahuhta, A., Hens, H., Jäkäläniemi, A., Kull, T., Shefferson R.P., & Tuomi, J. (in press). Prolonged dormancy in orchids incurs absolute and relative costs in large, but not in small plants. *Botanical Journal of the Linnean Society*.
- III Hurskainen, S., Jäkäläniemi, A., Ramula, S., & Tuomi, J. (2017). Tree removal as a management strategy for the lady's slipper orchid, a flagship species for herb-rich forest conservation. *Forest Ecology and Management*, 406, 12-18.

Author's contributions:

The original idea for paper I came from Veijo Kaitala and Juha Tuomi, the idea for paper III from Anne Jäkäläniemi and Juha Tuomi, and the original idea for paper II was proposed by Richard Shefferson and Tiiu Kull. Ideas for all the papers were further developed by the co-authors and me. The Finnish *Cypripedium calceolus* data is collected by Anne Jäkäläniemi and me. Kirsi Alahuhta and Hilde Hens provided data for the other two Finnish orchids, and the Estonian data is provided by Tiiu Kull and Marilin Mõtlep. All the statistical analyses are conducted by me (partly by Kirsi Alahuhta for paper II) under guidance by Satu Ramula. I wrote the first drafts of all the manuscripts, which were then commented by co-authors.

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1 Introduction

The study of demography seeks answers to basic ecological questions about the viability, evolution, and adaptation of populations by exploring temporal and spatial changes in population size due to birth, death, and migration. Overall, the numbers of births and deaths in a population are the sum of all individuals' survival and reproductive success. In turn, these individual parameters often depend on an individual's age and/or size (Geber, Kroon, & Watson, 2016; Hutchings, 1987; Miller, Williams, Jongejans, Brys, & Jacquemyn, 2012; Worley & Harder, 1996). In addition to age and size, the reproduction and survival of a plant can also depend on its current and past demographic state, but how such states are defined varies among species. For example, the life cycle of a terrestrial orchid can be divided into four states: young, vegetative, flowering, and dormant. As Ehrlén (2000) demonstrated, if we do not take into account plants' demographic histories, this can affect our estimates of how the growth rate responds to changes in vital rates, as well as estimates of the population growth rate itself.

In nature, populations (and individuals within populations) do not exist in isolation, but interact with their biotic and abiotic environments in myriad ways. Environmental factors such as temperature, precipitation, and light availability can have profound implications for both individual survival and reproduction. In this thesis, I assess how individual demographic history and environmental factors affect measures of individual and population performance (see Fig. 1).

1.1 Clonal growth strategy

Any demographic study must first begin by identifying the individuals in question. In plants, there are multiple definitions for what constitutes an individual (Clarke, 2012). One definition for an individual is a genet, also called a clone, which is the genetic individual and a product of a single zygote (Harper, 1987). Most plants are modular in structure, meaning that they consist of repeated self-reproducing and semi-autonomous units called modules (e.g., shoots of a birch tree). In clonal plants, these sub-units form physically coherent structural entities in themselves (e.g., runners of strawberry or trees in an aspen stand) and are called ramets (Clarke, 2012; Harper, 1987). For these plants, the rate of individual turnover varies depending on whether it is measured at the level of the genet or the ramet. For example, in the orchid *Cypripedium calceolus*, ramets live for only one growing season and therefore have rapid turnover rates, while genets can live for a hundred



Fig. 1. A flow-chart depicting the effects of individual history and environmental factors on demographic parameters at the individual and population levels. Red arrows indicate potential trade-offs between different demographic functions and green arrows indicate environmental effects. All other correlations and interactions are in blue (for example, population-level parameters are often the sum of individual-level parameters, or population-level parameters reflect back on the individual level via, e.g., density dependency). Arrows returning to a variable itself indicate historical effects (e.g., flowering in one year affects flowering in the following year). Note that some of the effects indicated by the arrows are positive, some are negative, and some (especially the environmental factors) have both positive and negative effects.

years (Kull, 1999; Nicolè, Brzosko, & Till-Bottraud, 2005). Genet size often correlates with age, and some aspen genets are reported to be thousands of years old and form forest patches that are hectares wide (De Witte & Stöcklin, 2010 and references therein). Genet fitness depends on the number and quality of descendants an individual produces; in clonal plants, these descendants can be

produced either by clonal growth or by sexual reproduction (Clarke, 2012; Sackville Hamilton, Schmid, & Harper, 1987). The length of time that ramets remain physically connected to their mother plant varies from species to species. In some clonal plants, new ramets depend on their parents for resources (Hartnett & Bazzaz, 1983; Isogimi, Matsushita, Watanabe, & Nakagawa, 2011). The integration and sharing of resources among ramets can increase the performance of daughter ramets and allow plants to spread to otherwise unattainable, unfavorable patches (Alpert, 1991, 1996; Roiloa & Retuerto, 2005; Saitoh, Seiwa, & Nishiwaki, 2002). Consequently, by sharing resources among clones, the plant can better exploit a heterogeneous environment (Stuefer, During, & de Kroon, 1994). Furthermore, the higher number and wider spatial spread of ramets reduces the probability of genet-level mortality (Clarke, 2012). However, the parent ramet incurs costs for supporting daughter ramets that are growing in unfavorable patches, and sometimes these costs outweigh the benefits at the whole-clone level (Alpert, 1991, 1996; Chesson & Peterson, 2002; Hutchings & Mogie, 1990). The costs of resource sharing can be mitigated if integration increases the photosynthetic efficiency of parent ramets via strong sink effects (Roiloa & Retuerto, 2005).

1.2 Carryover effect of individual demographic history

The demographic history of a plant can affect its current and future performance (Bullock, Mortimer, & Begon, 1993; Ehrlén, 2000), for example via organ preformation or storage effects (Geber et al., 2016). In the former case, organs (such as leaf and floral primordia) are formed during the previous growing season and are thus affected by the conditions at that time (Worley & Harder, 1999). In the latter situation, the levels of stored resources, on which current vital traits depend, can be depleted by past events (Cunningham, 1997; Sala, Hopping, McIntire, Delzon, & Crone, 2012; Worley & Harder, 1996). Plants usually have limited resources which must be allocated among growth, survival, and reproduction, and this constraint leads to trade-offs between these functions (Fig. 1; Obeso, 2002; Stearns, 1989; Worley & Harder, 1996). Reproduction in particular is widely assumed costly: current reproduction can decrease survival, future reproduction, and/or future growth (Meléndez-Ackerman, Ackerman, & Rodriguez-Robles, 2000; Miller et al., 2012; Obeso, 2002; Primack & Stacy, 1998). Such reproductive costs can lead to intermittent reproduction, the most extreme examples of which occur in masting or mast-seeding species, in which the differences in reproductive intensity between high and low years are great and reproduction is synchronous among

individuals (Crone, Miller, & Sala, 2009; Crone & Rapp, 2014; Satake & Iwasa, 2002). Similarly, in clonal plants, extensive vegetative growth can be expected to also deplete resources, and therefore contribute to a trade-off between reproduction, survival, and future growth.

1.3 Dormancy

Prolonged vegetative dormancy, hereafter 'dormancy', is a state in which a plant does not sprout for one or more years, instead spending the growing season(s) below ground before eventually re-sprouting (Lesica & Steele, 1994; Shefferson, 2009). Dormancy is widely distributed in the plant kingdom, as it has been observed in at least 112 species from 23 families (Shefferson et al., 2018). In some species, a large proportion of a population may be dormant every year (Kéry & Gregg, 2004; Shefferson, Sandercock, Proper, & Beissinger, 2001). In traditional life-cycle graphs, it is assumed that dormancy resets all plants to the same state, i.e. that the vital rates of all dormant plants are equal irrespective of their age or demographic state before dormancy. However, Jäkäläniemi et al. (2011) showed that the state in which an individual emerges from dormancy depends on the state it was in before going dormant, and, likewise, Gremer et al. (2012) revealed that dormant plants do not necessarily constitute one uniform class.

The obvious costs of dormancy include losing opportunities for photosynthesis and reproduction for that year. The life-history costs and benefits of dormancy (possible scenarios in Fig. 2) have been widely studied, but with somewhat contradictory results. Dormancy is often considered an adaptive response that allows the plant to enter a state that has lower mortality during stressful periods (Shefferson et al., 2001). Indeed, several studies have observed that during stressful events the probability of going dormant is higher, and dormant plants have higher survival than those sprouting aboveground (Davison, Nicole, Jacquemyn, & Tuljapurkar, 2013; Gremer et al., 2012). Moreover, when the proportion of dormant plants is high, the non-dormant plants show reduced growth or survival (Davison et al., 2013; Gremer & Sala, 2013). Therefore, dormancy can have benefits relative to sprouting in the form of avoidance of some costs incurred by aboveground plants (Fig. 2g-i). Dormancy can also have absolute benefits, i.e. a net gain in resources, via mycoheterotrophy or the remobilization of structural carbon (Gremer 2010; Fig. 2c, f, i). Whether this resource gain is beneficial also in the relative sense (situation in Fig. 2c, f, or i) depends on the costs that dormancy has relative to sprouting (e.g., missing the opportunity for photosynthetic gain). Furthermore, it is



Fig. 2. Schematic presentation of the performance (W) of a plant before and after a given period of time, depending on whether the plant stayed emergent (E, solid line) or went dormant (D, dashed line). An absolute effect of dormancy refers to a change in plant performance after dormancy compared to the pre-dormancy state. A relative effect refers to improved or decreased performance of a post-dormancy plant as compared to a scenario in which it stays emergent.

possible that the benefits of dormancy are not necessarily realized after a single stressful event, but only after longer, cumulative stress (Gremer & Sala, 2013).

In contrast, other studies have found dormancy to have no benefits and only costs for survival and reproduction compared to the sprouting state (Gregg & Kéry, 2005; Hutchings, 1987; Shefferson & Tali, 2007; Shefferson, Proper, & Beissinger, 2003). The benefits of dormancy may also depend on the age and size of an individual plant. Even in species in which dormancy appears to be a means for mature orchids to survive difficult times, it has clear survival or size costs for young individuals, presumably due to their lack of sufficiently developed rhizomes

(Davison et al., 2013; Kéry & Gregg, 2004). In other species, there are even reports that dormancy may not necessarily have any notable effect at all on demographic rates. For example, in Spalding's catchfly (*Silene spaldingii*), survival did not differ between sprouting and dormant states (Lesica & Crone, 2017). Furthermore, both in Spalding's catchfly and in the dark-red helleborine (*Epipactis atrorubens*), individuals tended to emerge from dormancy in the same demographic state in which they had previously been seen aboveground (Jäkäläniemi et al., 2011; Lesica & Crone, 2007).

The probability of going dormant has been observed to depend on the demographic state and age of a plant, such that young plants and already-dormant plants typically have the highest probabilities of going or remaining dormant, presumably due to low resource levels (Gremer, Sala, & Crone, 2010; Hutchings, 1987; Jäkäläniemi et al., 2011; Primack & Stacy, 1998; but see Shefferson, Kull, Tali, & Kellett, 2012). On the other hand, in the lady orchid (Orchis purpurea), large plants had higher probabilities of dormancy than smaller ones (Miller et al., 2012), and in Cypripedium parviflorum, vegetative genets had higher probabilities of going dormant than flowering or young genets (Shefferson et al., 2003). Gremer et al. (2010) noted that in the legume Astragalus scaphoides, dormancy seems to be a response to a lack of resources, as the plants that entered dormancy had less carbon stored than those that remained sprouting. However, by the end of the growing season, the dormant legumes had acquired enough carbon so that their levels were comparable with those of the sprouting, photosynthesizing plants. This indicates that dormancy can have absolute benefits in terms of resource levels. Gremer et al. (2010) speculated that an increase in carbon levels during dormancy was due to the mobilization of structural carbon (e.g., hemicellulose of cell walls) or the acquisition of carbon from symbionts

In addition to individual-level benefits and costs, dormancy has implications for population genetics. For example, dormancy can facilitate outbreeding: if only a part of the population emerges yearly, there is more potential variation in plant crosses, and genetic diversity is increased (Jäkäläniemi et al., 2011). Dormancy has also been suggested to act as a conservative bet-hedging trait (Gremer et al., 2012; Shefferson, 2009). The implicit assumption is that there are some "dormancy genes" and that different genotypes give rise to phenotypes that differ in how they react to certain cues in the environment and plant resource status (i.e., how sensitive their "dormancy trigger" is). Dempster (1955) showed that heterogeneity could be maintained in a population if the success of different alleles varies from year to year, even if this strategy briefly reduces performance during good years.

Furthermore, bet-hedging models offer a parallel explanation of how dormancy can arise and prevail under variable environments: it increases the geometric mean fitness of a genotype by buffering fitness against environmental stochasticity and thus decreasing the variance of the fitness (Cohen, 1966; Seger & Brockman, 1987; Slatkin, 1974).

1.4 External factors

In addition to the demographic history of an individual, a plant's performance also depends on several external factors, both abiotic and biotic. Abiotic factors include, for example, carbon dioxide concentration (Bazzaz, 1990; Reddy, Reddy, & Hodges, 1995), soil chemical and physicochemical properties (Gough, Shaver, Carroll, Royer, & Laundre, 2000; Parviainen, Luoto, Ryttäri, & Heikkinen, 2008), topography (Nicolè, Dahlgren, Vivat, Till-Bottraud, & Ehrlén, 2011; Parviainen et al., 2008), and climate (Parviainen et al., 2008), all of which contribute to determining plant species' abundance and distribution. In particular, weather often correlates with plant vital rates, such as survival, reproduction, and sprouting (Fig. 1, orchid examples in Kéry et al. 2005; Nicolè et al. 2011; Shefferson et al. 2017; Sletvold et al. 2013; Williams et al. 2015). Due to the effects of anthropogenic emissions, Earth's climate is changing: atmospheric and ocean temperatures are increasing and extreme precipitation events are becoming more intense and frequent (IPCC, 2014). At medium-to-high latitudes, increases in temperature are predicted to have a positive effect on plants, birds, and invertebrates, leading to increases in abundance (Pearce-Higgins et al., 2015). Moreover, distribution ranges are expected to expand and shift polewards (Berry, Dawson, Harrison, Pearson, & Butt, 2003; Parmesan & Yohe, 2002), and growing seasons are expected to lengthen as springs advance and autumns are delayed (Fitter & Fitter, 2002; Marchand et al., 2004; McEwan, Brecha, Geiger, & John, 2011). However, the effect of weather on plants can differ between habitats, times of the year, and the vital rates under consideration (Jäkäläniemi, 2011; Nicolè et al., 2011; Sletvold et al., 2013; Williams et al., 2015). As an example, in tundra plants, the poleward shift of the southern distributional border can lead to range compression (Lesica & McCune, 2004; Parmesan & Yohe, 2002) and advancing spring phenology can also lead to phenological mismatches in pollination (Bartomeus et al., 2011; Hegland, Nielsen, Lázaro, Bjerknes, & Totland, 2009). To be able to predict how plants respond to future changes in climate, there is a need to first understand the present relationship between plant performance and weather.

Plant performance depends on physiological factors such as photosynthesis and respiration rates, which are temperature dependent (Atkin & Tjoelker, 2003; Ryan, 1991). This means that temperature has a direct effect on plant resource status via both current and past resource gains. In addition, dormancy rates in orchids have also been reported to be dependent on weather conditions (Gremer, 2010; Lesica & Crone, 2007; Shefferson et al., 2001, but see Hutchings, 1987). Weather factors can also have indirect effects on plant resource status via physiological damage (e.g., frost, Inouye 2000)

Biotic factors affect plants through their interactions with other organisms. For example, some plants synchronize their reproduction with others, mostly in the context of masting. There are several hypotheses for this, one of which is that this phenomenon represents a unified response to a shared environment (Crone & Rapp, 2014; Pesendorfer, Koenig, Pearse, Knops, & Funk, 2016; Rees, Kelly, & Bjørnstad, 2002; Satake & Iwasa, 2002). This behavior has been noted to respond to both abiotic factors, e.g., precipitation and temperature (Kon, Noda, Terazawa, Koyama, & Yasaka, 2005; Maria, Cortés, Molowny-Horas, Sánchez-Humanes, & Retana, 2011), as well as biotic factors, such as pollen limitation during the years that flower density is low (pollen coupling hypothesis, Crone, 2013; Satake & Iwasa, 2002). Masting has benefits for pollination efficiency, which increases with increasing flower density, especially in wind-pollinated plants (Moreira, Abdala-Roberts, Linhart, & Mooney, 2014; Shibata, Tanaka, & Nakashizuka, 1998). However, synchronous reproduction can also have disadvantages, including increased competition for pollinators (Parra-Tabla & Vargas, 2007; Ward, Johnson, & Zalucki, 2013) and, in the case of plants with deceptive pollination, faster pollinator learning (Internicola, Juillet, Smithson, & Gigord, 2006; Smithson & MacNair, 1996; Sun, Cheng, Zhang, Luo, & Ge, 2009).

Another example of biotic interaction is the effect of a surrounding tree stand and canopy cover on a forest understory. Canopy cover and light availability, as well as associated changes in, e.g., temperature and moisture, are the main factors that define understory cover and species richness in temperate and boreal forests (Barbier, Gosselin, & Balandier, 2008; Brosofske, Chen, & Crow, 2001; Galhidy, Mihok, Hagyo, Rajkai, & Standovar, 2006; Hart & Chen, 2006). Canopy gaps not only have a higher amount of light, but also different light quality compared to under a closed canopy, where the light is "greener" and the ratio of red to far-red wavelengths is lower (Lieffers, Messier, Stadt, Gendron, & Comeau, 1999). Increased insolation also increases air and soil temperature (Abd Latif & Blackburn, 2010), and leads to higher decomposition rates (Binkley, 1984). In addition to light, a forest canopy also intercepts rain, so that a decrease in canopy cover results in an increase in precipitation reaching the ground (Geiger, Aron, & Todhunter, 1995). However, the warmer temperatures found in gaps also increase evaporation (Geiger et al., 1995), meaning that the overall effect of the canopy on humidity and soil water content can be hard to predict. In temperate forests, most studies have observed increased soil moisture in gaps or with decreasing canopy closure (Abd Latif & Blackburn, 2010; Galhidy et al., 2006; Ma, Concilio, Oakley, North, & Chen, 2010; Rydgren, 1996), though the opposite effect has been reported from arid areas (D'Odorico, Caylor, Okin, & Scanlon, 2007; De Boever, Gabriels, Ouessar, & Cornelis, 2016). These results take on increased significance when viewed in the context of logging, which depending on its intensity may have profound effects on the microclimate and nutrient availability in the forest understory.

Gaps can have both positive and negative effects on plant species growing in the forest understory. The intermediate disturbance hypothesis (Connell, 1978) predicts that, for some plant species, gaps provide a window of opportunity to reproduce (Brumback, Cairns, Sperduto, & Fyler, 2011; Kirchner, Kammermeier, & Bruelheide, 2009; Valverde & Silvertown, 1998), increasing microhabitat diversity and, consequently, species richness (Peterson & Pickett, 1995). Negative effects of forest gaps include the increased risk of frost (Geiger et al., 1995) or intensified competition from grasses or other species that spread aggressively, especially in large gaps (Sjöberg & Ericson, 1992). Overall, the effects of canopy gaps on forest plants and microhabitat may depend on the intensity and frequency of logging or the size of the gap (Galhidy et al., 2006; Romme, Everham, Frelich, Moritz, & Sparks, 1998), with effects often being the strongest in young gaps, then returning to pre-harvest conditions as the canopy gap closes (Brokaw, 1987; Dirzo, Horvitz, Peterson & Pickett, 1995; Quevedo, & Lopez, 1992; but see Kirchner et al., 2009)

1.5 Conservation aspects

Probably no other single species has transformed our planet as thoroughly as humans have, which has led to several kinds of conservation concerns. For example, in Finland, changes in the forest environment and overgrowth of meadows and other open habitats are the two most common threats to endangered plant species (Ryttäri, Kalliovirta, & Lampinen, 2012). Similarly, both the intensification of livestock farming (especially grazing) as well as the total abandonment of agricultural activities (leading to succession of woody plants) are listed among the

main threats in the European Red List of Vascular Plants (Bilz, Kell, Maxted, & Lansdown, 2011).

Approaches to conservation questions can be roughly divided into two categories: single-species approaches and ecosystem approaches, both of which have their benefits and drawbacks (Lindenmayer et al., 2007). Although single-species studies are often criticized for concentrating on few charismatic species and having limited generalizability (Lindenmayer et al., 2007; Simberloff, 1998), they can pinpoint causal processes that lead to population declines, which increases our understanding of the relationships between a species and its environment. Moreover, single-species studies can offer specific and directly applicable information for policymaking and management for threatened species, problematic invaders, flagship species, or other surrogate species (Lindenmayer et al., 2007; Simberloff, 1998).

The idea of the surrogate species approach is that it is possible to identify one or a few species that are in one way or another especially important for or indicative of the health of the ecosystem. There are several types of surrogate species (Caro & O'Doherty 1999; Simberloff 1998). For example, umbrella species, such as the capercaillie (Tetrao urogallus, Suter et al. 2002), white-backed woodpecker (Dendrocopos leucotos, Martikainen et al. 1998), or various birds of prey (Sergio, Newton, Marchesi, & Pedrini, 2006), are species that require such a large area of a specific habitat type that providing this surely meets the habitat requirements of several other species as well (Caro & O'Doherty 1999). Flagship species, such as orchids (Gale, Fischer, Cribb, & Fay, 2018), on the other hand, are not necessarily of any particular direct importance to the ecological community, but are charismatic and attractive; they can be used in marketing conservation to the public and in doing so generate resources, goodwill, and the funds necessary for successful management (Bowen-Jones & Entwistle, 2002; Caro & Girling, 2010; Simberloff, 1998; Veríssimo, Fraser, Groombridge, Bristol, & MacMillan, 2009). In order to evaluate how long-lived species, surrogate or otherwise, respond to changes in their environment, long-term studies are necessary

As Finland's largest orchid, the lady's slipper orchid (*Cypripedium calceolus*) is one example of a charismatic plant that could serve as a flagship species for conservation efforts. It has also been suggested to be an umbrella species (Nicolè et al., 2011). In a 2014 IUCN report, this orchid was described as threatened due to increased shading and soil degradation arising from the abandonment of traditional grazing activities and the replacement of natural forests with spruce plantations (Rankou & Bilz, 2014). The report further stressed the importance of

ensuring sufficient light conditions on the forest floor for the maintenance of these orchid populations (Rankou & Bilz, 2014). In Finnish boreal herb-rich forests, Norway spruce (Picea abies) is often the dominant species during later successional stages (Kujala, 1979; Similä & Juninen, 2011). While Norway spruce is important for forest biodiversity, e.g., as a substrate for Aphyllophorales fungi (Tikkanen, Martikainen, Hyvärinen, Junninen, & Kouki, 2006), overgrowth of spruce can have negative impacts on the understory vascular plant community via, e.g., shading and the acidic litter it produces (Similä & Juninen, 2011). In a 60-year study of an old-growth boreal forest in Norway (Nygaard & Odegaard, 1999), an increase in the tree basal area of Norway spruce was observed to reduce understory species richness. Similarly, in North American boreal forests, understory biomass and species richness peaks during the first decades of succession, and tree harvesting was observed to increase the number of vascular plant species (Hart & Chen, 2006). Multiple studies have reported that the growth and reproduction of herbaceous species in the forest or shrub understory are increased in lighter patches (e.g., Kelly, 1994; Miller et al., 2012; Valverde & Silvertown, 1998). In addition to shade, conifers are often assumed to produce more acidic and nutrient-poor soil compared to deciduous trees (Barbier et al., 2008; Hart & Chen, 2006; Oostra, Majdi, & Olsson, 2006). Nutrient availability in boreal forests further decreases as a forest matures due to two factors: more and more nutrients are fixed in woody biomass and the nutrient turnover rate decreases (Hart & Chen, 2006).

1.6 Aims

My major aim in this thesis was to study the ways in which plants' current and future performance are affected by environmental factors and/or plants' individual demographic histories. Using long-term demographic data of northern orchids, I asked: 1) How do different vital rates vary spatially and temporally (I), and how are these rates affected by environmental factors (such as weather (I) or tree removal (III))? 2) How does the individual history of a plant affect dormancy, and how does dormancy affect the future performance of the plant (II)? and 3) What are the management implications of environmental alteration (such as selective removal of trees, III) for understory orchid populations?

Firstly, I studied spatial and temporal variation in reproduction (measured as flowering intensity) and plant size (measured as the number of ramets in a clump) of the lady's slipper orchid, *Cypripedium calceolus* (I). Specifically, I tested for the existence of temporal trends, cycles, and synchrony in flowering and plant size

within and between populations. I also assessed how weather regulates reproduction and growth by evaluating the correlation of these traits with several temperature, precipitation, and snow-cover variables. Secondly, I studied the two-way interaction between dormancy and plant performance in three Finnish orchids: *C. calceolus*, the fairy's slipper orchid (*Calypso bulbosa*), and the dark-red helleborine (*Epipactis atrorubens*) (II). I was especially interested in the absolute and relative costs and/or benefits dormancy may have, and whether the size of a plant in a certain year affected its probability of being dormant the following year. Lastly, I evaluated selective tree removal as a management method for *C. calceolus* at over-grown herb-rich forest sites, and assessed how harvesting different amounts of tree basal area affected the survival, dormancy, ramet density, flowering, and fruiting of this orchid (III).

2 Materials and methods

2.1 Study species

My study species were the lady's slipper orchid, Cypripedium calceolus L.; the fairy's slipper orchid, Calypso bulbosa L.; and the dark-red helleborine, Epiactis atrorubens (Hoffm. Ex Bernh.) Besser (Fig. 3). All three species are long-lived perennial orchids in the family Orchidaceae of the monocot order Asparagales. Family Orchidaceae is estimated to be the largest vascular plant family, comprising 736 genera and 28 000 species (Christenhusz & Byng, 2016), many of which are endangered (518 species out of the 808 that have been assessed, IUCN 2017). This cosmopolitan family includes large-flowered epiphytes, many of which are popular among horticulturalists, as well as lithophytes and terrestrial species that typically have more humble-sized flowers. Orchids exhibit a plethora of unique flower shapes and pollination mechanisms that were already the focus of studies by Darwin's time (Darwin, 1862). Many orchids use deception in pollination: they attract pollinators via colors and odors that mimic, for example, specific flowers, flowers in general, or even females of the pollinator species, but offer no nectar as a reward (Ackerman, 1986; Dafni, 1984; Jersáková, Johnson, & Kindlmann, 2006). Nectarless orchids typically have low fruit set (Brzosko, 2002; Neiland & Wilcock, 1998; Suetsugu & Fukushima, 2014; Sun et al., 2009; Tremblay, Ackerman, Zimmerman, & Calvo, 2005). It has been hypothesized that the specialization of orchids to their pollinators is an adaption to increase reproductive success by decreasing the loss of pollen to flowers of the wrong species. Indeed, the correct transfer of pollen is especially important in orchids, because all pollen is packed in few pollinia that are removed together as a single pollinarium, and deposited as individual pollinia or in few separate massulae (Johnson & Edwards, 2000; Micheneau, Johnson, & Fay, 2009). Despite the large range of flower shapes and pollination mechanisms, all orchids share some common traits. For example, they produce masses of tiny dust-like seeds that contain very few nutrients, which makes seedlings dependent on mycorrhizal fungi, especially in early life stages (Leake, 1994; Phillips et al., 2014; Rasmussen & Rasmussen, 2009). In general, arbuscular and ectomycorrhizal fungi provide their host plants minerals and water in exchange for carbon (Allen, 1991), but in the case of orchid mycorrhiza, it is the plants that exploit their fungal partners for carbon. Indeed, there are achlorophyllous orchids that remain dependent on their mycorrhiza for carbon for their entire lives (mycoheterotrophy, Leake, 1994; Motomura, Selosse, Martos, Kagawa, & Yukawa, 2010); less extreme are the many photosynthesizing orchids that obtain additional



Fig. 3. The three study orchids. A) The lady's slipper orchid, *Cypripedium calceolus*. Photo by Juha Tuomi. B) The fairy's slipper orchid, *Calypso bulbosa*. Photo by Sonja Hurskainen.C) The dark-red helleborine, *Epipactis atrorubens*. Photo by Hilde Hens.

carbon via their fungal networks (mixotrophy, Bidartondo et al. 2004; Gebauer & Meyer 2003; Julou et al. 2005; Motomura et al. 2010). The ultimate source of this carbon is dead organic material (if the fungal partner is saprotrophic) or a nearby tree (if the fungal partner is ectomycorrhizal) (Bidartondo et al., 2004; Lee, Yang, & Gebauer, 2015; McKendrick, Leake, & Read, 2000; Rasmussen, 2002; Taylor & Bruns, 1997). In general, mycorrhizae do not appear to restrict the distribution of orchids (Phillips et al. 2014; Shefferson et al. 2005; but see McCormick et al. 2012; Swarts et al. 2010), but the often highly specialized pollination system does (Pauw & Bond, 2011; Phillips et al., 2014); this high degree of specialization partly explains the great number of species in the orchid family (Cozzolino & Widmer, 2005; Givnish et al., 2015). However, due to their dependency on a few very specific fungal species and pollinators, all of whom have their own specific habitat requirements, orchids can be expected to be especially sensitive to environmental changes (Rasmussen, Dixon, Jersáková, & Těšitelová, 2015; Swarts & Dixon, 2009) and prone to extinction (Dunn, Harris, Colwell, Koh, & Sodhi, 2009), making them excellent indicators of ecosystem health. All orchids are included in Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

2.1.1 Cypripedium calceolus

My main study species was the lady's slipper orchid, *Cypripedium calceolus* (Fig. 3a). Pollination of *C. calceolus* occurs by food deception: the orchid uses odors and a bright yellow color to attract pollinators – mostly solitary bees of the genus *Andrena*, but also of *Lasioglossum* and *Halictus* (Antonelli, Dahlberg, Carlgren, & Appelqvist, 2009; Erneberg & Holm, 1999; Kull, 1999) – but offers no nectar as reward. The insects coming to inspect the flowers fall into the yellow "slipper" formed by the labellum, and are guided out by the base of the labellum, so that they get pollinia stuck to them on the way (Kull, 1999).

The roots of *C. calceolus* are colonized by mycorrhizal fungi belonging to the families Tulasnellaceae and Thelephoraceae (Shefferson et al., 2005), but the long horizontal rhizome remains uncolonized (Kull, 1999). Each tip of the rhizome produces two apical buds annually; the larger one forms the next year's shoot, while the smaller one often stays dormant (Blinova, 2004; Kull & Kull, 1991). The whole genet is considered dormant when all buds are dormant. *C. calceolus* can grow as a single ramet, but typically ramets form dense clumps, in which there can be several genets intermingled (Nicolè et al., 2005). Flowering occurs in late June to early July in Finland and in May to early June in Estonia. (Kuusk, 1984). One stalk (20-60 cm) supports three to five leaves and one to two, rarely three, yellow slipper-shaped flowers (Kull, 1999). The aboveground parts of the plant wilt in August, meaning that the lifespan of a ramet is only one growing season. The genet, however, can be over 100 years old (Kull, 1999).

Despite its wide distribution in Europe and Asia, *C. calceolus* is rare everywhere it occurs (Rankou & Bilz, 2014). This can be at least partly explained by its preference for partial shade and lime-rich soils (Rankou & Bilz, 2014). The species is becoming even rarer because of habitat destruction (Rankou & Bilz, 2014). When undisturbed, *C. calceolus* has slow population dynamics that are typical to long-lived species, and a long-term population growth rate close to unity (Nicolè et al., 2005). This suggests that the severe declines observed in the past in many European countries (Rankou & Bilz, 2014) were caused by external factors. The main threats to *C. calceolus* include agricultural intensification, collection, and forest management, such as clear cutting and the replacement of natural forests with spruce plantations. The abandonment of traditional grazing activities has led to increased competition through plant succession (Rankou & Bilz, 2014; Rassi et al., 2010), and in addition, previous studies have shown that shading has detrimental effects on the flowering and seedling establishment of this orchid (Brzosko, 2002;

Laitinen, 2006). Herbivory is likely not a serious threat to this species. Herbivory is documented as the reason for disappearance for only one population in Finland. However, one location in Southern Finland is reported to fail at fruit production due to moose herbivory (Laitinen, 2006). In Poland, on average 5% ramets were eaten (Brzosko, 2002).

Fortunately, conservation measures have been largely successful, and the species is not currently listed as endangered (IUCN Red List status in European regional assessment is "Near Threatened", globally "Least Concern", Rankou & Bilz 2014). Similarly, in Finland the species has been reclassified from vulnerable to nearthreatened in the most recent Red List of Finnish Species (Rassi, Hyvärinen, Juslén, & Mannerkoski, 2010). However, the species is still declining and listed as endangered in several countries, including Luxembourg, where it is regionally extinct, and in Britain, where only a single population remains (Rankou & Bilz, 2014).

C. calceolus is listed on Annex II of the Habitats Directive and under Appendix I of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Rankou & Bilz, 2014).

C. calceolus occurs in whole Finland, except the northernmost Lapland, although it is more common in the calcium-rich regions in the north. The total number of ramets in Finland is estimated to be 240 000 (Laitinen, Eeronheimo, & Ilmonen, 2009). In 2006, there were records of 1249 localities, of which 80% were known to still exist (Laitinen, 2006). Of these localities, only 4% were known to be extinct by 2006; the status of the rest of the localities was unknown. However, there are regional differences in the extinction probabilities: while the population size in Northern Finland seem to be increasing, 25-35% of the recorded southern Finland localities are estimated to be now extinct (Laitinen, 2006). Most (85%) of these extinct populations disappeared before the 1980's, and were on privately owned land. Furthermore, the first recorded *C. calceolus* sightings from southern Finland are from 1800s, and it is highly likely that agriculture has destroyed several populations before this. Fortunately, most (65%) of the recorded localities are on state owned land in Natura 2000 sites or other protected sites (Laitinen, 2006).

In Estonia there are about 200 documented localities with *C. calceolus*, most of which contain less than 100 ramets. However, the largest populations, located on the western islands and in the central part of the mainland, support thousands of ramets (Kull, 2003). The population trend is reported to be increasing (Kull 1997, Kull, 2003).

2.1.2 Calypso bulbosa

The fairy's slipper orchid, *Calypso bulbosa* (Fig. 3b), is short in stature (8-16 cm) and has only one leaf which wilts by midsummer. In August, the plant produces a new, over-wintering leaf is which is ridged above and purple underneath. *C. bulbosa* is non-clonal and has a bulb-like corm. The single flower is pink and shaped like a fanciful slipper, giving rise to the common name of the species. *C. bulbosa* flowers in May-June, and pollination occurs by food deception as in *C. calceolus*. The main pollinators are naïve bumblebee queens (Jäkäläniemi, Illarionova, & Rankou, 2011), who emerge early in spring when not many other plant species are in flower; this possibly explains why this orchid has a surprisingly high pollination rate for a deceptive species (Abeli, Jäkäläniemi, Wannas, Mutikainen, & Tuomi, 2013). The success of pollination can depend on the local density of flowering willows, which function as a magnet species that attract pollinators to the site (Alexandersson & Ågren, 1996).

C. bulbosa has a circumpolar distribution (Hultén & Fries, 1986). In Finland, the species prefers old-growth forests, and its habitats range from dry and mesic herb-rich forests to rich spruce-birch fens (Rassi et al., 2010). There are 918 known localities in Finland, and the total number of flowering ramets is estimated to be 27 000 - 37 000 (Paalamo, Eeronheimo, & Ilmonen, 2009). The population size is expected to decrease, and 4% of all known sites disappearing during 1980-2006 (Alahuhta, 2003; Paalamo et al., 2009; Rassi et al., 2010). However, most of these sites were in the core region of the distribution area. The extent of the distribution area is therefore stable or even expected to increase slightly (Paalamo et al., 2009). The species is classified as vulnerable and under strict protection in Finland (Rassi et al., 2010), and near-threatened in Europe (Jäkäläniemi et al., 2011). It is threatened by human activities such as forest management, mining, and construction, as well as climate change and vole herbivory (Jäkäläniemi et al., 2011; Rassi et al., 2010). In Oulanka, the observed percentage of eaten flowers and capsules was 0-70% (Alahuhta, 2013). C. bulbosa is listed on Annex II of the Habitats Directive (Jäkäläniemi et al., 2011).

2.1.3 Epipactis atrorubens

The dark-red helleborine, *Epipactis atrorubens* (Fig. 3c), is a non-clonal, rhizomatous orchid. It is perennial, but the aboveground parts wilt in winter. In Finland, it grows up to 40 cm tall and the stems arising from the short vertical

rhizome have 1-13 spirally arranged leaves. The inflorescence is a raceme with 1-12 dark-purple flowers with five petals (Jäkäläniemi, 2003). Four of the petals are identical, and one has developed into a lip that functions as a landing place for pollinators. Flowering takes place in July (Jäkäläniemi, 2003). Pollination is by wasps, bees, and hoverflies (Jakubska-Busse & Kadej, 2011). Unlike the other two study species, *E. atrorubens* rewards its pollinators with nectar, the key attractants being vanillin derivatives (Jakubska-Busse & Kadej, 2011).

The distribution of *E. atrorubens* stretches from Europe to the Ural Mountains and Siberia, with the species preferring lime-rich sites (Jäkäläniemi, 2003). In Finland, E. atrorubens has been found in only a few areas, most important of which are Hanko, Juuka-Juankoski, and Kuusamo-Salla (Jäkäläniemi, 2003; Laitinen & Ilmonen, 2009). There are 60 known localities, and the total number of individuals in Finland is estimated to be 1578 (Laitinen & Ilmonen, 2009). The preferred habitats of E. atrorubens include dry and mesic herb-rich forests, but also calcareous rock outcrops and roadsides, and it has a fragmented distribution (Rassi et al., 2010). There are likely to be some yet unknown small locations in the calcium-rich sites and lime quarries in the Western Finland that have not yet been found, as well as some short-lived occurrences along the coast. These ephemeral coast sites are likely founded by long-distance seed dispersal from Baltic Sea islands and Estonia, where the species is common. Therefore, it is estimated that the known distribution could slightly increase in the future (Laitinen & Ilmonen, 2009). E. atrorubens is classified as vulnerable and is under strict protection in Finland, Belarus, Denmark, Lithuania, Luxembourg, and the Czech Republic, while in Europe as a whole its conservation status is least concern (Bilz et al., 2011). In Finland, the main threats to the species are the wearing away and overgrowth of habitats (Laitinen & Ilmonen, 2009; Rassi et al., 2010). Previously also construction and the intensification of land use has likely destroyed sites in Southern Finland (Laitinen & Ilmonen, 2009). Herbivory is rare and restricted to few eaten flowers and capsules (A. Jäkäläniemi, personal observations). The genetic variation in the northern populations is low, but does not seem to correlate with population size or lead to inbreeding depression (Hens, Pakanen, Jäkäläniemi, Tuomi, & Kvist, 2017). Seedling production is very low, and some of the northern populations may become soon extinct (Jäkäläniemi, 2003; Hens et al., 2017). The lack of seedling production seems to be caused by failure in germination rather than in pollination, as the capsules are maturing normally also in small populations (Jäkäläniemi, 2003; Hens et al., 20017). However, there is great variation between populations in the growth rate, and some populations seem to be increasing in the

total number of ramets, although the number of emergent ramets per year has decreased (Jäkäläniemi, 2003). The overall population trend in Finland is estimated to be increasing, and the species has been known to disappear only from few localities (Laitinen & Ilmonen, 2009).

2.2 Field methods

2.2.1 Long-term demographic surveys

Long-term demographic survey data of *Cypripedium calceolus* were collected at three sites in Oulanka National Park, municipality of Kuusamo, northern Finland (I and II, Fig. 2). A 10 x 10 m permanent plot was established at each site during the summer of 2000 by Metsähallitus as a part of their own monitoring program. In these plots, each clump of ramets (either a single ramet that was clearly separate from others or a group of ramets growing densely together) was marked with an individually numbered plastic tag. Each individually marked clump was used as a demographic unit, because ramets in the clumps grew so densely together that we could not reliably differentiate between individual ramets, and differentiation between clones was impossible without genetic analysis or digging up the plants. Each July from 2000 to 2016, the following variables were recorded for each clump: the numbers of ramets, flowers, and capsules; the demographic state of the clump (seedling, young, mature vegetative, flowering, dormant); and the height of the tallest ramet of each state.

To assess spatial and temporal variation in vital rates and the influence of weather, I obtained data from a similar demographic survey of two *C. calceolus* populations in Estonia (Fig. 4). These populations were visited and counted once a year in June by professor Tiiu Kull (Estonian University of Life Sciences, Tartu) and her research group from 1987 to 2012.

To reliably determine if *C. calceolus* ramets were dormant or not, only clumps consisting of single ramets were included in the dormancy models. To compare



Fig. 4. A map showing the locations of the tree removal sites (Oulanka National Park and surroundings in Kuusamo, and municipalities of Tervola and Ylitornio in SW Lapland) and the long-term demographic survey sites in Finland (Kuusamo) and in Estonia (Muhu and Ussisoo). The map was created with Adobe Photoshop. Map templates are from d-maps.com (http://d-maps.com/carte.php?num_car=5973&lang= en).

dormancy rates with other orchids, I used data from three populations of *E. atrorubens* (two populations followed 2000-2014 and one 2002-2014) and five populations of *C. bulbosa* (followed 2002-2010) in Oulanka National Park, Kuusamo, that were collected by Anne Jäkäläniemi, Kirsi Alahuhta, and Hilde
Hens. The survey method was the same as for the study of *C. calceolus*, with the exception that for *C. bulbosa* and *E. atrorubens* we used the individual as the study unit.

Finnish climate data were obtained from the Kiutaköngäs weather station (within 13 km of the Finnish study populations) of the Finnish Meteorological Institute. Estonian climate data for the Ussisoo and Muhu populations were provided by the Estonian Weather Service from the Türi and Virtsu weather stations (located 25 km and 13 km from the populations), respectively.

2.2.2 Tree removal experiment

To evaluate selective tree removal as a management method, I used data from a total of twenty sites (ten managed tree removal experiment sites and ten control sites of similar habitat) that were established as a part of Metsähallitus' EU LIFE project in 2001 (Fig. 4, see details in Laitinen 2006). A randomly located 1×10 m permanent plot was established in the summer of 2001 at each site. If needed, an extra plot of varying size (2.8 - 8 m²) was established to obtain a sufficient sample size. Plot size therefore varied from 10 m² to 18 m². Tree removal was conducted without heavy machinery in the winter of 2001, i.e. after the first summer survey. A thick snow cover protected the plants and ground from mechanical disturbance during cutting, and all logs and branches were removed from the sites. Managed sites were divided into three different intensities of selective tree removal depending on their forest type: (1) dense spruce forests, where half of the total tree basal area (TBA) was cut (mean = 48.9%, SD = 8.4%), (2) sparse spruce forests, where one-fourth of the spruce TBA was cut (mean reduction in TBA = 26.4%, SD = 7.4%), and (3) sparse broadleaf forests, where one-fourth of the total TBA was cut (mean reduction in TBA = 25.7%, SD = 0.7%). Control sites, in which no trees were cut, included the same forest types as the treated sites. The size of the managed areas varied from 600 m² to 1700 m² with the study plot in the center.

All twenty experimental sites were monitored by Metsähallitus in 2001-2004 (pre-harvest and immediate post-harvest period), by our research group in 2008-2010 (middle post-harvest period), and by me in 2014-2016 (late post-harvest period). During these years the numbers of ramets, flowers, and capsules; the demographic state of the clump; and the height of the tallest ramet of each state in the clump were recorded as in the long-term demographic surveys.

To explore how tree removal treatments affected light availability in the forest understory, photographs were taken during the pre-harvest period and then again in the middle and late post-harvest periods. The camera was positioned straight up toward the sky at 1-m intervals along each plot (10 photographs in total per plot) and at the middle of the potential extra square. Using Adobe Photoshop, photographs were edited so that the open sky was filled with white and canopy was filled with black. The canopy cover was then calculated as the percentage of black in the photographs.

2.3 Statistical analyses

All analyses were conducted using the R statistical package (R Development Core Team 2015), with particular use of the function "glmmadmb" in the glmmADMB package (Fournier et al. 2012) and functions "Imer" and "glmer" in the Ime4 package (Bates et al. 2015). First, I tested for temporal trends in the flowering intensity and clump size of C. calceolus, and their correlations with weather factors (I) by using generalized linear mixed effects models (GLMMs) and step-wise model selection. Based on a previous study by Kaitala & Kull (2002), I tested for two-year cycles in flowering intensity and clump size within individuals (I) by studying temporal autocorrelations, specifically checking if the autocorrelation at a lag of one year was negative and significant (based on bootstrapped data sets). Synchrony in reproduction and size among individuals was studied by calculating pairwise correlation coefficients among clumps (I). The average strength of (auto) correlations in each country was then examined with general linear mixed effects models (GLMs), and the proportions of significant (auto) correlations in each country were analysed with GLMMs with a binomial distribution and logit link function (I). Second, I analyzed the relationships between dormancy and the past and future performance of the three orchid species with GLMs and GLMMs (II). Lastly, I studied the effect of tree removal on C. calceolus; specifically, I examined differences in ramet density, reproduction, survival, and dormancy between treated and control sites using GLMMs, taking into account the year and the initial level of a given response variable (III).

Larger sample of populations might have increased the statistical power and generalizability of our results. However, the number of populations we could sample was constrained by both availability of resources (funding, trained personnel) and the protected status of the study species. Ideally, the tree removal treatments would have been more evenly arranged among dry and wet sites and among regions, but this was impossible because of where the known *C. calceolus* sites with the given forest type happened to occur. It would have also been

interesting to have data on the soil properties and the understory vegetation layer of the tree removal sites, but unfortunately these were not recorded when the study was started in year 2001.

3 Results & discussion

The main result of this thesis is that the performance of northern, terrestrial orchids depends on both environmental factors (weather and canopy cover, I and III, respectively) and the demographic history of an individual (I, II, Fig. 5).



Fig. 5. A simplified schematic presentation of the results of the thesis. Effects of the environment (tree removal, weather of the previous growing season, winter and the current spring) are in green, and the interactions between past and current demographic variables are in red. Note that only the relationships observed in this study are presented; possible relationships that were not studied, or were studied and not observed, are left out for the sake of clarity. Note also that some of the effects indicated by the arrows are positive, some are negative, and some arrows include both positive and negative effects.

Furthermore, my results show that selective removal of trees increased the fruit production and ramet density of *C. calceolus*, and could thus be a suitable management method at herb-rich sites (III).

3.1 Effect of individual history

In this thesis, I show that the demographic history of a plant affects its current performance, presumably via effects on the plant's resource status (Cunningham, 1997; Ehrlén, 2000; Obeso, 2002; Sala et al., 2012). Plants which were large (measured as the number of ramets (I) or height of the plant (II)) in the previous year had a larger current size (I, II) and a higher probability of flowering (I) than plants that had previously been smaller. Furthermore, I observed that larger orchid individuals generally had a lower probability of going dormant than smaller individuals did (II). A similarly positive size effect had been previously observed in the orchids Orphys sphegodes (Hutchings, 1987) and Orchis purpurea (Jacquemyn & Brys, 2010), as well as in the clonal rhizomatous herb Asarum canadensis (Cain & Damman, 1997). These results are not surprising as large plants have more resources available to allocate to both flowering and growth than smaller plants do (Zimmerman, 1990). There was also a positive temporal trend in the number of ramets in C. calceolus clumps in both Finland and Estonia (I). This increase in clump size with time probably occurred via rhizome branching as the clones aged, and the extent of this branching can also explain the correlation between current and past size. My results further indicate that flowering and growth in C. calceolus depend on resources accumulated during the previous growing season rather than on the photosynthesis of the current growing season, as has also been observed for the epiphytic orchid Catasetum viridianum (Zimmerman, 1990).

3.1.1 Cycles and asynchrony

I observed putative two-year cycles in the reproduction of *C. calceolus* (I), which indicates that also non-masting herbs can have cyclic reproduction. Moreover, the existence of these cycles suggests that there is a trade-off between current and future reproduction in this orchid species. The likely mechanism for such cycles is that reproduction depletes an individual's resources, so that the plant needs to collect resources for a year or more before it is able to reproduce again (similar to the resource budget model for masting species, Isagi, Sugimura, Sumida, & Ito, 1997). A similar negative carryover effect of past reproduction on future reproduction has been previously observed in several other orchids of the genera *Cypripedium* (Kaitala & Kull, 2002; Primack & Stacy, 1998), *Spiranthes* (Willems & Dorland, 2000), and *Comparettia* (Meléndez-Ackerman et al., 2000), as well as

in other herbaceous plants such as the masting legume *Astragalus scaphoides* (Crone et al., 2009).

Here I also show that intensive vegetative growth can deplete resources and result in demographic costs, as revealed by two findings: *C. calceolus* also demonstrated two-year cycles in the number of ramets present, and all three studied orchids were more likely to go dormant after intensive growth (II). Similar results had been obtained by Ehrlén (2000), who observed that in the legume *Lathyrus vernus*, individuals that had in the past year transitioned to larger sizes were more likely to retrogress in size in the following year. Temporal cycles in ramet number could also arise due to self-shading, as discussed by Kaitala & Kull (2002). It is possible that fruiting results in even deeper resource depletion (Primack & Stacy, 1998) and creates more pronounced cycles than flowering or clonal growth. However, due to the consistently low fruiting probability of the populations of *C. calceolus* in Kuusamo, I was unable to test this. The low fruiting probability in these populations was most likely caused by pollen limitation, as hand-pollination resulted in significant increase in fruiting (S. Hurskainen, unpublished data).

There was virtually no synchrony in flowering among clones between or within populations of C. calceolus (I), and it seems likely that in deceptive orchids the disadvantages of synchronous flowering outweigh the advantages. If the environment were the main regulator of reproduction, synchrony in reproduction could be expected to arise if all plants reacted in a similar way to the common environment. However, this does not seem to be the case in orchids. For example, Hutchings (1987) observed no synchrony in flowering or dormancy rates in the sexually deceptive spider orchid Orphys sphegodes, and concluded that at least in this species, these functions are not under climatic control. Furthermore, in insectpollinated species, the disadvantages of synchronous flowering include competition for pollinators (Parra-Tabla & Vargas, 2007) and the fact that pollinator learning is positively density-dependent (Smithson & MacNair, 1996). This may thus lead to negative frequency-dependent selection, which has been observed, for example, in the polymorphic deceptive orchid *Dactylorhiza sambucina* (Gigord, Macnair, & Smithson, 2001; Internicola et al., 2006) and in clusters of deceptive *Cypripedium japonicum* (Sun et al., 2009). On the other hand, the synchrony or asynchrony in flowering and the subsequent success of pollination may be of little importance for orchid fitness if the correlation between pollination and recruitment is low, for example due to microsite limitation for germination (Calvo, 1993). This seems to be the case for C. calceolus, as an increase in flowering and fruiting did not translate into an increase in the number of seedlings (III).

3.1.2 Dormancy

Like other vital rates, dormancy depends on both internal and external factors (Gremer, 2010; Lesica & Crone, 2007). In Cypripedium calceolus, Calypso bulbosa, and Epipactis atrorubens, the demographic state and the size of individual orchids after dormancy depended on their pre-dormancy state. Specifically, the size of the plant post-dormancy correlated positively with the size before dormancy, and the probability of flowering was the lowest for previously immature individuals and the highest for previously flowering individuals (II). In these orchids, large size and mature state before dormancy were therefore positively correlated with the probability of flowering after dormancy (II). Together with the tendency of smaller orchids to go dormant more often than larger individuals (unless the large size was a result of intensive growth spurt, II), this means that if analyses of dormancy do not take into account the pre-dormancy state, spurious costs may appear. For example, if dormant plants tend to be smaller upon emergence than plants that remained continuously sprouting, their smaller size may not necessarily represent the costs of dormancy. Instead, the same result could be found if plants that go dormant are on average smaller than those that keep sprouting, and this difference is reflected in their post-dormancy size as well.

However, there do seem to be real costs to dormancy, both in the absolute and relative senses, as revealed by two findings: dormant orchids regressed both in demographic state and size (the latter for large plants only), and this effect was either more common (state) or as common (size) than that observed in continuously sprouting individuals (II). Moreover, in all three studied orchid species, these effects of dormancy seem to be state- and size-dependent (Davison et al., 2013; Jäkäläniemi et al., 2011). In large and mature orchids, dormancy appeared to be a costly state associated with more shrinkage in size and retrogression in state compared to sprouting states (II). In small and young individuals, however, dormancy appears to be a passive state with no pronounced effects on the future fate of the plant. In other words, below-average-sized orchids tended to emerge from dormancy larger than they had been pre-dormancy, and a few young individuals emerged from dormancy in a mature state (II), but these absolute benefits were just as common in sprouting young orchids (II). Therefore, there is no evidence that dormancy in these young orchids has any benefits in the relative sense compared to sprouting. The results merely indicate that under some circumstances dormancy can be non-harmful. This low cost of dormancy in young plants, in addition to the fact that they do not yet pay the costs of lost opportunities

to reproduce, might explain their higher tendency to enter this state (II). In this, my results were similar to prior studies of the American slipper orchid, *Cypripedium candidum* (Shefferson, 2006), and the legume *Astragalus scaphoides* (Gremer, 2010), which likewise reported that small plants had the highest probability of dormancy.

Large plants, on the other hand, incurred both demographic costs (reduced future size and reproduction) as well as the costs of missed opportunities for reproduction. This raises questions about the evolution of dormancy, as it is expected to be advantageous over sprouting in situations in which (i) the performance of emergent plants is strongly suppressed and dormant plants will escape such adverse effects, and/or (ii) plants acquire resources during dormancy that will improve their expected future survival, growth, and/or reproduction, and this resource gain is greater than in sprouting plants. It is therefore likely that dormancy has some other fitness benefits (e.g., survival, Shefferson, Warren, & Pulliam, 2014) that I did not measure in this study. Dormancy may also improve fitness via the timing of reproduction: prolonged dormancy delays reproduction and growth, which functions as a bet-hedging trait (Gremer et al., 2012; Shefferson, 2009) and increases variability in mate choice (Jäkäläniemi et al., 2011).

3.2 Effect of environment

3.2.1 Weather factors

In addition to demographic history, the weather conditions of spring and of the previous growing season and winter also affected the flowering intensity and clonal growth of *C. calceolus* (I). In general, variation in flowering intensity and in clump size of this orchid was best explained by the previous size of the clump, temperature of the previous summer, as well as spring and winter snow depth (I). However, the effect of the weather variables on reproduction and growth varied between Finland and Estonia. My results were consistent with reports from two other orchids that the weather of the previous summer had an important effect: in *Orchis purpurea*, summer precipitation increased growth (Williams et al., 2015), and warm summers had a positive effect (increased population growth due to increased survival) on *Dactylorhiza lapponica* in Norway (Sletvold et al., 2013). It appears that, in Finland and Norway, the mean summer temperature is sub-optimal for these orchids and thus an increase in temperature is beneficial. Furthermore, increasing annual mean

temperature can be expected to decrease the depth of wintertime snow cover, which based on our results would be beneficial for flowering in Finland. However, at the warmer Estonian sites, warmer summer temperatures appeared to be actually detrimental to the growth of C. calceolus (I). Furthermore, both in Finland and Estonia, spring snow depth correlated positively with vegetative growth (I), possibly by sheltering and providing moisture to the plants. Vegetative growth was also a major predictor of flowering probability (I). Higher temperatures in springtime lead to earlier snowmelt and sprouting, and can expose plants to more frequent frost damage (Inouye, 2000). This seemed to be the case in Estonia, where high spring temperatures were indeed negatively correlated with vegetative growth (I). An increase in frost damage due to high spring temperatures was observed also in montane wildflowers in Colorado, USA (Inouye, 2008). Thus, the effects of climate warming are not straightforward, and even within the same species, populations at different latitudes are likely to respond differently to the expected increase in temperature. However, it should be noted that the observed correlations with weather variables did not result in synchrony among C. calceolus clumps either within or between populations in this study (I), which suggests that the carryover effect of demographic history, and possibly the effect of microsite factors, can override the synchronizing influence of weather.

3.2.2 Tree removal

In this thesis, I show that selective removal of trees can be used to manage populations of *C. calceolus* that are threatened by overshading from spruce, although the effect of tree removal depended on the forest type and time period in question (III). The observed increases in *C. calceolus*' survival, growth, and reproduction at tree removal sites (III) were probably the result of increases in ambient light and resource availability. Tree removal likely encouraged the release of nitrogen, which tends to be immobilized in spruce stands in acidic, slowly decomposing litter (Barbier et al., 2008; Hart & Chen, 2006) that is shaded and kept cool by mature trees (Abd Latif & Blackburn, 2010), which further reduces decomposition rates (Binkley, 1984).

Furthermore, the higher fruiting rates of *C. calceolus* at spruce forest sites with 25-50% TBA removal compared to unlogged control sites (III) can be explained by the pollinators' preference for light patches (Antonelli et al., 2009; Erneberg & Holm, 1999), which leads to increased pollination in canopy gaps compared to closed forest. My results are consistent with previous studies showing that light

correlates positively with flowering and fruiting in several herbaceous species, including a rare orchid (*Isotria medeoloides*, Brumback et al. 2011), a mycorrhizal fern (*Botrychium australe*, Kelly 1994), a small rhizomatous herb (*Trientalis europae*, Kirchner et al. 2009) and a primrose (*Primula vulgaris*, Valverde & Silvertown 1998). However, the effects of forest harvest on orchid survival and sexual reproduction were seen only during the immediate post-harvest period (up to three years after logging) (III). Furthermore, the initial increase in fruit production did not result in an increase in *C. calceolus* seedling production (III). This means that the initial positive effects of tree removal on this orchid's seed reproduction did not translate into lasting benefits for recruitment in the population.

The increase in ramet density of *C. calceolus* at the broad-leaf forest sites, on the other hand, appeared with a lag, but was still visible at the end of the study (III), which suggests that tree removal did increase ramet-level population size in the long-term. As seed set in *C. calceolus* is low and the species reproduces mainly vegetatively, this increase in ramet number is likely to markedly increase the number of offspring generated and therefore the fitness of this species. In a similar study, selective removal of 25% TBA more than doubled the number of stems of *Isotria medeoloides* over a ten-year period (Brumback et al., 2011), which indicates that tree removal has the potential to increase fruiting and shoot density also in other orchids. Furthermore, other endangered species with similar habitat requirements to *C. calceolus* are likely to benefit from the careful tree removal.

One possible reason why our tree removal treatments failed to increase orchid seedling density despite their positive effect on fruit production could be that the treatments were designed to minimize soil surface damage. Seedling recruitment of *C. calceolus* appears to be microsite limited (Kull, 1998), and small-scale disturbance of the moss layer may improve sprouting (Laitinen, 2006). Our tree removal treatments were more comparable to natural forest gaps created by snapped stems than those created by wind-throws, as treated sites lacked the pit-and-mound topography typical of wind-throw forest gaps (Ulanova, 2000). The beneficial effect of disturbance on the sprouting of *C. calceolus* was also seen in the long-term demography plots, where the dormancy rates dropped after the first study year. This likely occurred because the prodding of the thick moss layer in search of the plastic tags allowed more light to enter deep in the moss and break dormancy.

Although the rhizomes of *C. calceolus* are very close to the soil surface (often not more than 1 cm belowground, making the species easily damaged by any intensive mechanical disturbance), it seems that as long as the soil surface is not

severely damaged during logging, even an extensive reduction in tree basal area might not have long-term negative effects on this orchid. This is supported by the results of this tree removal experiment and the observation that, after an initial decrease, the population size of C. calceolus seems to increase at clear-cut sites in northern Finland, with populations being the largest in the open, young forest stage and then decreasing again as the canopy closes (A. Jäkäläniemi, personal observations). However, clear-cutting is unlikely to be a suitable management method: while harvesting tends to increase species richness in boreal forests, this is mainly due to an increase in early successional species and a shift in species composition (Pykälä, 2004). Therefore, some endangered species (such as the fairy's slipper orchid, Calypso bulbosa, Ryttäri et al. 2012) co-occurring with the lady's slipper orchid would likely suffer from treatments that were too intensive. Still, Reier et al. (2005) suggested that a number of forest species are "lost" without a moderate level of disturbance, which is lacking in conventional forestry with clear-cuts, but also in conventional conservation sites, in which the policy is to leave the forest untouched.

4 Conclusions and future directions

Taken together, the findings of this thesis show that both the sexual and asexual reproduction of *C. calceolus* depend on environmental factors, such as weather and tree removal, as well as on an individual's own history, although the latter appears to be the more influential factor of the two. One consequence of the clonal growth strategy is that the number of offspring, and therefore fitness, of an individual depends not only on the number of seeds produced, but also on the number of daughter ramets generated, i.e. the extent of vegetative growth (Clarke, 2012; Sackville Hamilton et al., 1987). In general, *C. calceolus* has a low probability of fruiting and seedling production, so it reproduces mainly vegetatively (Kull, 1999). For this reason, any factor, environmental or historical, that affects vegetative growth in this species can be expected to have direct fitness consequences.

I observed a trade-off between current and future reproduction with respect to both flowering and clonal growth in *C. calceolus*. These reproductive costs may be mitigated in clonal plants by spreading the costs among several ramets. Furthermore, clonal plants can fine-tune their flowering effort by having some ramets flower and some remain vegetative (in contrast with a plant with one shoot which has only two options: to flower, or not to flower at all). A similar spreading of costs can be expected to occur also regarding dormancy, as clonal plants can control how many ramets they produce annually. In this study, I was unfortunately not able to estimate the within-clone degree of dormancy as the total number of available meristems cannot be counted without digging up the plants.

This thesis shows that orchids tend to delay their reproduction until conditions are suitable, with respect to both the environment and internal resource status. This means that these orchids will spend a large portion of their lifetimes as vegetative or dormant, which decreases momentary reproduction. However, this strategy likely increases survival, which elasticity analyses have identified as the most important demographic component for population growth in long-lived species (Franco & Silvertown, 2004; Heppell, Caswell, & Crowder, 2000). It is possible, then, that dormancy may have evolved due to long-term life-history trade-offs (Shefferson, 2009; Shefferson et al., 2018, 2014). Furthermore, fecundity tends to increase with size (Crone, 2016; Ehrlén & Van Groenendael, 2001), and delaying reproduction, e.g., by having vegetative and dormant periods, is therefore likely to maximize lifetime reproduction (Metcalf, Rose, & Rees, 2003; Miller et al., 2012; Orzack & Tuljapurkar, 1989; Tuljapurkar, 1990). Moreover, spreading reproduction over several years can also provide plants with a wider sample of available

environmental conditions. In temporally variable conditions (i.e. in environments with low temporal autocorrelation), trading off momentary reproduction for survival increases the geometric mean of the individual fitness by reducing the variation of the fitness, which is a central characteristic of evolutionary bet-hedging strategies (Childs, Metcalf, & Rees, 2010; Jäkäläniemi et al., 2011; Starrfelt & Kokko, 2012). However, to be a genuine bet-hedging trait, dormancy should also decrease the arithmetic mean of the fitness (Childs et al., 2010; Seger & Brockman, 1987). There is some evidence that a moderate amount of dormancy can fulfill all bet-hedging criteria (Gremer et al., 2012; Shefferson, 2009), although this may not always be the case (Shefferson et al., 2014). For example, in the shading experiment of Shefferson et al. (2012), dormancy increased both the arithmetic and geometric mean of the fitness of the shaded plants.

At the local or regional scale, weather is something that cannot be modified by conservation efforts. However, the effects of climate and climate change must be taken into account when making conservation plans. Furthermore, while we cannot reduce the resource costs of reproduction and dormancy, we can reduce the effects of these costs by improving the overall resource status of a plant. One way to do this is by providing favorable growing conditions, for example via selective tree removal treatments. Although forestry is a threat to several plant species, the positive effects of the tree removal experiment on C. calceolus show that the logging is not always harmful, and that preserving a site untouched does not automatically lead to successful nature conservation. However, in conservation management it is important to have a clear picture of what we are aiming to conserve. In this study, I evaluated the effect of tree removal only on one species, and the effect of these treatments on any other species or on the overall biodiversity of the understory remains unknown. However, as the young broadleaf-dominated forest is usually the most species-rich state in the succession cycle of an herb-rich forest (Alanen, Leivo, Lindgren, & Piri, 1995), spruce removal can be expected to benefit the majority of understory herbs. In this respect, it has been suggested that C. calceolus could serve as an umbrella species (Nicolè et al., 2005). In other words, providing enough quality habitat for this species would likely ensure that several other species dependent on the same rare habitat type would prosper as well (Caro & O'Doherty 1999). Irrespective of whether this orchid species offers any direct benefits to other species or can serve as an indicator of their health, C. calceolus can certainly be used as a flagship species (Devillers-Terschuren, 1999; Gale et al., 2018; Kull, 1999), i.e. a rallying point for nature conservation. Because of its charismatic yellow flowers, C. calceolus is a popular plant also in gardens (in fact,

collecting has been one of its main threats; Rassi et al., 2010) and it is a wellmarketed attraction in the nature parks where it occurs, such as the Oulanka National Park where a large part of this study was conducted.

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- I Hurskainen, S., Jäkäläniemi, A., Kaitala, V., Kull, T., Mõtlep, M., Ramula, S., & Tuomi, J. (2017). Temporal cycles and spatial asynchrony in the reproduction and growth of a rare nectarless orchid, *Cypripedium calceolus. Botanical Journal of the Linnean Society*, 183(2), 316-326.
- II Hurskainen, S., Alahuhta, A., Hens, H., Jäkäläniemi, A., Kull, T., Shefferson R.P., & Tuomi, J. (in press). Prolonged dormancy in orchids incurs absolute and relative costs in large, but not in small plants. *Botanical Journal of the Linnean Society*.
- III Hurskainen, S., Jäkäläniemi, A., Ramula, S., & Tuomi, J. (2017). Tree removal as a management strategy for the lady's slipper orchid, a flagship species for herb-rich forest conservation. *Forest Ecology and Management*, 406, 12-18.

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ISBN 978-952-62-2087-1 (Paperback) ISBN 978-952-62-2088-8 (PDF) ISSN 0355-3191 (Print) ISSN 1796-220X (Online)

