

A ROCHA

SOUTH AFRICA



Annual Review

2023

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Cover image: African Honey Bee (*Apis mellifera scutellata*)
Photo credit: Murray Tessororf

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A Rocha South Africa is a national Christian organisation which equips, motivates and mobilises people to care for God's creation, through theology, sustainable livelihoods, research and projects.



A Rocha South Africa is member of the international family of A Rocha organisations.



A Rocha South Africa is a registered Non-Profit Organisation: NPO Number 038-193
and Public Benefit Organisation: PBO Number 930020406

National Director's Report

This, the 19th annual report of A Rocha South Africa, is a celebration of another year of impactful work amongst people and in places. The following pages summarise our effective work in our four focal areas in 2023: community and theological engagement, biodiversity and habitat conservation, environmental education, and sustainable development.

The year ended with the completion and handing over of projects A Rocha SA has been conducting in collaboration with the Kuzuko Foundation. Over our four years of calibration, A Rocha South Africa has made impactful contributions in setting up the Kuzuko Honey Project, contributing to Lion conservation, conducting EcoAdventure Camps for disadvantaged youths and facilitating field guide training that has seen young people attain their field guide qualifications. A great deal of the success of these projects has happened because of the support and friendship of Gerhard and Catharina de Lange; we wish them God's richest blessing and favour in their new endeavours. Completing these projects marks the end of a successful collaboration with the Kuzuko Foundation in which A Rocha South Africa has provided the tools and infrastructure for ongoing impact in community and conservation.

I am extremely grateful to every supporter of A Rocha South Africa who has carried us prayerfully and financially. Thank you to the Board of Trustees of A Rocha South Africa, under the chairmanship of David Gertzen, for your continued support and guidance. A special thank you to Godfrey Harris and Tanya Morton who have very efficiently and accurately managed our project finances during the year. Thank you to Joshua Bull and

Carl and Tori Nelson who continue to voluntarily and sacrificially assist our finance team to ensure flawless operation. Thank you to my wife, Brenda, for your continued support and for keeping the home fires burning whilst I'm away on project business. Mostly, I give thanks and glory to Jesus Christ who equips me, enables me and strengthens me to do the work entrusted to me.

Murray Tessoroff
National Director - A Rocha South Africa





Chairman's Report

The year 2023, for A Rocha South Africa, can be summarised as one of implementing projects from the grants and donations received during the previous financial year.

As reported at our last AGM our revenue was up to R 1,567 673 in 2022 from R 185 684 in 2021. This financial year, 2023 it's back down to R 349 903 which is still an 88% increase from 2021. However, our assets are down as the projects at Philipskop, and with the Kuzuko Foundation have been implemented. We are grateful to continue playing our part in caring for creation, through projects that help conservation and pioneer livelihood sustainability.

As you will see from our annual financials, our assets have reduced from R 1261 144 to R 854 342 largely attributed to project expenditure. We are still using reserves, although at a reduced rate, to sustain operations. As I said last year, please continue with this as an item for prayer and action as an organisational goal would be to become net zero in our use of reserves and have donations and support income to match our operating expenses. I continue to urge all of our supporters to give, organise fundraising events, and any other ideas that God

might bless you with so that we have the resources to continue the work in Creation Care.

In 2023, the A Rocha International Family celebrated its 40th anniversary of the founding of the organisation. The A Rocha worldwide strategic direction was updated during the year and finalised in November. A new Executive Director Ed Walker started in September 2023 and a new international Church Engagement Director was also appointed.

Learnings from the Les Courmettes gathering in 2022 for A Rocha South Africa are still dreams to be implemented and we pray God will show us and give us resources to better serve Jesus in the extension of his kingdom through creation care in South Africa; with an intern's programme, residential centre's where we can develop and mentor in community, growth in our partner programme, links with Universities, funding for scientific research, sustainable livelihood creation. Please join us in praying that Jesus will raise committed volunteers to champion and run with some of these dreams, which will mean that we can implement those ideas that He wants to plant and grow.

Organisationally I wish to thank Godfrey for his able financial stewardship and thank Tanya Morton for her financial administration. We welcomed Kirsty Kyle on as our Communications Manager.

We also welcomed Sarah Chiles onto the Board on a co-opted basis pending her formal election at the 2024 AGM. We continue the search for members to expand the Board. The portfolios are Environmental Science and Research, NGO Sector, Community/ Youth and Church/Theology. We also wish to expand the board with Regional Representatives and re-energise our actions teams/ associate staff

programme

To all of our supporters, again my thanks for your faithful giving during 2023 and I look forward to what God will do through us for the extension of His kingdom. My ongoing thanks to Murray for his dedication, hard work and perseverance.

Dave Gertzen
Chairman - A Rocha South Africa



Church and Community

Uniquely operating as a biodiversity conservation organisation within the Christian tradition, A Rocha South Africa is strategically equipped to engage with South Africa's largest religious demography in matters of environmental care and biodiversity conservation.

During 2023, representatives of A Rocha South Africa engaged with local churches, Christian community groups and theological institutions in several significant ways. These included:

- Facilitating a six-week Bible study series entitled "Why Care for God's Creation" which provides participants with a faith motivation to care for the environment.
- Interactions with bible study home groups outlining a biblical theology of creation care and motivating Christians towards environmental action as an expression of their faith.
- Sermons preached in churches on Sundays offering a biblical motivation to care for God's creation.
- Lectures covering the topic of biblical creation care to seminary students.
- Speaking engagements at youth groups, motivating emerging generations to care for the environment to the glory of God.
- Creation care workshops for pastors who desire to understand the theology and practice of caring for God's creation.

Faith Leaders Environmental Training

Funded by a small grant from the Pietermaritzburg and District Community Chest, A Rocha South Africa has commenced a series of workshops designed to equip African church leaders, including clergy, laity and seminary students, in issues of environmental care. The Faith Leaders Environmental Training workshops, held over two days, provide a biblical foundation and environmental awareness that informs and motivates church leaders to encourage their communities to care for creation. The project, which commenced in September 2023 will be completed in March 2024 with the goal of providing training to 50 church leaders who will, in turn, influence their respective communities.



John Stott Birding Day

The John Stott Birding Day has become a significant event on the A Rocha South Africa calendar as it allows friends from across the country to join together to participate in a global A Rocha event. Each year, teams from around the world take part in the John Stott Memorial Birding Day organised by A Rocha International to commemorate and celebrate our great friend and supporter John Stott's legacy as a theologian, pastor and birdwatcher.

During 2023, A Rocha South Africa teams participated in Gauteng and the Eastern Cape. Despite the inclement weather that affected much of the country, the Eastern Cape team logged 81 species in the pouring rain whilst



the Gauteng team added 60 to their list. The John Stott Birding Day coincides with World Migratory Bird Day and the Global Big Day. All birds logged by our South Africa teams contribute to an international list which provides a global picture of bird demographics and movements.



Community

The A Rocha team in Johannesburg has been particularly active in organising a number of valuable community events during 2023. These include an Introduction to birding, an Easter Egg Craft event, a series of bible studies on creation care, participation in the John Stott Birding Day at Marrievale, a river clean-up event, a spring picnic celebrating pollinators and finished the year with a Christmas wrapping and decoration making event. Well done to the Johannesburg team for an effective year.



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Footsteps to Good Hope EcoYouth



'Footsteps to Good Hope' EcoYouth, is an A Rocha SA-affiliated youth organisation located in the Belleville area of the Cape Town Metro. This group of energetic young people are convinced of their role and responsibility as Christians to care for God's creation and are eager to educate themselves on the best ways to do it. During the year, the EcoYouth continued their long-term rehabilitation programme on a portion of the Kuils River, conducting 4 river cleanups. During these cleanups, close to 100 large dustbin bags of trash were removed from the river. The group also



hosted two educational gatherings, the first a talk about Aardwolves by Erik van Der Linden and the second about creation care by Anna Whitehouse. The group also continued to gather data on a 16-year-old tidal pool biodiversity survey on the Kleinmond coastline. This data will further contribute to an understanding of long-term biodiversity changes.



#ecoyouth

Kuzuko Honey Project

The Kuzuko Foundation and A Rocha South Africa have collaborated to develop a honey initiative on the Kuzuko Private Game Reserve. Funded by a grant from the John Templeton Foundation, the project has three main focal areas, namely pollinator conservation, environmental education and environmentally positive livelihood creation.



With the project commencing in November 2022, A Rocha South Africa worked with beneficiaries of the Kuzuko Foundation to train them in hive box construction and preparation, setting catch boxes out to attract swarming bees and initial monitoring of these catch boxes. With an initial 18 hive boxes placed, 12 of them had been occupied by the end of 2022. With the feasibility of the project determined, 2023 saw another 92 boxes positioned on the reserve bringing the total to 110 boxes distributed throughout the reserve. Mindful to minimise disturbing the natural balance of honey bees to other insect pollinators, no swarms were introduced to the reserve, but reliance was made on wild swarms colonising hive boxes. By the end of 2023, 72 bee hives had been colonised and the first honey had been sustainably harvested.

In addition to contributing to the financial sustainability of the project through honey production, the project also had a strong conservation component that extended beyond the well-being of the honey bees. To this end, beehives were strategically positioned around specimen Karoo Shepherd trees (*Boscia oleoides*) and Jacket plum trees (*Pappaea capensis*) to

minimise elephant damage. During this time none of the protected trees suffered elephant damage. Additionally, casual observations indicated a visible decrease in the over-browsing of protected trees by the considerable Kudu and Giraffe populations within the reserve and indications of sapling growth of these tree species were noticed around the beehives. Early observations suggest that beehives may be an effective management tool for the establishment and protection of trees in conservation areas experiencing high browsing pressure.



The overriding purpose of the Kuzuko Honey Project is to serve as a sustainable social development livelihood creation tool. To this end, A Rocha South Africa has successfully established this project and put everything in place for the Kuzuko Foundation to empower local community members through a bee-keeping mentorship and livelihood creation programme. A Rocha South Africa completed all fieldwork on this project in December 2023. We wish the Kuzuko Foundation every success as they further this project for conservation and community.



Why beekeeping?

We believe that training, equipping and supporting community beekeepers exceeds the goals of sustainable development to be an environmentally positive form of livelihood creation. Not only are trained beekeepers able to supplement their income through beekeeping but also become invested caretakers of the environment since their livelihoods are directly linked to a healthy environment. To this end we see the value of local beekeepers becoming stewards of their environment. In addition, if carefully managed, we see community beekeeping as a tool for positive relationship building between communities and nature reserves, particularly within the private sector, where communities can directly benefit from conserving land without any environmental harm or cost to the landowner. With the experience gained through the Kuzuko Honey Project, A Rocha South Africa is well positioned to develop and manage community honey projects in conservation and environmentally sensitive areas.



The Tortoise Project



The Tortoise Project is a collaborative project between A Rocha South Africa and FreeMe Wildlife with our contribution relating to the funding and assistance with the construction of tortoise rehabilitation enclosures at the FreeMe Wildlife facility in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands. The project exists for three main purposes, namely for the conservation of the four Terrestrial Tortoise species found in KZN, for implementing, testing and perfecting tortoise rehabilitation protocols, and to provide a viable and legal option for the reintroduction of South Africa's captive tortoise population back into the wild.

Since the successful rehabilitation and release of Natal and Eastern Hinged Tortoise into their natural range in the Zululand area of KwaZulu-Natal in 2022, FreeMe Wildlife has focused on the

rehabilitation and release of Leopard Tortoise in 2023. Through genetic testing of their captive Leopard Tortoise population, FreeMe Wildlife has been able to isolate the area of origin and find release sites for the animals in their care. This has fulfilled the final hurdle, thereby permitting the legal release of these tortoise into their area of origin. During 2023, FreeMe Wildlife was able to release 18 Leopard Tortoise back into the Eastern Cape province where they originated.

It is important to note that removing tortoise from the wild is illegal and keeping an indigenous tortoise in captivity requires the necessary permits from provincial wildlife authorities. As relocating tortoises across provincial boundaries requires the appropriate permits, FreeMe Wildlife is prohibited from accepting tortoise from outside of KwaZulu-Natal. In cases where assistance is needed with tortoise outside of KwaZulu-Natal, it is advisable to contact the local NSPCA offices.



EcoAdventure Camps

EcoAdventure Camps are an adventure of new experiences and opportunities for discovery outside of a teen's normal surroundings. EcoAdventure Camps are designed to give underprivileged participants new experiences in the natural environment while providing valuable hands-on environmental education opportunities. The experience is designed to ignite the participants' interest in the natural environment, provide knowledge that fuels a growing fascination for wild things and build a foundation of environmental knowledge that the individual can build on for the rest of their life.



Following on from the two EcoAdventure camps held in 2022, two more were held during 2023 and run in partnership with the Kuzuko Foundation situated in the Eastern Cape. Catering for learners in grades 9 to 11, participants had



opportunities for a multitude of new experiences. These included, amongst others, an equine encounter, nature walks, game drives in a Big Five nature reserve, a visit to a San rock art site, interacting with conservation professionals, exploring career opportunities in conservation, introduction to a case study in lion conservation, learning how animals use different types of camouflage, conducting water quality assessments and constructing soil erosion control structures.

A Rocha South Africa is appreciative of the grant funding provided by the John Templeton Foundation which made these EcoAdventure Camps possible.



Happy Earth Festival

A Rocha South Africa was very ably represented by Dr Friederike Voigt at the 2023 edition of the Happy Earth Festival held during August at the Pietermaritzburg Botanical Gardens. The festival was attended by 1400 learners between Grade R and 12.

The format for the day involves school groups visiting various stations for a period of 20 to 30 minutes to learn about different aspects of the environment. With A Rocha South Africa's focus on pollinator conservation during 2023, it was fitting that Dr Voigt presented lessons on pollinators. Here she enthused children by outlining the importance of pollinators, their diversity, the importance of the sense of smell for some pollinator species and even the basic morphology of flowers so that the learners could understand the role of pollinators. Whilst the younger grades enjoyed the excitement of the "Bee at Work" relay race, the older grades got a close-up guided tour of various flowers and pollinators, aided by their use of magnifying lenses.

Thank you to Dr Voigt for the time taken to develop a pollinator-focused environmental educational syllabus and for sharing this knowledge at the festival.



The poster for the Happy Earth Festival 2023 features a central logo of a smiling globe with arms, surrounded by the text "HAPPY EARTH" and "LET'S CONNECT KIDS WITH NATURE". A speech bubble says "SAVE THE DATE!". Below the logo, it reads "HAPPY EARTH FESTIVAL 2023" and "JOIN US FOR A MORNING OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND EDUCATIONAL FUN!". The dates "17-18 August" and location "KZN Botanical Gardens" are prominently displayed, along with registration times "8:00 | 8:30-13:30 Programme". The poster lists 25 participating organizations, including A Rocha South Africa, and provides contact information for Pandora Long. It also includes a note about transport assistance and a statement that "FREE ENTRY TO THE FESTIVAL, REGISTRATION IS ESSENTIAL".



Green Economy: Field Guide Training

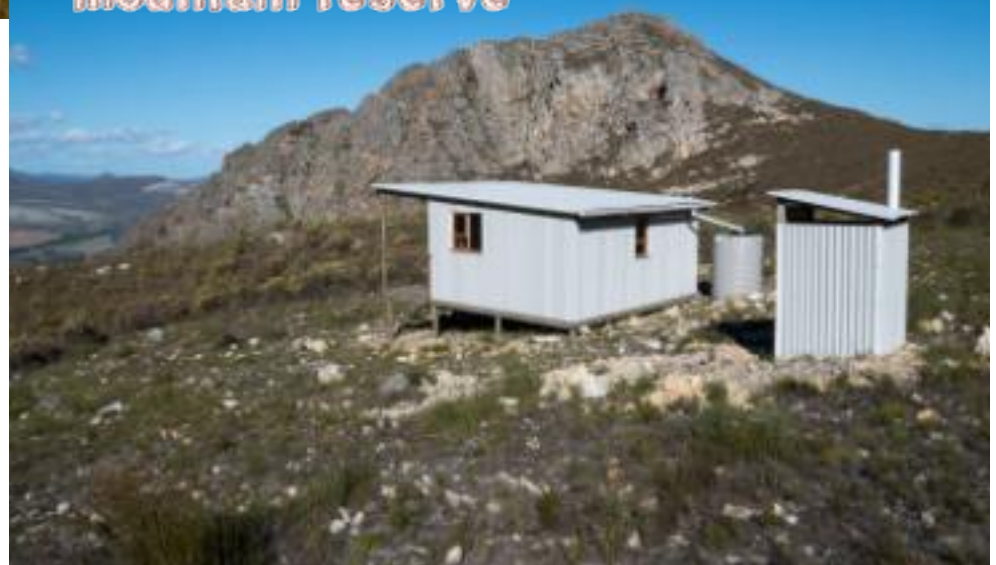
Through grant funding received from the Templeton Foundation, A Rocha South Africa was able to cover training costs for four participants to train towards becoming registered field guides in the tourism sector. This online training, provided by Inkube Field Guide Training, enables participants to qualify as registered field guides, offering them a career path and placing them in a position where they can educate and instil their love of the natural environment to local and foreign guests.

This training prepared participants to write the CATHSSETA-accredited Field Guide Association of Southern Africa examination. Two of the participants chose to write this exam and a big congratulations to Precious Zintle Leyila and Angelique de Lange who both passed their examination with a mark of more than 75%.



Phillipskop Nature Reserve Mountain Hut

Since 2022, A Rocha South Africa has administered a grant provided by the Gesellschaft für Fleischfressende Pflanzen (German Carnivorous Plant Association) to Phillipskop Mountain Reserve for the construction of a mountain hut. Built on the upper reaches of the mountain reserve, this hut provides overnight accommodation and a base of operation for alien invasive vegetation clearing teams working at the heights of the reserve. The mountain hut has now reached near completion and will be a valuable tool in furthering the work of eradicating exotic plant species that invade and threaten the Fynbos vegetation.



A Rocha South Africa Vital statistics 2023

Non Profit Organisation - NPO Number 038-193
Public Benefit Organisation - PBO Number 930020406

Board of Trustees:

David Gertzen (National Chairperson)
Christine Cuénod (Secretary)
Martin de Wit (Western Cape & EcoYouth)
Sarah Chiles (Coopted)
Godfrey Harris (Treasurer)
Murray Tessendorf (National Director)

Finance:

Godfrey Harris
Tanya Morton
Carl Neilson (Dulverton Financial Services)
Tori Neilson (Dulverton Financial Services)
Joshua Bean

Auditors:

Jacques van Rooyen Chartered Accountant (SA) will continue in office for the 2024 financial year.

National Team:

Murray Tessendorf (National Director)
Tanya Morton (Finance)
Kirsty Kyle (Communications Manager)
Estelle Home (Website design)

Board of Reference:

Mark Brown
Michael Cassidy
Ray Durrheim
Philip Le Feuvre
Les Underhill



A Rocha South Africa Financial Statement 2023

A Rocha South Africa

Statement of Financial Position at 31 December 2023

	<u>Notes</u>	<u>2023</u> <u>R</u>	<u>2022</u> <u>R</u>
Assets			
Non-Current Assets			
Property, Plant and Equipment	2	506	736
Current Assets			
Trade and Other Receivables		22 398	29 217
Cash and Cash Equivalents	3	831 438	1 231 191
Total Assets		854 342	1 261 144
Equity and Liabilities			
Equity			
Retained Earnings		845 890	1 258 366
Current Liabilities			
Trade and Other Payables		8 452	2 778
Total Equity and Liabilities		854 342	1 261 144

Audited annual financial statements in compliance with the Non-Profit Organisation Act 1997, independently audited by Savunde Accountants / AhvRJ.

Full report available from info@arocha.org.za



A Rocha SA would like to acknowledge the valuable and varied contributions the following organisations have made to further our work during 2023.

We are thankful for the part they have played in our ongoing story of conservation and hope.



Account holder:
Bank:
Account number:
Branch:
Universal branch code:
International Swift code:

A Rocha South Africa NPO
First National Bank
62918100380
Midlands Mall
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