

# Field notes

Updates from the A Rocha world

issue <sup>of</sup> 67



THEME

# Celebrating 40 years!

April 2023

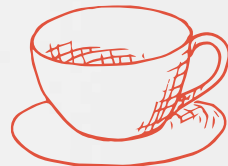
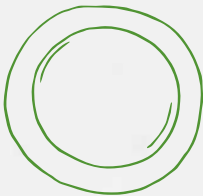


## Join A Rocha International's community of regular givers protecting people and places around the world.

The A Rocha Table is a faithful community of regular givers committed to seeing nature and humankind flourish. Together with people like you, we have been responding to the global crisis of biodiversity loss for four decades. We believe it's this long-term commitment to people and places that makes the difference.

Find out how you can be a vital part of A Rocha's hands-on work caring for and protecting our most vulnerable habitats and species.

Visit [arocha.org/table](https://arocha.org/table)



# Welcome

## Welcome to this special anniversary edition celebrating 40 years of A Rocha.

40 is a significant number in the Bible. There are many illustrations of this, but two stand out: the 40 years that the Israelites spent in the wilderness before entering the promised land and the 40 days Jesus spent in the wilderness before beginning his public ministry, which is a recapitulation of the first.

The baptism and temptations of Jesus which bookend his 40 days in the wilderness highlight three gifts he receives as he starts proclaiming the Kingdom of God, preaching the gospel of wholeness in the power of the Holy Spirit: his identity, his calling and his mission (Matthew 3 and 4).

40 years of A Rocha do not quite mirror the experience of Israel or Jesus, but these four decades have been a time of sharpening our identity, calling and mission as we see three major paradigm shifts in the world:

First, the urgency of the climate and environmental issues in the world. We were there at the beginning of any organized Christian movement of environmentalism. We've been there since then as a worshipping community, witnessing to the living God. Our identity has never changed but our influence has grown deeper and wider.

Second, the missional potential of the church's role. We were there before there were invitations from local churches to

care for creation. We've been there with our calling to journey with the church, pointing them to a hurting creation that calls for our attention (Romans 8:21). Our message has never changed but our audience has grown bigger.

Third, the radical desire for social change in younger people. As an older generation retires from the workforce, young people genuinely cry out for changes for the better for the earth. We've been there with our mission to equip and empower young people and communities to bring healing to our hurting planet. Our mission has never changed but our field has been enlarged.

This is our humble testimony, and we praise God for his faithfulness through your prayers, volunteering, giving and more. We also give thanks to God for the hope he gives us in Christ – for the next 40 years. We invite you to join us for this exciting future!

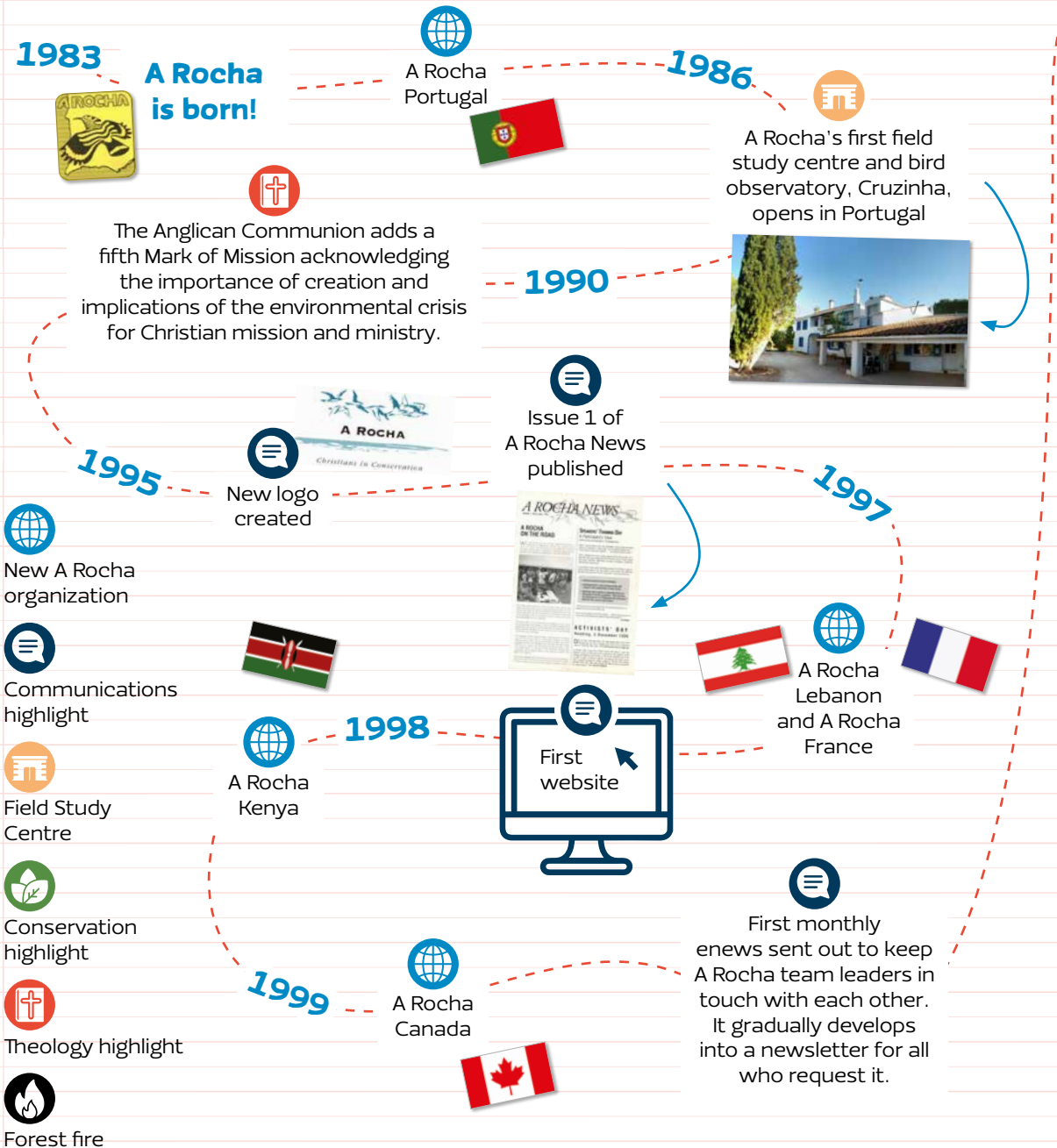
**Soohwan Park,**  
Board Chair,  
A Rocha  
International



Credit: Nathan Wilson-Hartgrove

# The Story so far...

A Rocha was born in 1983 when the Harris and Batty families moved to Portugal to establish a Christian field study centre and bird observatory in the Algarve. As on many journeys, we have seen spectacular panoramas and devastating forest fires along the way. Travel along with us to explore how A Rocha has grown to become an international network of organizations caring for creation in over 20 countries.





2000

A Rocha  
Czech Republic,  
A Rocha UK and  
A Rocha USA



2001

A Rocha Kenya  
team moves into  
Mwamba field  
study centre and  
**A Rocha France**  
into Les Tourades



A Rocha News becomes  
A Rocha International  
News and changes from  
black and white to colour

2003

A Rocha Ghana,  
A Rocha Finland (2003–20),  
A Rocha Netherlands,  
A Rocha Bulgaria (2003–15),  
A Rocha India  
A Rocha South Africa



The July International  
News is replaced  
by a new-style  
International Review



2006

A Rocha Brazil  
(2006–2020),  
Climate Stewards



 **Climate  
Stewards**

2004

A Rocha  
Peru



2005



A Rocha India  
Kasserguppe Centre,  
Bannerghatta  
National Park



2007

A Rocha  
International  
joins Facebook



2008

A Rocha Aotearoa  
New Zealand,  
A Rocha Switzerland



The first  
A Rocha France  
team move into  
Les Courmettes



# and further...

2009



In countries like Singapore and later Germany, informal groups start to be formed by A Rocha volunteers



A Rocha Uganda



2010



A Rocha Czech Republic, Krupárna

2011



Vijay Anand, Founder and National Director of A Rocha India, dies suddenly in December



2012



The Lausanne / WEA Creation Care Network is formed. A series of regional conferences on Creation Care and the Gospel are co-led by A Rocha International.



A Rocha Portugal's four-year legal battle results in the conviction of the owners of Quinta da Rocha for their destruction of species and habitats



The Marine Conservation Programme is launched to study, protect and restore marine life and their habitats

2013



Eden Creation Care Initiative, Associated Project of A Rocha International in Nigeria

2014

**A ROCHA**  
**MARINE**  
**CONSERVATION**  
PROGRAMME



A Rocha Canada Brooksedale Environmental Centre in BC



A Rocha Kenya establishes a nature reserve (now over 2,100 hectares) in Dakatcha Woodland to protect habitats and precious species



2015



New logo created

2016



A Rocha Australia



2016



Eco Church launches as an A Rocha UK project



2017



A Rocha Canada, Boreal Ecology Centre in Manitoba

2019



Christians in Conservation Philippines (CIC), Associated Project of A Rocha International



The campaign to protect Atewa Forest in Ghana from bauxite mining begins



Peter and Miranda Harris, A Rocha Co-Founders, and Chris Naylor, A Rocha International's Executive Director, and his wife Susanna, are involved in a horrific car accident in South Africa. Miranda, Chris and Susanna do not survive.



Kristna för naturvård i Sverige (KriNa for short, or in English: Christians for Nature Conservation), Associated Project of A Rocha International

2021



The African Forest Programme is launched to protect biodiversity-rich forests across Africa. The Churches & Theology Global Programme is formed to enable engagement with churches.

2020



Launch of Field Notes, including a new podcast and a revamp of the International News and enews



Brand refresh

2023

2022



Friends of A Rocha Network launched



A Rocha Ghana leads a coalition taking the Ghanaian government to court for its plans to allow bauxite mining in Atewa Forest



# Changing landscapes

By Rev Dr Dave Bookless, David Chandler and Dr Jeremy Lindsell

Rewind to 1983. Ronald Reagan is President of the United States, Margaret Thatcher is re-elected as the UK's Prime Minister and Robert Runcie is the Archbishop of Canterbury. A ground-breaking year sees the first full heart and lung transplant, the birth of the Internet, the advent of 3D printing and new legislation that makes seatbelt-wearing compulsory in the front seats of UK cars. Nintendo launch the Mario Bros. video game in Japan, a lot of gold goes missing from the Brink's-Mat vault and Lech Walesa receives the Nobel Peace Prize. Cruise missiles arrive at Greenham Common, more than a million people hit the streets of London to protest against nuclear weapons and a 26-year civil war kicks off in Sri Lanka.

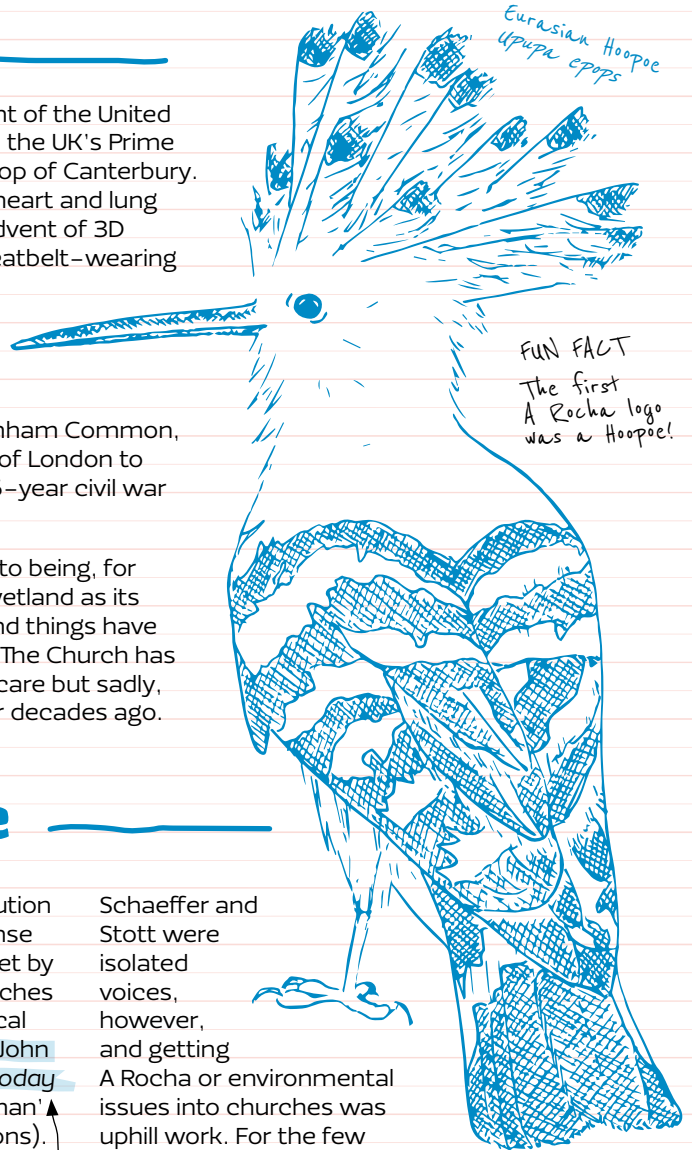
On a more positive note, A Rocha came into being, for the good of creation, with a Portuguese wetland as its first beneficiary. Fast-forward 40 years and things have changed. A Rocha has made a difference. The Church has a more enlightened approach to creation care but sadly, biodiversity is even more in crisis than four decades ago.

## A faith response

Back in 1970, Francis Schaeffer wrote *Pollution and the Death of Man* as a Christian response to the ecological concerns of the 1960s. Yet by 1983, when A Rocha began, very few churches were speaking on or doing anything practical about creation care. In the following year, John Stott's influential *Issues facing Christians today* was published, with a chapter on 'Our human environment' ('Creation Care' in later editions). John became a firm friend of A Rocha and played a key role in giving A Rocha, and the biblical mandate for creation care, credibility in church circles.

Great read

Schaeffer and Stott were isolated voices, however, and getting A Rocha or environmental issues into churches was uphill work. For the few individuals who shared God's passion for his creation, churches were often lonely places where those people were misunderstood or





rejected as having 'gone soft' on the Gospel. Sadly, that still holds true in some places.

Gradually things changed though, and our expanding work and reputation played a part in that, as people saw tangible evidence of Christians 'writing the Gospel in the landscape' \* as Peter Harris said when he saw A Rocha Lebanon's transformation of the Aammq Marsh. The 1990s saw a growth in theological writing about land, the cosmic scope of Christ's saving work and the renewal of creation when Jesus returns, but very little of this filtered through to the training of ministers or to ordinary churches. Major denominations started to address issues such as ozone depletion, pollution, resource use and climate change with high-level reports but again, most Christians remained oblivious.

Today, and globally, the situation is very different, though a minority of churches are

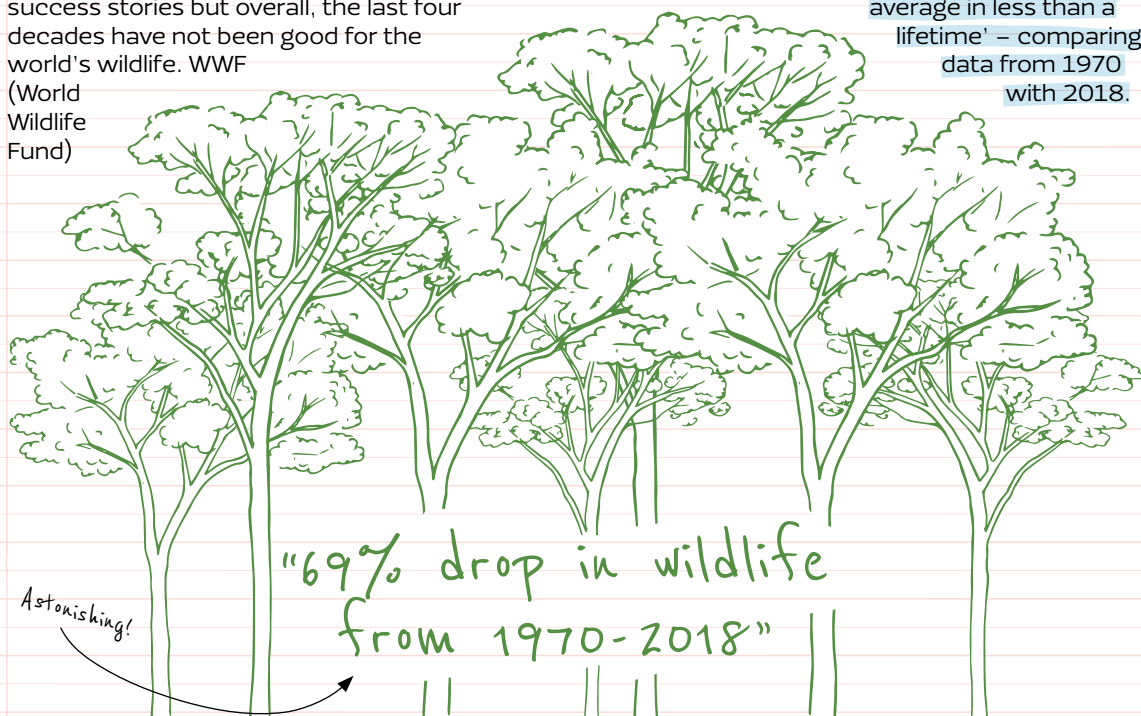
still resistant to creation care theology. Over the years A Rocha has helped to transform attitudes on the ground as the family has grown to over 20 countries. We have helped lead the global Lausanne / World Evangelical Alliance Creation Care Movement, which has held 12 regional conferences bringing clear biblical teaching, good science and practical ideas to people from over 100 countries. In the UK, Eco Church has grown rapidly – more than 5,500 churches have registered to engage in a practical programme of action, and similar schemes are springing up in other countries. We were once a prophetic voice on the margins of the global Church. Now we find ourselves overwhelmed with requests for theological and practical advice on creation care from global networks, seminaries and local churches. It's been quite a journey! And there is, of course, more to come.

\* Writing the Gospel in the landscape!

## A poor response

The faith response may be encouraging but humanity's response to the biodiversity crisis leaves room for improvement. There are success stories but overall, the last four decades have not been good for the world's wildlife. WWF (World Wildlife Fund)

published the Living Planet Report last year. Its headline is truly shocking – 'A devastating 69% drop in wildlife populations on average in less than a lifetime' – comparing data from 1970 with 2018.



What has driven that loss and what can we do to turn things around? There are five key drivers. The most significant are changes in

- ① how we use the land and the oceans – when natural forests and grasslands, wonderful wetlands and coastal and marine habitats become farmland or urban, are quarried, mined or industrialised, or used for commercial forestry, biodiversity is normally the loser.
- ② Direct exploitation of plant and animal species is the next most significant driver of change, with over-fishing of marine fish stocks, wildlife trade for traditional medicines and other cultural purposes, and forest logging as specific examples. Then it's pollution, followed by
- ③ invasive species and climate change. Pollution is airborne, in freshwater and seawater, and terrestrial. While plastic pollution is high-profile and highly visible, it is agricultural pollution (pesticides and fertilisers) that have the greatest impact. Humans have a long history of introducing plants and animals to places where

they don't belong. Native species simply can't compete, have no adequate strategy to avoid predation or have no means to survive diseases that the introduced species bring with them. Non-native introductions have brought about the demise of many island bird species. Climate change-induced severe weather events can be direct threats to biodiversity, and over longer timescales, climate change forces species to shift their geographic range and change their behaviour – for example, the timing of migration. If there is not enough suitable habitat in a species' new range, it has a problem.

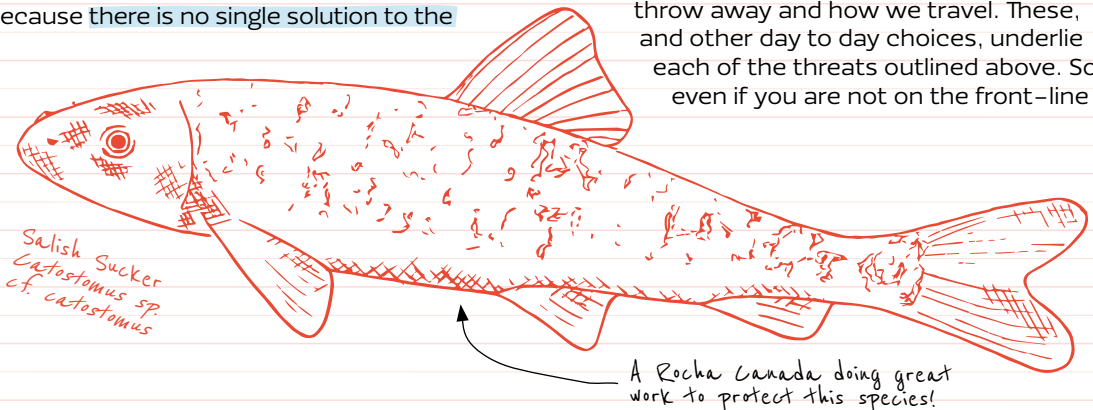
In terrestrial habitats land-use change, direct exploitation and pollution are the key threats. In the oceans direct exploitation and climate change are the main culprits. The different drivers also interact with each other – one threat can make another even more potent, creating a lethal anti-biodiversity cocktail.

## A hopeful response

But let us not lose hope. Most readers will know some positive biodiversity conservation stories and there are many initiatives to halt and reverse biodiversity loss, and more proposals in the pipeline. The Convention on Biological Diversity reached a new agreement last December, with protecting areas of land and sea from human impacts and exploitation so that plant and animal species can recover and then flourish as central to the plan. The plan has many other elements as well: necessary because there is no single solution to the

biodiversity crisis. We do know what needs to be done but for whatever reason, we are not doing enough of it.

The threats, the scale at which they operate and the way they are embedded in our way of life can make one feel almost powerless to make a difference. But this connection to how we live also provides an opportunity to be a voice for creation – in what we choose to eat, our purchasing decisions, what we throw away and how we travel. These, and other day to day choices, underlie each of the threats outlined above. So even if you are not on the front-line



\* it's the right thing to do



of species conservation or site protection, there is something you can do. Perhaps more importantly, those actions and others can help to create an environment that will enable the larger scale actions that we know need to be done.

world (Romans 8:19). While creation may be groaning, the Church is now recognising creation care as part of its mission. We keep on doing what we do, for the good of creation, in the service of the Creator, hoping for more and doing the right thing because it's the right thing to do. \*

A Rocha has been making a difference for four decades and will continue to do so. Our work around the world brings hope for places, species and people. The Church is God's hope for the

40 years

## Biographies

**Rev Dr Dave Bookless** is A Rocha International's Director of Theology. He joined the staff team in 2011 having previously co-founded A Rocha UK. He co-leads the Lausanne / World Evangelical Alliance Creation Care Network, has a Cambridge University PhD on biblical theology and biodiversity conservation and is a qualified bird-ringer.

**David Chandler** is a freelance writer and wildlife guide. He is the author / co-author of 17 books, a regular contributor to Bird Watching magazine and the editor of 'Root & Branch', A Rocha UK's magazine. David has also worked for the RSPB and BirdLife International.

**Dr Jeremy Lindsay** leads A Rocha International's Science and Conservation team. He has worked on globally threatened species and tropical forest conservation for over 20 years, including work on the conservation of long-distance migrant bird species and the biodiversity value of protected, unprotected and degraded tropical forests. He has a PhD in Zoology (Ornithology) from the University of Oxford and has played a key role in A Rocha's campaign to protect the Atewa Forest in Ghana.

# 40 years in faces

A Rocha has meant many things to people around the world over the years. Here are some tiny stories of wonder, romance and transformation – enjoy!

## Julia Rawlins, Germany ▶

'I was so warmly welcomed at Les Courmettes, France. Coming from my single life in Berlin to community life on a hillside with spectacular views, lavender-scented breeze, dazzling stars, humming insects, fabulous French cuisine and many lovely encounters exceeded my expectations.'



## ▼ Marcial Felgueiras, Portugal

'When an A Rocha leader asks your forgiveness after giving you a rather harsh rebuke, that's a hallmark of a great leader. That's a leader worth following! I was lucky to have been given the opportunity to share life with such people. Thank you God!'



## ◀ Sara Kaweesa, Uganda



'Lubigi Wetland was our number one agenda item when we started A Rocha Uganda. We watched birds, prayed and researched. One day it was invaded. Our dreams were

frustrated, dashed. Our new project in West Bugwe forest reserve is consolation. I am celebrating.'

## Peter Sturgess, Wales ▶

'In 1993 I helped Cruzinha's moth trapping. A nice young lady was very keen to assist, even learning the Latin names. Turned out that she wasn't just interested in moths. Anita and I have been married for over 27 years now and we're still moth trapping!'

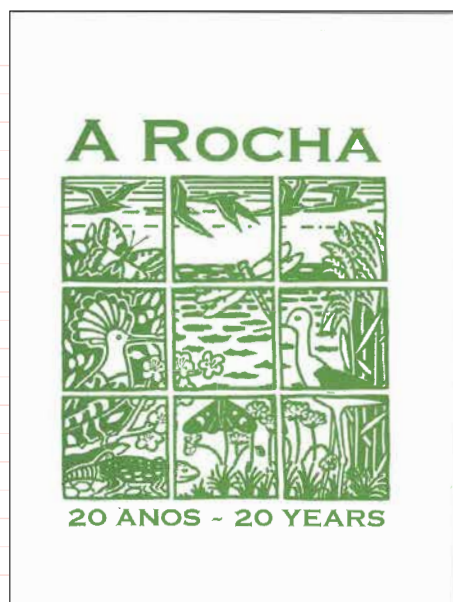
[Photo of the photo that's been up at Cruzinha since our engagement there in 1994! (Sent to us by Dave Fielder when he visited in 2017)]





## Will and Rachel Simonson (with Ben and Rosie), England ▶

'The Leaders' Forum in Portugal, during our 20th Anniversary, with a day at Cruzinha, was the first taste of an A Rocha centre for many attendees. Many stayed beyond the week because they didn't want to leave! Our family was so happy to be part of this time of tremendous growth for A Rocha.'



## ◀ Kai Jackson (age 10), Kenya

'We went to Whale Island, two kilometres offshore, high speed over the waves. There are very spikey rocks, and I don't normally wear shoes! We tried to catch Roseate and Sooty Tern chicks to put rings on them. Then we had to put them deep into the bush so they don't run off the cliff, because they are scared.'

## ◀ Barbara Mearns, Scotland

'Ghana in 2012 was unforgettable. I accompanied Seth Appiah-Kubi as he visited schools and villages working with A Rocha to restore and protect forests. Driving, we saw problems: logging, open-cast gold mines, illegal bush meat for sale. Arriving, I had the joy of photographing people adopting new, sustainable livelihoods: breeding tasty cane rats, and planting native woodlands including cash-crop trees.'



## Filipa Brasch, Peru ▶

'I visited La Libertad Dry Forest Project in Peru last February and toured Cañoncillo, a beautiful Private Conservation Area. It was a true oasis – forests of ancient Algarrobo trees and stunning lagoons, teeming with birds and lizards. There was even more fun when one adventurer finished the day sandboarding the dunes!'





### Janice Weatherly Singh, Belgium ▶

'My most memorable moment was on a fact-finding mission to Papua New Guinea in 2010. I visited a remote forest community where I was carried into the village in a traditional welcoming ceremony. Unfortunately my trousers were almost pulled off.'



### ◀ David Melville, England

'Teachers and teaching assistants from Wolf Fields Primary school joined the fun after the children left their 'hand leaf' marks on the back of the storage container. Over 300 children took part – it was quite a military operation.'

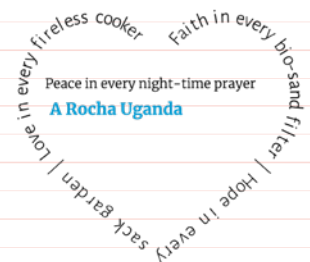
### Nathan Lemphers, Canada ▶

'The 2007 Leaders Forum in Kenya – witnessing A Rocha staff from five continents converge on Watamu was a sight to behold – a veritable Noah's Ark of hope-filled Christians, renewing our shared calling amidst such (bio)diversity!



### ◀ Heidi Sumei Chuang, USA

'The Butterfly Project was born through conversations with Peter and Miranda Harris in New York. In Spring 2017, this beautiful conversation developed into A Rocha's first Artist Residency at A Rocha France. I painted the butterfly's poetry, minute beauty, and colours revealing a story of hope.'



### Julia Jardine, Australia ▲

'Faith in every bio-sand water filter  
Hope in every sack garden  
Love in every fireless cooker  
Peace in every night-time prayer.'





### ◀ Petra Crofton, Netherlands

'Portugal 1999. Balancing two Dutch apple pies I opened the door for our latest arrival – a bearded British birdwatcher. We monitored Kentish Plovers, talked about life and quickly bonded. We married, moved to the French centre, toured the Netherlands talking about A Rocha, counted raptors in Lebanon and became involved with ARUK. Our daughter hopes to move to Cruzhina this autumn for her gap year...'

### Sagarika Phalke, India ▶

'As a woman from the global south working in conservation, finding opportunities and a safe research environment is often a challenge. My colleagues at A Rocha India have always supported my goals and growth, respected me and ensured that I never feel marginalised because of my gender.'



### ◀ Nicholas Warren, Scotland

'In 2018 I landed in Kenya to collaborate on our owl conservation project. The target species is Africa's smallest, the endangered Sokoke Scops Owl. To monitor the presence of this elusive, nocturnal bird, we tested small recording devices which can be left out to record their calls. It was so exciting being in the forest at night, listening for owls and testing the machines. I remember meeting a herd of elephants who seemed unimpressed with our nocturnal activities!'



### Limmy Khongsai (age 11), England ▶

'I had a great experience in A Rocha, from bird ringing at Minet Country Park to pond dipping at Wolf Fields and able to connect with nature and people at events. A Rocha has broadened my knowledge of the natural world and has taught me to appreciate God's diverse creation and its beauty.'



# 40 species years



## Salish Sucker *Catostomus* *sp. cf. catostomus*

A small freshwater fish thought to be locally extinct – until identified in the Little Campbell River watershed (BC) in 2011! The population is now thriving.



## Indian Elephant *Elephas* *maximus indicus*

A Rocha India is helping solve the growing issue of human–elephant conflict in and around Bannerghatta National Park.



## Sokoke Scops Owl *Otus* *ireneae*

Dakatcha – A Rocha Kenya's nature reserve of threatened woodland – offers the perfect habitat for Africa's smallest owl and 12 other species on IUCN's Red List.



## White-naped Mangabey *Cercocebus atys lunulatus*

A Rocha camera traps confirmed the presence of this monkey in the Atewa Forest in 2017, the first photo ever taken of this species in Ghana.



## European Roller *Coracias* *garrulus*

A Rocha France has studied and protected this magnificent bird since 2002. Our findings influence new conservation measures and populations are responding positively.



## Halavi Guitarfish *Glaucostegus halavi*

Guitarfish, sharks and rays are under enormous threat globally. A Rocha monitors their populations off the Kenyan coast to identify key habitats and nursery areas.



## Horseshoe Crab *Limulus* *polyphemus*

This ancient creature is under threat due to factors such as shore–line development and nutrient runoff. A Rocha USA is part of monitoring this species to learn how to help.



## Northern Red–legged Frog *Rana aurora*

Since 2009, A Rocha Canada has inventoried annual egg mass surveys for pond–breeding amphibians like this 'Special Concern' frog throughout the Little Campbell River watershed (BC).



### Barn owl *Tyto alba*

A Rocha prioritizes monitoring species to help us understand a place and the relationships in play within it.



### Long-tailed Bat *Chalinolobus tuberculatus*

This endemic and rare species has been sighted on and around Mount Karioi through surveys and monitoring. The species holds the highest

threat ranking of Nationally Critical in Aotearoa New Zealand.



### Tiger *Panthera tigris*

In 2015, A Rocha India scientists tracked a solitary male tiger roaming Bannerghatta Park, where A Rocha is based. He has now established his territory.

Recently a female was recorded in the area – perhaps this will lead to a breeding population?



### Grey-headed Flying Fox *Pteropus poliocephalus*

A Rocha Australia monitors several species, including the largest bat found in Australia, the Grey-headed Flying Fox (listed as Vulnerable).



### Tree Frog *Hyla savignyi*

The Tree Frog loves to climb – usually on twigs or leaves but pencils (pictured) will do! This one did so in the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon.



### Yellow-banded Bumblebee *Bombus terricola*

We care for creation, no matter the size! The Yellow-banded Bumblebee, one of the earlier species to emerge

in the spring, is listed under Special Concern in Canada.



### Huarango or Algarrobo *Neltuma spp.*

One tree, two names! A Rocha has been planting native dry forest trees from 2009 to the present. Known as Huarango in the south and Algarrobo in

the north, *Neltuma spp.* trees are vital to the survival of dry forests, one of the most fragile ecosystems in the world.



### Grey-faced Petrel *Pterodroma gouldi* or Ōi

A Rocha has been working with the community since 2009 to re-establish Mount Karioi, New Zealand, for seabirds like the Ōi. More than

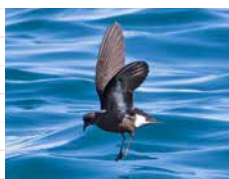
47 Ōi chicks have fledged over the last six years!



### Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis*

Between 2005 and 2018, A Rocha Canada monitored the spring migration of hawks, eagles and other raptors in the Pembina Valley

(Manitoba), an important migration corridor for birds of prey and other bird species.



### European Storm-petrel *Hydrobates pelagicus*

A Rocha Portugal has been studying these smallest of all seabirds since 1990, making it possible to examine links between climate change,

oceanography, marine food-webs and the diet and migration strategies of Storm-petrels.

Photo credits →





**Oregon Forestsnail**  
*Allogona townsendiana*

This terrestrial snail is endemic to the Pacific Northwest. A Rocha Canada has monitored a small population in the Little

Campbell River watershed (BC) since 2013 to observe and mitigate any potential impacts to the population and habitat.



**Southern Festoon**  
*Zerynthia Polyxena*

This butterfly is on the threatened species list in France – it depends on one unique plant and a specific habitat. The team in the Vallée

des Baux (near Arles) has been managing this species habitat and studying its population for over a decade.



**Keeled Skimmer**  
*Orthetrum coerulescens*

A Rocha local groups manage sites around the Netherlands: three are Natura 2000 sites and many host species listed on the Dutch IUCN Red List,

such as the Keeled Skimmer dragonfly and the *Choleva spadicea*, a species of truffle beetle found for the first time in Gelderland province since 1967 on one of the sites A Rocha manages (French Camp, Bennekom)!



**Hermit Butterfly** *Chazara briseis*

In the hills above Nice, A Rocha studies the little-known Hermit butterfly, whose populations are in sharp decline. Since 2000, it has

disappeared from 72% of French territory – but the population at Domaine des Courmettes is remarkable!



**Kentish Plover** *Charadrius alexandrinus*

A Rocha Portugal measured the behaviour and breeding success of Kentish Plovers from 1990–2005. The presence of breeding

Kentish Plovers and other rare species important for conservation in the Alvor Estuary has supported the case to protect this unique area.



**Crisp Pillow Coral**  
*Anomastrea irregularis*

A Rocha works to study, protect and restore marine habitats. In Kenya, this includes rockpools, important for their diverse

habitats and rare, endemic species such as the Crisp Pillow Coral (Vulnerable).



**Weaver's Fritillary** *Boloria dia*

Flowers, butterflies, grasshoppers, reptiles, birds, plants, small mammals and insects like the Weaver's Fritillary: dry grasslands – in

steep decline – provide habitat for more than 30% of Switzerland's living species. A Rocha is helping reverse the trend through biodiversity surveys and habitat management.



**Camphor Thyme** *Thymus Camphoratus*

A Rocha Portugal's discovery of the presence of this protected plant species had a major impact on their court case to stop illegal

development of the Ria de Alvor estuary.



**European Pond Terrapin**  
*Emys orbicularis*

In 2020, A Rocha France led an innovative study of the Pond Terrapin populations resident in the Natura 2000 site, 'Marais de la Vallée des

Baux', where A Rocha has been working since 1999.



**Atewa Slippery Frog**  
*Conraua sagyimase*

A new species to science was discovered in Atewa Forest in 2006: the Atewa Slippery Frog. A Rocha is working with the Forestry Research

Institute of Ghana to survey Atewa's streams for the frog, using passive sound recorders to record their nocturnal calls.



**Norfolk Hawker**  
*Anaciaeschna isoceles*

This dragonfly is one of many found at Foxearth Meadows, A Rocha UK's reserve dedicated to dragonflies and damselflies in Essex.





### Garry Oak *Quercus garryana*

Garry Oak is the only oak tree native to BC, Canada and its habitat is very restricted. In the early 2000s, A Rocha helped inventory and

oversee restoration on two island sites. In 2015–2017, we partnered with Hope Farm (Duncan, BC) on environmental projects, such as restoring 3,000 m<sup>2</sup> of Garry Oak meadows.



### European Hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*

There are 200–250,000 hedgehogs in the UK, down from 30 million in 1950. The hedgehog is included in A Rocha UK's Target 25

initiative which focuses on managing sites to increase populations of 25 declining species, species groups and habitats.



### Geometric Tortoise *Psammobates geometricus*

South Africa is home to 14 terrestrial tortoise species – the largest diversity of tortoise species of any

country in the world. Many are threatened and poorly known. A Rocha is partnering with FreeMe Wildlife to create a dedicated tortoise rehabilitation and reintroduction programme.



### Russell's Viper *Daboia russelii*

The Bannerghatta locals have A Rocha India on call to come and remove snakes when found in unexpected places – this helps keep the

snakes alive and offers a good teaching moment of the importance of protecting reptiles and the role they play in agricultural ecosystems!



### Black-headed Lapwing *Vanellus tectus*

Eden, an A Rocha Associated Project, monitors the many resident and visiting species at Rennajj Fish Farm, 80 ha of wetland and savannah on

the fringes of Jos, Nigeria. This Black-headed Lapwing, photographed in 2015, was the first to be sighted on the Plateau since 1933.



### Kelp *Laminaria digitata*

A Rocha UK researched the impact of blue-rayed limpets on the forests of kelp in bays near Lee Abbey, Devon. On Lee Bay itself, over 90 different intertidal species

and 17 different habitats were identified.



### Clarke's Weaver *Ploceus golandi*

The Kenyan–endemic Clarke's Weaver is one of the rarest birds in the world. Its breeding sites had never been found – until 2013, when A Rocha

found a colony in the Dakatcha Woodland, now an A Rocha nature reserve.



### White-throated Dipper *Cinclus cinclus*

In the Czech Republic, A Rocha is monitoring Dipper populations, which have come under threat through extreme weather conditions

and acidic pollution.



### Ocellated Lizard *Timon lepidus*

A Rocha France is studying the Ocellated Lizard, a species endemic to southwestern Europe, to determine the population and

distribution at both French study sites (Vallée des Baux and Domaine des Courmettes).



### Three-toothed Orchid *Neotinea tridentata*

In 2022, A Rocha France launched an orchid protocol at the Domaine des Courmettes to see what they can learn about the health

and evolution of the site's habitats from this excellent bio-indicator species.



### Honey Badger *Mellivora capensis*

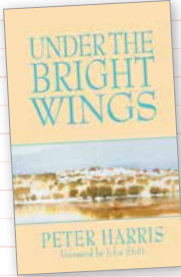
The Honey Badger is one of the most elusive animals of the Indian jungle. In 2015, the team captured (by camera) the first documented

occurrence in Bannerghatta National Park.

# A Rocha books



One of the ways A Rocha stories have been told over the years is through books written by A Rocha people. Many of these books are available from [arocha.org](http://arocha.org) – by purchasing here you are directly supporting the work that A Rocha does around the globe.



## **Under the Bright Wings**

Peter Harris

(A Rocha International), Hodder & Stoughton/ Regent College Publishing (1993)

Telling the story of A Rocha's first ten years, this is an honest, thoughtful and often funny account of how an idea became a vision and then reality.

\*Available in English & French

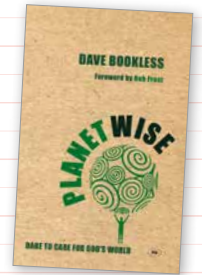
## **Planetwise**

Dave Bookless

(A Rocha International), IVP UK (2008)

A compelling biblical case for caring for the planet God made for his glory and his people's enjoyment, written with hope and full of encouragement.

\*Available in English, Chinese, Dutch, French, German, Korean & Spanish



## **Kingfisher's Fire**

Peter Harris

(A Rocha International), Monarch Books (2008)

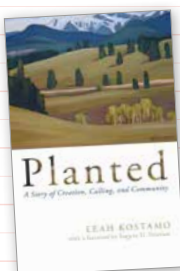
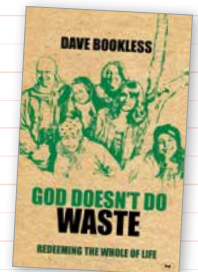
A sequel to *Under the Bright Wings*, this book chronicles the explosive global expansion of A Rocha's mission into nearly 20 countries in the years after the Harrises left Portugal.

## **God Doesn't Do Waste**

Dave Bookless

(A Rocha International), IVP UK (2010)

When God challenged Dave Bookless over his attitude to the environment, Dave did a total rethink. This led to major changes and the founding of A Rocha UK.



## **Planted**

Leah Kostamo

(A Rocha Canada), Cascade Books (2013)

A wild ride of salmon saving, stranger welcoming and God worshipping as Leah and her husband help establish A Rocha Canada.



## Postcards from the Middle East

Chris Naylor

(A Rocha Lebanon/A Rocha International), Lion Books (2015)

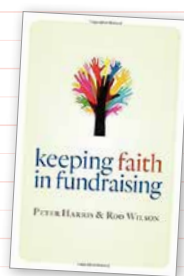
An engaging and warm-hearted account of the Naylor's experience of founding A Rocha Lebanon, which also serves as a great introduction to the cultural, political and religious complexities of the Middle East.

## Keeping Faith in Fundraising

Peter Harris & Rod Wilson

(A Rocha International), Eerdmans (2016)

Speaking from rich experiences as Christian leaders engaged in fundraising across diverse contexts and cultures, this is not a 'how to' but rather a profound reflection on the connection between God's kingdom and fundraising. It includes many A Rocha stories.



## A Place at the Table

Miranda Harris & Jo Swinney

(A Rocha International), Hodder & Stoughton (2022)

Rooted in A Rocha experiences of hospitality around the world and including selected journal entries from Miranda Harris, this is a call to live out God's calling to be radically hospitable, both to other people and to our earth.

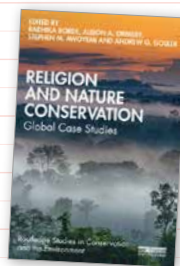
## Religion and Nature Conservation

Radhika Borde, Alison A. Ormsby,  
Stephen M. Amoyemi and Andrew G. Gosler

With contributions from Stanley Baya (A Rocha Kenya), Brittany Ederer (A Rocha USA), Rachel Mander (A Rocha International), Dave Bookless (A Rocha International), Robert Sluka (A Rocha USA/International) & Jeremy Lindsell (A Rocha International)

Routledge (2022)

A rich collection of case studies making it abundantly clear that world religions are not only thriving but making a positive impact on nature.



## Look out for...

### The Whole Easter Story

Jo Swinney

BRF (2025)

A Lent devotional exploring what Easter means for God's relationship with us but also with the whole of creation, and how that changes our relationships with each other and with creation.

# Environmental Education highlights



From classrooms to woodlands, from Sweden to South Africa, from small children to the very mature, A Rocha has been engaged in Environmental Education activities since the beginning. Here are just a few highlights...

In Portugal, A Rocha's Alvor field study centre welcomes hundreds of school children each year to take part in outdoor activities based on the national science curriculum, such as bird ringing or studying moths. A Rocha Aotearoa New Zealand, Canada, Czech Republic, France, Switzerland and USA run children's summer camps and expeditions, a chance to explore creation and experience wonder. A Rocha Uganda offers training to pastors – who in turn train their communities – in environmentally-sensitive approaches like making briquettes from waste materials to use in cooking instead of traditional charcoal and constructing insulated baskets which keep hot food cooking. These strategies reduce fuel needs and thus also deforestation.

## Conferences and workshops

Many A Rocha organizations have Environmental Education staff. In recent years we've been able to gather many of them together for four in-person conferences and two online workshops, thanks to the generosity of supporters of our recent Big Give campaigns.

To give an idea of the breadth of content and impact these gatherings have, here is an extract of the 2022 Uganda conference report:

'A Rocha International facilitated a five-day Environmental Education Africa conference for ten A Rocha staff from Uganda, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa and Ghana. We shared information and practices around climate change, biodiversity loss and nature-based solutions, the circular economy, Sustainable Development Goals and eco-schools. We explored new pedagogical approaches alongside practical sessions of experiential learning and visited eco-schools. In addition, we ran two Ugandan residential environmental workshops for 40 teachers and pastors, who between them teach and preach to over 18,000 people.'

## The Arabuko-Sokoke Schools and Eco-Tourism Scheme (ASSETS)

A Rocha Kenya's early efforts to conserve the Arabuko-Sokoke forest – the largest remaining remnant of East African coastal forest – and the associated tidal inlet of Mida Creek were frustrated by the local community's reliance on these biodiversity hotspots as a resource to



fund their children's schooling. The team came up with the creative solution of a community conservation programme in 2001. ASSETS distributes funding from eco-tourism to provide scholarships for local secondary school children, encouraging the local people to value the forest and creek by equally distributing the benefits from eco-tourism throughout the local communities. In addition, ASSETS beneficiaries get involved in various conservation activities. There are countless stories that could be shared. Here is just one:

'Lydia Kayaa was inspired by the environmental education sessions she participated in as an ASSETS beneficiary. After completing her secondary school education at Ribe Girls, she volunteered at A Rocha Kenya in the Environmental Education department, an opportunity that led her to pursuing a degree in Environmental Education. She then worked at Mwamba Field Study Centre for some time as Environmental Education Officer. Lydia's dream was to inspire more students, especially girls, to work hard against all odds to attain education and value the natural world, upon which the wellbeing of all depends.'



Lydia teaching a group of children to birdwatch. Credit: A Rocha Kenya

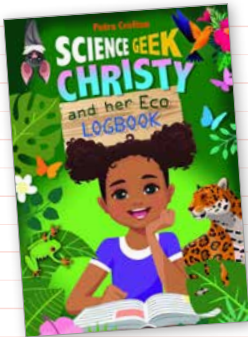
## Resource highlights

### Plastic Toolbox

The Plastic Toolbox was developed to help people contribute to global efforts to fight plastic pollution in the oceans. It brings together science, theology, education and lifestyle, with videos, fact sheets, a guide to nurdle hunting, Bible studies and more.



[arochoa.org/plastics-toolbox](http://arochoa.org/plastics-toolbox)



### Science Geek Christy


In 2021, A Rocha Netherlands launched a free education resource aimed at primary schools, with 16 lessons about wildlife, climate and faith. The lessons and related eco-adventure story were written by Petra Crofton, a biologist and friend of A Rocha since 1998. The resources are available in Dutch [www.lespakketchristi.nl](http://www.lespakketchristi.nl) and English [www.wildandwonderful.uk](http://www.wildandwonderful.uk).

### Children to the Rescue of the Dry Forest


As part of A Rocha Peru's dry forest restoration project in Talara, they developed an environmental education manual, entitled 'Children to the Rescue of the Dry Forest' ('Niños al rescate del Bosque Seco'). This beautifully illustrated manual aims to encourage local children to learn about key species of flora and fauna found in the dry forest and the practical ways to look after their environment. The online version (in Spanish only) can be accessed at [roc.me/ninos-bosque-seco](http://roc.me/ninos-bosque-seco).







# Looking ahead

The last 40 years have taught us that nothing in life is predictable or straightforward! We are wise if we hold our plans lightly – while holding onto God for dear life. That said, here are some of our hopes and goals for the next chapter of A Rocha's story. 

## Launching the legacy project

Following the deaths of A Rocha co-founder Miranda Harris and A Rocha International Executive Director Chris Naylor and his wife, Susanna, in 2019, many people gave generously in their memory. These gifts have been used as seed funding for a new initiative, 'A Rocha Legacy.'

A Rocha Legacy is developing a 24-week certificate programme for people seeking to engage environmental challenges with greater wisdom, hope and skill alongside others who share a commitment to Jesus, neighbour and the earth.



## Welcoming new A Rocha organizations to the family

For 12 years, A Rocha's only base was in the Algarve, Portugal. There followed a decade or so of explosive growth, expanding the family to 20 A Rocha organizations around the world. It was then a time to focus on strengthening governance, fundraising and working relationships. We didn't expand geographically but our roots grew deeper. Our hope is that a new season of growth is coming. We would love to see an A Rocha presence in places of rich but vulnerable biodiversity and in countries where the Church is strong but still disengaged from God's mandate to care for his creation.



## Initiating new global programmes

The Marine Conservation Programme and the African Forest Programme are examples of how collaboration between A Rocha organizations can raise the profile, impact and funding potential of our work. Other programmes are in the works and we look forward to telling you more as they develop.

### A ROCHA MARINE CONSERVATION PROGRAMME

### A ROCHA AFRICAN FOREST PROGRAMME

### A ROCHA THEOLOGY & CHURCHES PROGRAMME

## Expanding the Theology & Churches programme

On that note, we are seeking to strengthen and grow our Theology & Churches programme to equip A Rocha organizations to engage local and national churches. We have a brand new online Resource Hub which we are hoping to expand over time, particularly adding resources in languages other than English, and we hope to increase capacity in A Rocha International to support growth on the ground.



## Winning significant campaigns – Atewa & Alvor estuary

A Rocha Ghana's campaign to defend Atewa Forest (pictured below) from bauxite mining, illegal logging and poaching, and A Rocha Portugal's campaign to save the Alvor Estuary from the development of destructive tourist infrastructure, have taken immense courage and huge human and financial resource. We pray they will both result in these precious places receiving permanent protected status for the good of all living things and to the glory of God.



## Growing the Friends of A Rocha Network

# Friends of A ROCHA



The Friends of A Rocha Network was launched in 2022 and by March 2023 had 16 members with a long list of applications waiting to be evaluated. Aimed at groups or organizations working towards biodiversity conservation and led by committed Christians, the network facilitates sharing, learning and mutual support as well as identifying potential new A Rocha organizations. We are excited about this vibrant and flourishing part of our work and what may come from it.



### EcoVila Teshuvah, Brazil

The area around the Paraná River was greatly affected by a large hydroelectric dam built further up the river, causing a scarcity of fish. This led to the impoverished local subsistence fishing community turning to illegal fishing, poaching and deforestation, alongside competition with fish-eating animals such as the Giant Otter *Pteronura brasiliensis* (Endangered on the IUCN Red List) and the introduction of invasive species.

Building upon years of previous relationship with the river and its people, Camila and Bruno Landim started EcoVila Teshuvah as a church plant in 2020. The eco-friendly church building is made of bamboo and other local materials. Permaculture and literacy are taught as part of Christian discipleship. The Landims are considering ecotourism and agroforestry to relieve the pressure on the river's ecosystem, and host volunteers and mission school interns who leave with a deeper understanding of integral mission.

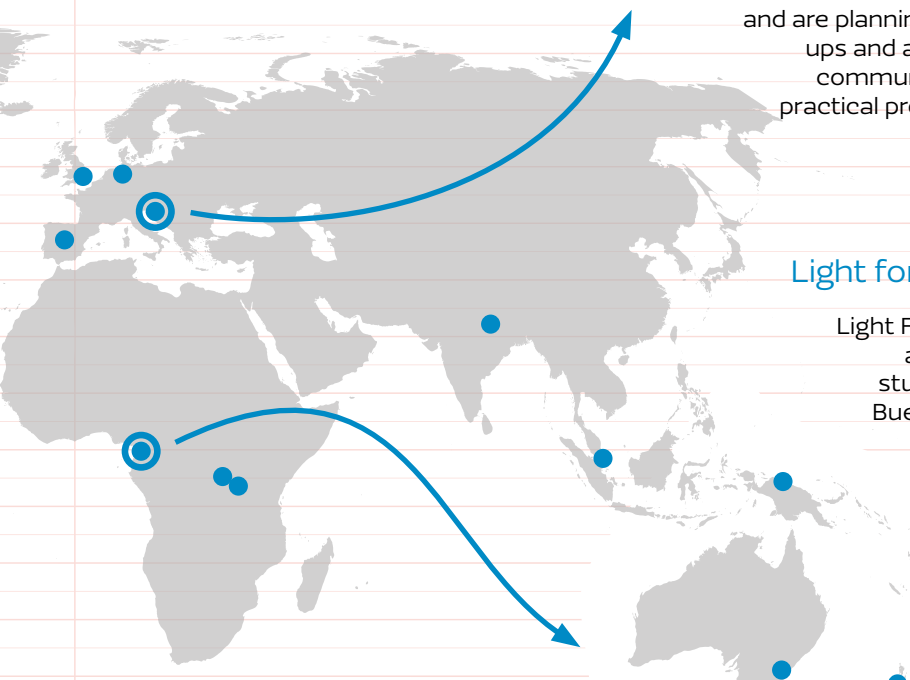




## Nada za ljude i prirodu ('Hope for People and Nature'), Croatia

Croatia is a country with diverse ecosystems, from snowy mountains to plains and the Adriatic coast. Hope for People and Nature's vision is to equip Christians in Croatia for their God-given role as stewards of creation and to engage in practical activities to protect and restore local environments and communities, contributing to the country's ecological beauty and biodiversity.

They organized and hosted an international creation care conference in June 2022 and are planning coastal and river clean-ups and a Christian organic farming community, as well as looking at a practical project for children's Sunday school education.



## Light for Nature, Cameroon

Light For Nature started in 2016 among several Geography students at the University of Buea, Cameroon, passionate about environmental sustainability and conservation in their local community. They are currently engaged in replanting mangroves in several communities in the Maberta-Bimbria Creek and in clean-up from plastic waste in rivers, beaches and other coastal ecosystems.

Headquartered in the English-speaking Southwest Region of Cameroon, Light For Nature's members speak both English and French. They aim to be an instrument of peace within the country by acting towards nature conservation both in the anglophone and the francophone regions, particularly in the Douala region.



# A Rocha Churches

We invite churches to join in our mission to live out God's calling to care for creation as we seek a world where nature flourishes and people live equitably and sustainably.

A Rocha works in over 20 countries around the world and has partnerships in many more, supporting Christians in environmental action and partnering with local communities to conserve species, habitats and landscapes and improve livelihoods. We see our efforts as part of God's calling to love all of creation. When you become a church partner, your church makes a commitment to help us in this mission. In turn, we equip and support you in living out God's calling to care for creation wherever your church calls home.

## What is an A Rocha Church Partner?

A Rocha Church Partners can be churches of any denomination, located anywhere in the world. A Rocha Church Partners participate in our 'Learn, Engage, Support' model which includes a Resource Hub for churches to learn more about creation care, a network of churches and programmes to engage in environmental action in a local context, and opportunities to make a commitment to support A Rocha – with either a financial gift or other commitment (see examples below).

## Get started in becoming a church partner:

### LEARN

Grow in understanding from the ideas and expertise in our Resource Hub. This includes sermon suggestions, Bible studies, video resources and more to help your church explore the biblical basis of caring for creation.

### ENGAGE

We are proud of the collaborative work A Rocha is doing with churches and Christian organizations around the globe. Read more about the latest stories of our Church Partners and how you can engage locally on our blog.

### SUPPORT

Commitments of support from our Church Partners help sustain A Rocha's Christian mission to care for creation. Learn more about how your church can make a difference through a commitment of support as a Church Partner.

## How are church partners committing to support A Rocha?

- Financial support: one-time gifts, monthly contributions and congregational tithes
- Hosting an event for A Rocha: small group gatherings, church fundraisers, speaking engagements and more
- Represent A Rocha: congregational prayer, promoting A Rocha on your platforms or sharing A Rocha's story



Get in touch with [churches@arocha.org](mailto:churches@arocha.org) with any questions, and learn more about becoming a Church Partner at [www.arocha.org/church-partner](http://www.arocha.org/church-partner) or the QR code below. Thank you for your interest in partnership with A Rocha.

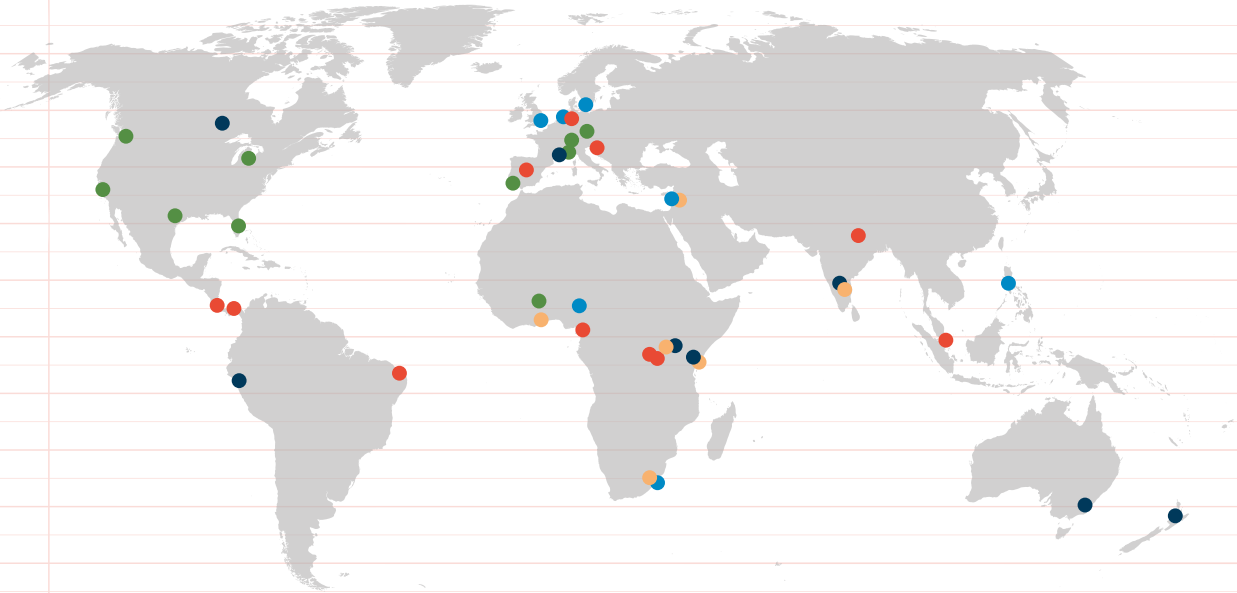


# 40 for the Future

As A Rocha reaches the significant milestone of our 40th year, you are invited to become part of the story of God's work through us in his world. **We are looking for 40 gifts of \$40,000 for 40 A Rocha locations.**

Whether you are an individual, a church, a family or a group of friends, our hope is that

investing in A Rocha's next 40 years will bring you into deeper relationship with this beautiful world and the One who created it.



Can't make a gift of \$40,000 but still want to support our 40th campaign? Feel free to contribute any smaller amount as an individual or group through our pooled gift opportunity!

**For more information about this campaign and other ways to contribute, scan the code or visit:**

**[arocha.org/40](http://arocha.org/40)**



# A Rocha and you

Volunteer, visit, listen, attend, join in – there are so many ways to be a part of the A Rocha world...

## Field Notes Podcast

With a wide range of guests all working to restore and protect God's beautiful world, the A Rocha podcast is unfailingly hopeful. Find it wherever you listen to your podcasts.

[www.arocha.org/podcast](http://www.arocha.org/podcast)



## Volunteer opportunities

From cooking to bird surveys, social media content creation to tree planting – our volunteer opportunities are nothing if not varied! To find out more and apply, visit

[arocha.org/en/get-involved/opportunities/](http://arocha.org/en/get-involved/opportunities/)

# Virtual events

Zoom has its advantages, including enabling us to host regular virtual events, giving you the chance to hear from some interesting and impressive conservationists and pose your questions. Please sign up to our enews (below) to hear about upcoming events.

Field notes  
eNews

[www.arocha.org/enews](http://www.arocha.org/enews)



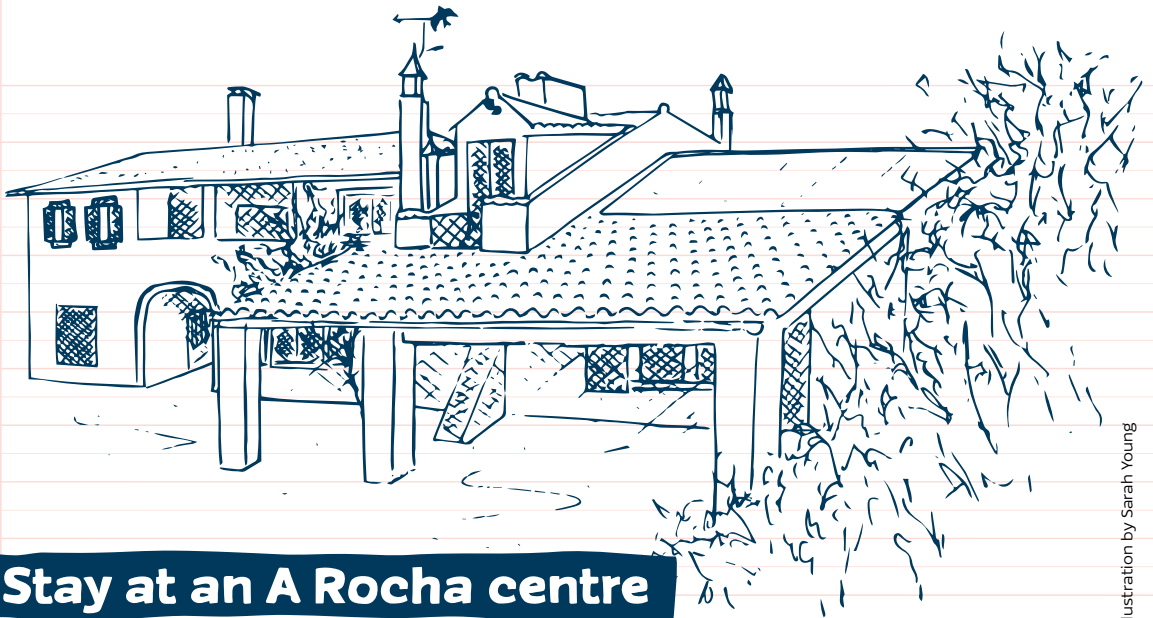


Illustration by Sarah Young

## Stay at an A Rocha centre

Our centres – in Canada, the Czech Republic, France, India, Kenya and Portugal – are fruitful meeting places for everyone with a shared concern for the environment: scientists and non-scientists, Christians and non-Christians from different cultures and backgrounds. Whether you want a welcoming base with research facilities for your own field studies or want to have a holiday at a working centre where you can learn more about A Rocha first-hand, our centres may meet your needs. The accommodation varies from very basic dormitories to en-suite and family rooms.

## The John Stott Memorial Birding Day

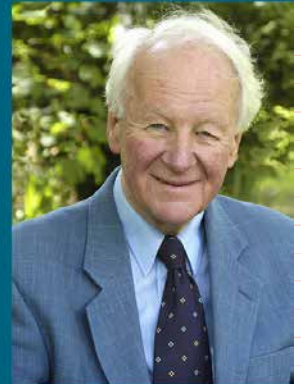
The late pastor and theologian John Stott was a great friend to A Rocha and known for his love of birds. In 2021, his centennial year, A Rocha organized a birding day in his honour which has since become an annual event including a bird race, photography competition and bird-themed retreat. See [www.johnstottbirdingday.com](http://www.johnstottbirdingday.com).



John Stott  
MEMORIAL  
BIRDING DAY

13 May 2023

[johnstottbirdingday.com](http://johnstottbirdingday.com)  
#johnstottbirding



# A ROCHA

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## RESOURCE HUB

For short films, environmental education resources, sermon outlines and more.

**COMING SOON!**



Leaders from around the A Rocha worldwide family

A Rocha International, 180 Piccadilly, London, W1J 9HF, UK.

t: +44 (0) 300 770 1346 | e: [international@arocha.org](mailto:international@arocha.org) | w: [arocha.org](http://arocha.org)

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A Rocha International is a member of IUCN,  
International Union for the Conservation of Nature.



Cover: