

# AROCHA

CHRISTIANS IN CONSERVATION

## INTERNATIONAL REVIEW

Stories of community-based  
conservation projects, research  
and education from around  
the world



2011/12

# ABOUT A ROCHA

## Our name

The A Rocha story began with the establishment of a field study centre in Portugal. The name is Portuguese and means 'The Rock'.

## Where we work

A Rocha has National Organizations in 19 countries: Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Ghana, India, Kenya, Lebanon, Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, Peru, South Africa, Switzerland, Uganda, UK and USA.

## What we do

A Rocha is an international Christian organization which, inspired by God's love, engages in scientific research, environmental education and community-based conservation projects.



The natural world thrives on interdependence: so does A Rocha. As the Hummingbird Hawkmoth *Macroglossum stellatarum* feeds on nectar it pollinates flowers. (Peter Harris)



A Rocha works closely with a wide range of partners. (Julia Jardine)

## HOW WE WORK

**Independence or interdependence?** As individuals we can strive to be independent, or we can recognise our human needs and limitations, and delight in a network of relationships that give each of us comfort, security and strength. As an organization, A Rocha has deliberately chosen to embrace interdependence, aware that our achievements come from embracing relationships with many supporters and partner organizations.

Within this review, you'll read stories which highlight interdependence: of species within ecosystems, of people and the natural resources which they steward, and of the interdependence embedded in our conservation programmes.

Good conservation programmes rarely depend on just a few individuals. Rather, they rely on coordinated action: scientists providing relevant data and expertise; teachers telling stories that enable communities to understand how they affect their surroundings; families changing their behaviour so that limited natural resources will still be there for future generations; volunteers providing the muscle and donors contributing the necessary funds.

Interdependence is intrinsically enriching. I hope that you will enjoy our stories, and that if you are not already an A Rocha supporter, then you will begin a relationship with us: in prayer, by volunteering or by giving financial support.

To all our existing friends and partners, please accept my thanks for enabling us to protect threatened wildlife, and to help people flourish,

Chris Naylor

Chris Naylor, Executive Director,  
A Rocha International

# COMMUNITY-BASED CONSERVATION

**A Rocha seeks to protect habitats: habitats which are habitations for people as well as wildlife. We work with communities who depend on the diverse natural resources of their local forest, marsh or river and who have often been shaping the landscape, and hence shaping the wildlife populations, for generations. We seek to learn from them, and to plan conservation programmes with them, so that both they and their environment can thrive.**

## **Case study: Helping people & wildlife to flourish in Lebanon**

When A Rocha Lebanon began, in 1997, the focus was on protecting the Aammiq Wetland, the most important inland site in the country for amphibians, dragonflies and water birds, and a key staging post for migrant birds. Aammiq had been shrinking as tenant farmers drained and ploughed the edges, and so we worked with the farmers, landowners and others, to ensure that the marsh not only survived, but increased in size. We also managed the pools and reedbeds to benefit key species. It was not just the wildlife that benefited: Aammiq is important to the local people for leisure activities, clean drinking water, irrigation and flood mitigation.

As the team studied the hydrology of the site, and the wildlife, they came to realise that the wetland and the Shouf Cedar Reserve on the adjacent slopes of Mount Lebanon were biologically interdependent.

Aammiq is sustained by the snow and rain which falls in the hills. The forest shelters mammals such as Swamp Cat *Felis chaus*, Stone Marten *Martes foina*, Wild Boar *Sus scrofa* and Striped Hyena *Hyaena hyaena*, which move between the marsh and the woods. Amphibians hibernate on the slopes and breed in the marsh.

Once the wetland was safe, new challenges emerged. How was essential management to the forest and wetland to be funded? How could better facilities such as car parking, toilets and meals be provided for the visiting hikers and naturalists? And how could environmentally friendly jobs be created?

The decision was taken to build an eco-restaurant\*, a joint venture between A Rocha Lebanon, the Shouf Cedar Reserve and the landowning Skaaf Estate, which opened this spring. The spacious building uses 80% less energy than a conventional construction, waste is reduced by sourcing unpackaged products or using reusable containers, and all the refuse is recycled. Visitors are enjoying local wines and local, mostly organic food, benefiting many small businesses. A percentage of the income will be divided between A Rocha and the Cedar Reserve, and spent on protecting the two sites. In the Middle East, nothing is ever certain, but all concerned are determined to do what they can to ensure that the villages and these two internationally important habitats prosper together.

Barbara Mearns, Editor

*\*Generously funded through the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.*



(A Rocha Lebanon)



# SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

A Rocha has field study centres in Canada, France, Portugal, Lebanon, Kenya, India and the Czech Republic. These centres enable the teams to undertake long-term research and monitoring programmes, often involving residential volunteers. Most of our research, whether or not based at a centre, aims to inform conservation priorities.

## Case study: Protecting an exceptional wetland in southern France

With the kind support of the landowners, Monsieur and Madame Donadiou, A Rocha has been studying the flora and fauna of the Ilon Marsh, Provence, since 1998. As a result of our research, the area was designated a Regional Nature Reserve in February 2012, and A Rocha France became responsible for the site management, in partnership with the Parc naturel régional des Alpilles. The habitat is extremely diverse: marshland, grasslands, hedges, steppe and different forest types are found within the 170 hectares of the reserve.

More than 190 species of birds have been recorded, of which 72 breed, including Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*, Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* and Purple Gallinule *Porphyrio porphyrio* around the marsh, Short-toed Eagle *Circus gallicus* in the pine forest, European Roller *Coracias garrulus* in the riparian woodland and Little Bustard *Otis tetrax* on the stony Crau. Monthly water bird counts during the last ten years have shown that it is also very important for migrant ducks and gulls: flocks of up to 3000 Mediterranean Gull *Larus melanocephalus* have been recorded.

Dragonflies have been studied on the site since 2003 and 51 species have been identified, making this one of the richest sites in the whole country. Breeders include Orange-spotted Emerald *Oxygastra curtisii* (a protected species in France) and Southern Damselfly *Coenagrion mercuriale*.

A Rocha will now be continuing a range of studies in order to inform the management of the water levels, grazing regimes and other factors which shape the ecology of this gloriously diverse strip of the Vallée des Baux.

*Timothée Schwartz, Science Officer, A Rocha France*



Counting water birds at the Ilon Marsh in winter. (A Rocha France)



Capturing European Pond Terrapins *Emys orbicularis* to weigh, measure and mark them at Ilon. Results indicate that there is a healthy population of over 200 individuals. (A Rocha France)



The nationally rare Ocellated Lizard *Timon lepidus*. (Nathan Horrenberger)



European Pond Terrapin.

(Nathan Horrenberger)

# ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

A Rocha's Environmental Education programmes are highly diverse, designed to address conservation priorities and to be culturally appropriate. Schools programmes in countries such as Canada, Portugal and Lebanon are shaped by the national science curriculum; some activities in Ghana and Kenya are planned for Muslim communities, or in Southall, UK, for a multi-ethnic society; sometimes we focus on Christian groups, encouraging them to put into practice the biblical emphasis on creation care.

## Case study: Mobilizing the Portuguese church

It began with a 'flash-mob' in the market place of the mediaeval city of Évora. A group of young people, shouting and playing drums and vuvuzelas, collected a crowd and processed towards the King Manuel Palace. There, representatives of the city council, the Catholic Archbishop and evangelical church leaders were gathered, along with the National Directors of the Portuguese Bible Society and A Rocha Portugal. After speeches and refreshments, it was declared open: Eklogia.

Eklogia is a travelling presentation of the biblical story of God's plans for the whole creation. The name is made up of three Greek words that form the key themes: Ecologia – blue planet; Logos – living word; Ekklesia – green church. It is contemporary, inter-active and colourful. Stunning images and video walls mixed with bible texts and brief facts about the planet lead visitors on a journey beginning with the beauty and diversity of nature and moving on to our human role – inviting them to enjoy, know, and care for creation. 'Feely bags' and picture blocks involve younger (and sometimes older) visitors. Then a corner is turned and the atmosphere changes: a pile of rubbish, dissonant noises, evidence of our growing footprint, biblical warnings about human misuse of nature. Next comes the 'tunnel of hope' with the message of Christ's saving work on behalf of people and nature. The final section looks at our response: a 'tree of hope' has pictures and stories from A Rocha and other projects that are making a difference. Computer screens invite visitors to assess their ecological footprint. A camera takes visitors' pictures in front of a green screen so that those who leave their email addresses can have a photo of themselves with an elephant, or on a palm-fringed beach ... and A Rocha can keep in touch with them.

Through Eklogia (which is a partnership between A Rocha and the Portuguese Bible Society) we are engaging the Christian community and others with the message of creation care. So far it has taken place in three cities, in each case for seven days, with several more planned. An average city might see a thousand people visiting, with others attending associated events such as bat hunts, birdwatching outings, lectures and workshops. It is a major investment of money, time and human resources but its impact could be enormous. The next challenge is to see if Eklogia can be adapted to other contexts where A Rocha and the Bible Society are working.



(©eklogia)

An Eklogia roadshow performance in Alcobaca.

(©eklogia)



An Emperor dragonfly *Anax imperator* laying eggs. (Norman Crowson)



As a Christian organization, our foundational conviction is that 'The earth is the Lord's'. We believe that God intends his whole creation to flourish: people and every living thing. So our programmes are designed to study and protect the diversity of life – and to bring blessing to the local communities. We'd like you to meet a few of the many people whose lives have been changed for the better by our work:

# ENRICHING LIVES



**Daniel Kheri Kazungu**  
*Student at Moi University, Kenya*

Daniel grew up on the edge of Arabuko-Sokoke Forest and joined A Rocha's environmental education activities, designed to encourage the conservation of the forest.

He says, 'We learned how to cultivate tree seedlings in a tree nursery. Sometimes we took part in inter-school competitions and had the chance to demonstrate our commitment to conserving the forest. I began to see that these were precious resources for our people and they were our heritage. The more we destroyed them, the more difficult our lives would be and those of the generations to come.'

In 2006, Daniel was offered a bursary through A Rocha's ASSETS programme and was able to go to secondary school. Now he has started further studies at university and is spreading the conservation message wherever he can.

**Seidu Munaba, his wife Amina Seidu, and their five children**  
*Farmer in Murugu, northern Ghana, near Mole National Park.*

In 2003 Seidu attended a meeting with A Rocha representatives to discuss how the community interacts with nature and he became Chair of the committee which oversees development and manages community lands. A Rocha has trained him in bee-keeping, and Amina processes Gari and Shea nut during the lean season using low-cost technology provided through A Rocha.

Seidu says, 'The status of my household has changed a lot. All my girls are in school and so is my boy. We have received some micro financing support for our farm work and other pressing cash needs. I am even able to afford solar lighting for the house. There has been a lot of learning opportunities on leadership, land management, financial literacy and self improvement. My community is a model for many other communities who want to implement their own land management programmes. I am always proud when people come on exchange visits and listen to us. Murugu is remote, the road rugged and we are cut off for three months of the year by floods, but A Rocha continues to reach out to us.'



**Laura Schep**  
*Student at the University of Otago, New Zealand*

During January 2012, Laura attended the A Rocha/ Scripture Union Makarora Mountain Eco-Adventure Camp.

Laura says, 'It was great to explore the valley and to slow down to see God's wonderful creation in a new way. Previously, I went so quickly through the bush; always trying to get somewhere and be the fastest. Here, I learnt that to listen, watch, be still – appreciate what is around me – is a great thing.'

Through the Bible studies, I discovered that my love of, and care for ecosystems, is actually a fundamental part of my faith. I'm now very excited about my Geography and Ecology courses and about being a participant in God's work to restore ecosystems.'

**Please make a donation at [arocha.org/donate](http://arocha.org/donate) to help us enrich the lives of people like Seidu, Laura and Daniel.**

# FINANCIAL REVIEW 2011

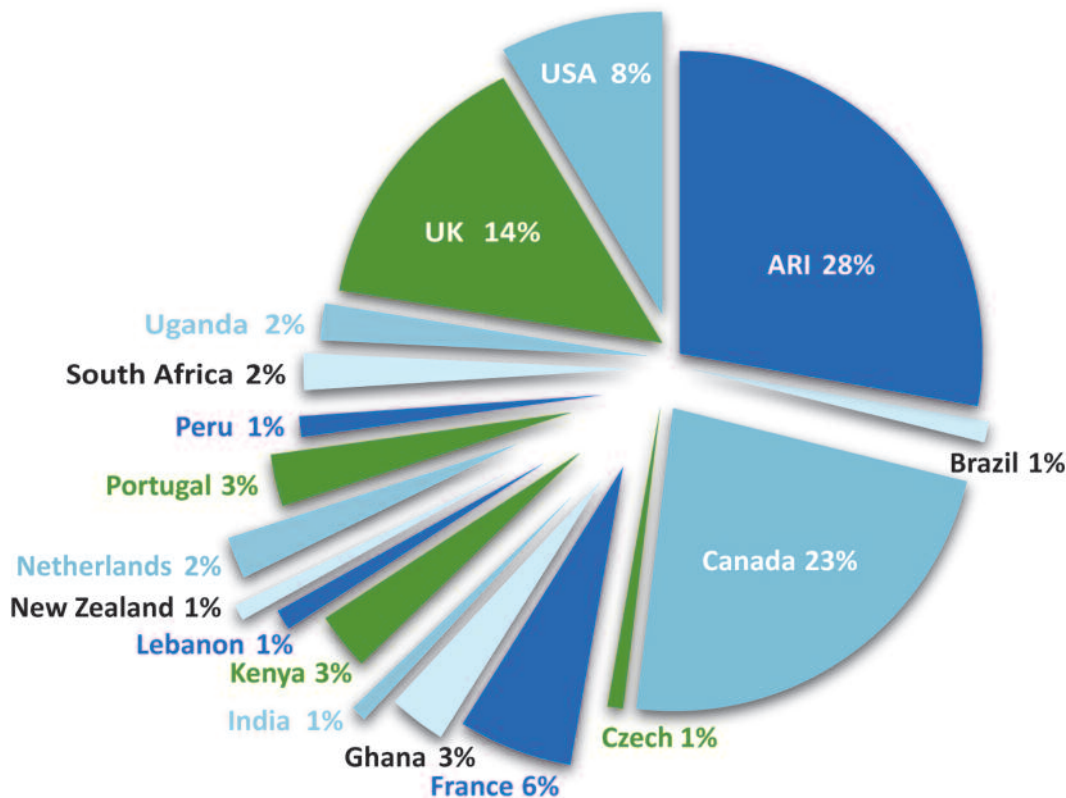
## A Rocha's Global Income & Expenditure

We are grateful to be able to report that A Rocha's global income has continued to grow: from £3.0 million in 2010 to £3.3 million\* in 2011. The chart shows income received by A Rocha International and each National Organization (except those whose income is under £20,000: Switzerland, Bulgaria and Finland).

We are deeply grateful to all our donor partners around the world – whether churches, individuals, corporations, governments and/or institutions – for your on-going support and financial investment. We could not do the work without you!

During 2011 A Rocha International again saw growth in its income due to a small number of highly committed donors. As a result of this:

- We made substantial grants to the National Organizations. These are part of a three year programme to fund key leadership posts in 15 countries, totalling £690,000, targeted to increase their own ability to raise funds and undertake community conservation projects. During 2011 we made grants of £267,000 to National Organizations. The reports from the first two years of the leadership programme have been very encouraging.
- Each of the Directors visited National Organizations to provide support. Our Director of Finance provided training in Uganda and Kenya, whilst our Executive Director visited Brazil, Switzerland and Portugal. Our Director of Conservation Science is working closely with our teams in India, Kenya, Uganda, Ghana and Peru on our Tropical Forest Programme.



\* These figures are based on management accounts as audited accounts for all our National Organizations were not available at the time of going to press. The National Organizations are separate, independent legal entities. Their income is combined here to show the progress of the A Rocha family as a whole.



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# INTERNATIONAL TEAM

The 16 members of the International Team have three key roles:

- To support the National Organizations by providing leadership and training programmes
- To publicise the work at an international level
- To foster the emergence of new A Rocha initiatives

Half the team is based in England, where the Management Team meets regularly, and the rest are more scattered: in Scotland, Portugal, Belgium, Switzerland and Singapore.



The A Rocha International Management Team (from left): Dr Martin Kaonga, Director of Science & Conservation; Sarah French, Director of Operations; Chris Naylor, Executive Director; David McKay, Director of Finance & Administration. (Christina Willows)

Since last year we have created two new posts:

## Sarah French, Director of Operations

**Sarah has been an International Trustee for the last five years and became Director of Operations in April 2012. She has international experience as a consultant, academic and practitioner in both the environment and development fields with an emphasis on sustainable livelihoods, biodiversity, conservation, business and trade.**

Her work has involved facilitating people-centred development projects, partnering with a variety of public, private and not-for-profit organizations worldwide such as the Governments of Costa Rica, The Netherlands and the UK, Countdown 2010, IUCN, FAO, PROFOREST, the Stockholm Convention, UNEP and the World Bank.

Sarah is an active member of two IUCN Commissions: on Education and Communication and on Ecosystem Management. She has lived and worked in Peru and Bolivia with Tearfund and is now based in Geneva.

Sarah says, 'My role in a nutshell is to provide strategic leadership and vision within A Rocha International's own Operations activities and to support and nurture the programmes of our 19 National Organizations. This will help us achieve more stability and sustainability in the amazingly diverse contexts and projects where we work. Assisting in the development of new A Rocha Initiatives, Associated Projects and National Organizations is another important part of my role.'

### A Rocha International

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[www.arocha.org](http://www.arocha.org) Registered Charity No. 1136041 Company Registration No. 6852417



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



## Rev Dave Bookless, Advisor for Theology & Churches

Dave has worked with A Rocha since 1997 in a variety of leadership roles, and joined the International Team in September 2011. He now provides advice and resources for ARI's Trustees, Team and National Organizations, and coordinates liaison with international theological and mission organizations. His passion is for communicating biblical teaching at conferences, colleges and churches and through his writing, which includes *Planetwise – Dare to Care for God's World* (IVP, 2008) and *God Doesn't do Waste* (IVP, 2010).

Dave says, 'I'm thrilled to be part of the International Team, as I've always seen A Rocha as a single worldwide movement with varied national expressions. One exciting development is working with the Lausanne organization (which gives a global lead on Christian mission) in helping organize a gathering of key Christian leaders from six continents to look at the theology and practice of caring for God's world.'

I've also done a major survey of the theological needs and potential contributions of A Rocha's National Organizations. The follow up will keep me and others busy for a while to come.'

Follow Dave each month at our Planetwise blog:  
[blog.arocha.org](http://blog.arocha.org)



Front cover photo: Bonelli's Eagle *Hieraetus fasciatus* winters at the Ilon Marsh. (Peter Harris)



A ROCHA

Christians in Conservation