



CONSERVATION & Hope

What do you expect to find as you open this Review?

News of species extinctions, habitat loss, doom and gloom?

If so, I hope you'll be surprised. All around the world there are ecological threats and disasters which should deeply concern us all. But there are also signs of hope. There are lots of 'good news' stories and that is what we have focused on here. We want to encourage you - and spur you on in whatever ways you too are caring for the earth.

In 2013, when we launched new branding for A Rocha, we chose 'Conservation and Hope' as our slogan. The bringing of hope is a vital part of A Rocha's mission. It's deeply rooted in our Christian identity, for it is the God of Hope who entrusted us with caring for his world - conservation in the broadest sense is the responsibility of all human beings.

Because this is God's world, hope is not optimism, but arises from the conviction that God's good plan for the earth is restoration. He wants to see human beings and all the rest of creation thriving together.



(Melissa Ong)

In practice, A Rocha brings hope to cash-poor communities who want to protect their forests, grasslands and wetlands for future generations, but need our partnership to do so.

We bring hope to young people who volunteer with us, often coming because they are painfully aware of the dire state of the planet, but unsure of how they can make a difference.

We create joy and hope through education activities when we encourage children, teenagers and adults to study, understand and appreciate the world around them. A sense of wonder so often engenders the desire to care.

As a former science teacher, I never underestimate the importance of good science: conservation research is vital



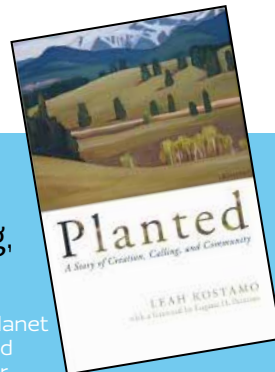
Lorna Dueck (right) interviewed A Rocha Canada's Storyteller, Leah Kostamo (left) with novelist Margaret Atwood at the CBC TV studios in Toronto in February 2014.

for A Rocha. But if conservationists are to inspire hope for the earth and the kind of blood, sweat and tears that make a difference, we need loving and hopeful songs and stories too. One of this year's many encouragements has been the response to Leah Kostamo's book: *Planted*, which wonderfully tells the story of A Rocha Canada. If you care about the planet and need hope, do read it.

I hope you'll enjoy this *International Review*,

Chris Naylor

Executive Director,
A Rocha International (ARI)



**Planted:
A Story of
Creation, Calling,
& Community:**

If bad news about the planet is getting you down, read *Planted*. You'll feel better, because you'll feel more hopeful. I certainly did.' Margaret Atwood, *Sojourners Magazine*

'Planted is a work of grace, wit and awe and conveys the joy for which A Rocha is known.' Charles Redfern, *The Huffington Post*

Visit arocha.org/enews to request our monthly e-newsletter.

RESEARCHING species & habitats

Success in the hunt for endangered weavers

After decades of mystery, and search expeditions by both A Rocha Kenya and NatureKenya, in early 2013 the first breeding and roosting sites of Clarke's Weaver *Ploceus golangi* were discovered. One of the rarest birds in the world, its range is limited to just a few woodlands in SE Kenya. We now

know that this forest weaver rather surprisingly nests and roosts in seasonal swamps – a very exciting development which reduces the danger of their extinction, as we are now taking action to locate and protect these areas.

Our leap forward in understanding the habitat requirements of Clarke's Weaver was the highlight of 2013 for A Rocha Kenya.

A pair of Clarke's Weaver approach their nest.
(Colin Jackson)

Surveying the vegetation of Bannerghatta National Park, the world's largest scrub forest inhabited by the Asian Elephant *Elephas maximus*.



Assessing threats to Atewa Forest, Ghana

In 2013, ARI teamed up with A Rocha Ghana to survey for signs of human activity in Atewa, to help us prioritize the most pressing conservation issues and set a baseline against which we can measure future changes. Discarded shotgun cartridges, snares and hunters' camps, evidence of illegal logging and even some small plantations were found, so we know we have multiple issues to tackle. Much of Atewa has been selectively logged over the years but happily, our surveys also revealed some very beautiful patches of undisturbed forest, though these tend to be a magnet for hunters. Atewa is home to at least 12 globally threatened species, one of which – the elusive Western Wattled Cuckoo-shrike *Lobotos lobatus* – only came to light during this fieldwork.

Studying tree density and diversity in South India

A Rocha India's first focus was on the reduction of human-elephant conflicts in and around Bannerghatta National Park. The research scope has now widened, as part of ARI's Tropical

Forest Conservation Programme, to improve our botanical understanding of the Park, which is important not just for elephants, but also for a range of wildlife indigenous to dry tropical scrub forest. The first assessment involved surveys at 79 sites distributed evenly across the Park. On each transect, all trees with a diameter at breast height of more than 10 cm were identified, measured and photographed, together with additional data including descriptions of the canopy and ground cover. Nearly 8,000 trees of 128 species were recorded. The study showed that the forest is relatively young and species-rich and has a high tree-density. This baseline survey will help us develop further lines of research and activities which will protect the forest.

FACTS:

- A Rocha studies or monitors 73 species of global or national conservation concern.
- A Rocha runs 163 monitoring projects.
- Research encompasses the five vertebrate groups: fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals, as well as many invertebrate groups and plants.

PROTECTING & RESTORING important sites



Quentin Kohler, biologist with A Rocha Switzerland, catching insects for identification as part of their dry meadows conservation project. (A Rocha Switzerland)

Managing meadows in western Switzerland

Farms can be a haven for wildlife, but farmers don't usually have the time, or the ecological knowledge, to fully exploit the conservation potential. A Rocha has begun an ingenious three-year project to help dry grassland farmers with land management advice and provide them with volunteer groups for the most arduous tasks, such as clearing invasive scrub. In spring and summer 2013, a Conservation Project Leader and 2 interns devoted 900 hours to fieldwork at 20 sites in the Canton of Vaud which will help shape the management plans and be used to assess progress. Their inventories focused mainly on orchids, butterflies, moths, grasshoppers and crickets.

Restoring native forests in northern Peru

Peruvian coastal dry forest is a rapidly disappearing habitat, threatening the survival of many species, including the Peruvian Plantcutter *Phytotoma raimondii*, a songbird with a sturdy, serrated bill, adapted to a diet of leaves. The need to restore these forests is urgent, not just for biodiversity, but also because they prevent desertification, store carbon and increase local rainfall. In March 2013, A Rocha began a three-year project to restore 35 hectares in La Libertad, working with local communities. Native seedlings have been produced at the National University of Trujillo's plant nursery, volunteers trained and environmental education started with children and teenagers.

Improving a Canadian west coast river

Restoring the health of the Little Campbell River, which flows through land surrounding the Brooksdale A Rocha Centre, is a priority for the team. Less than a third of the river's 30 km length remains forested and water quality has been degraded by urban and agricultural runoff. Activities in 2013 included off-channel wetland creation, invasive plant removal, native tree planting and fencing to exclude livestock. The team also identified major sources of pollution, surveyed 10 km of creek for restoration opportunities and met with 30 landowners. As a result, 19 sites were prioritized for habitat improvements during 2014-15.

FACTS:

- A Rocha's habitat protection work benefits 45 species of global conservation concern: 27 globally threatened plus 18 near-threatened or data deficient species. (These are in addition to the species listed under research).
- Sixteen sites have international designation (IBA, Natura 2000, Ramsar, UNESCO World Heritage Site, UNESCO Biosphere Reserve) and another three have national designations (National Park, Forest Reserve, Biosphere Reserve).

'During the past three years of surveys, we have confirmed the presence of a small population of Salish Sucker, *Catostomus* sp, thought to have been extirpated from the river since the 70s. The highlight was finding one juvenile in our very own purpose-built wetland, indicating natural recruitment, successful habitat restoration, and hope for this meagre population.'

Christy Juteau, Stewardship Coordinator, Little Campbell River. (Mike Pearson)



HELPING THE CHURCH to care for creation

Working on nature reserves in the Netherlands

A Rocha Netherlands has 11 groups scattered throughout the country, bringing Christians together for habitat management at local sites of conservation importance and for activities which increase environmental understanding (e.g. foraging for food, birdwatching, nature photography). Over 60 practical work days and almost 40 other activities were organized in 2013. Two new groups have each adopted a local nature reserve where they carry out habitat management: in Bennekom, a former military site of high conservation importance and in Enschede, a peatland with small hayfields.

Land management: investigating a Christian perspective

What does it mean to be a Christian landowner? In April 2013, A Rocha UK and the Wiston Estate, in SE England, hosted a conference for major landowners and estate managers. Prof. Michael Northcott (University of Edinburgh), Dr Elaine Storkey (Tearfund) and Martin Goldsmith (All Nations Christian College) were amongst the speakers, whose topics

included land inheritance, working out faith in the public sphere, current environmental crises and biblical principles applying to land management. For many, it was not just the formal talks, but the networking and prayer, along with some very open group discussion that really got them thinking. A delegate concluded, 'It was one of the most profound and thought-provoking events I have ever been to.'

Training future church leaders

In 2013, A Rocha Aotearoa / New Zealand partnered with Laidlaw College (an evangelical tertiary institution) to design and teach a new course: 'Ecology, God and Community'. Andrew Shepherd, the course leader, writes, 'It examines biblical and scientific narratives with regard to the interconnectedness within nature, and reflects upon the current ecological state of the planet. Students explore the Christian rationale for sustainability within a framework for ecological ethics and practices.' The course received such an enthusiastic response that there are plans to offer it as a week-long residential experience at Mt Karioi, A Rocha's 'Mountain to the Sea' conservation project on the North Island, in January 2015.



Members of the Amersfoort A Rocha Group in the Netherlands putting up nest boxes. (Eibert Messelink)

'I found the course refreshing and insightful. It broadened my thinking and it also focused my actions by emphasising practical volunteering. It was a unique experience to be able to explore the current state of damage and brokenness in the world while holding on to a hope for restoration that we get to participate in.'



Kiran Rai, environmental engineer and Laidlaw student.

FACTS

- A Rocha Brazil met with representatives from 136 churches around the country in 2013 to raise awareness of environmental issues and provide action facilitation kits.
- More than 800 people downloaded the first Environment Sunday pack produced by A Rocha Netherlands.
- Over 100 churches are running (or planning) gardens as part of A Rocha Canada's Community Garden Network, launched in 2011.

HELPING PEOPLE to thrive



Introducing new livelihoods in Ghana

A Rocha Ghana runs a multi-faceted programme aimed at protecting Atewa Forest, one of the most important forests in West Africa for wildlife and humans: three major rivers, on which over five million people depend, have their source in this unique upland range. One focus is on the introduction of new livelihoods to forest-fringe

communities, alternatives to illegal logging, mining and poaching. In 2013, a survey of 30 communities identified the rearing of Grasscutters (a large rodent), snails and mushrooms as the most popular options and in early 2014, over 90 beneficiaries from 15 carefully selected communities were trained through a hands-on approach. Later this year they will receive start-up materials to begin their own farms.

LEFT: A woman learns 'Farming God's Way' at Dakatcha Woodlands, Kenya. (Colin Jackson)

Teaching productive farming in Kenya

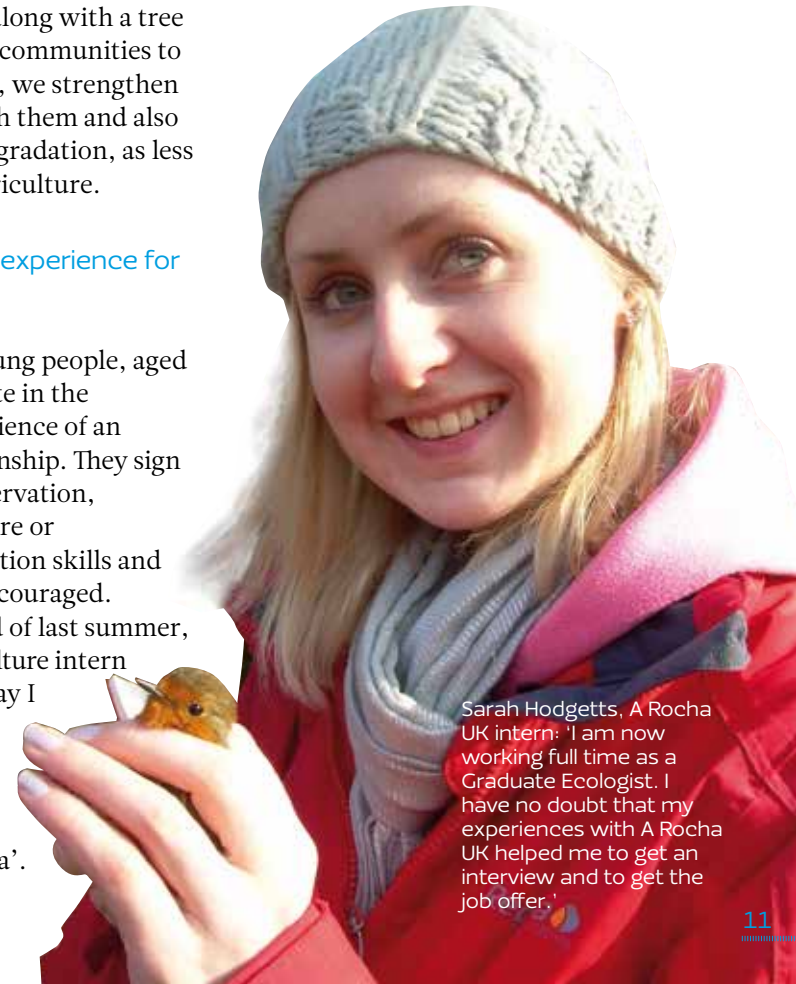
At A Rocha Kenya's office in Nairobi and at Dakatcha Woodlands, near the coast, we teach 'Farming God's Way': demonstrating simple and effective ways for subsistence farmers to improve their crops. In 2013, we opened a new office at Gede (10 km from our field study centre, Mwamba) where a permanent demonstration plot was developed, along with a tree nursery. By enabling communities to farm more efficiently, we strengthen our relationships with them and also help reduce forest degradation, as less land is cleared for agriculture.

Providing skills and experience for interns

Each year over 30 young people, aged 18 or older, participate in the transformative experience of an A Rocha Canada internship. They sign up for practical conservation, community agriculture or environmental education skills and leave inspired and encouraged. Edu wrote, at the end of last summer, 'My time as an Agriculture intern has challenged the way I think, eat, commute and more. All my life decisions will be different because of my time with A Rocha'.

FACTS

- A Rocha welcomed 723 volunteers and 61 interns in 2013.
- Over 900 people were trained in new sustainable livelihoods around Lake Bosomtwe, Ghana, in 2013.
- A Rocha Kenya trained nearly 400 people in 'Farming God's Way' between January 2013 and May 2014.



Sarah Hodgetts, A Rocha UK intern: 'I am now working full time as a Graduate Ecologist. I have no doubt that my experiences with A Rocha UK helped me to get an interview and to get the job offer.'

IMPROVING our field study & education centres



Introducing 'Laid-back Birding' holidays in Portugal

Cruzinha, our well-used and much-loved field study centre in the Algarve had a makeover in August 2013 when plumbers, plasterers, electricians and painters moved in to upgrade the accommodation. Why not come and enjoy the improvements? Cruzinha is surrounded by fields, marshes and

beautiful beaches – a superb base for a holiday in the Algarve. You can book in and explore by yourself, or if you would like a birding holiday with a guide, there are now two kinds to choose from: new 'Laid-back Birding' weeks for those who want a leisurely pace, as well as the 'Bird! Birds! Birds!' weeks. For more information see www.arocha.org/ecoservices

Opening the Czech field study centre

The Keith Morris Centre was officially opened in September 2013. A former mill, it stands in a valley near Dobruška, NE Bohemia, within 30 km of the ecologically important Eagle Mountains, Grandmother's Valley and Rozkoš reservoir. The centre has been named after a British naturalist, passionate about dragonflies, who gave huge support to the Czech team until his death in 2009. The centre is already being used for children's activities, lectures, workshops, concerts and fungi exhibitions whilst the renovations continue.

LEFT: A Rocha Portugal improved the visitor accommodation at Cruzinha. (Barbara Mearns)

BELOW: 'The Pembina Centre is a gem and everyone who visits expresses different ways in which they have enjoyed God's touch.'
Bethany Paetkau

New environmental education building in Manitoba

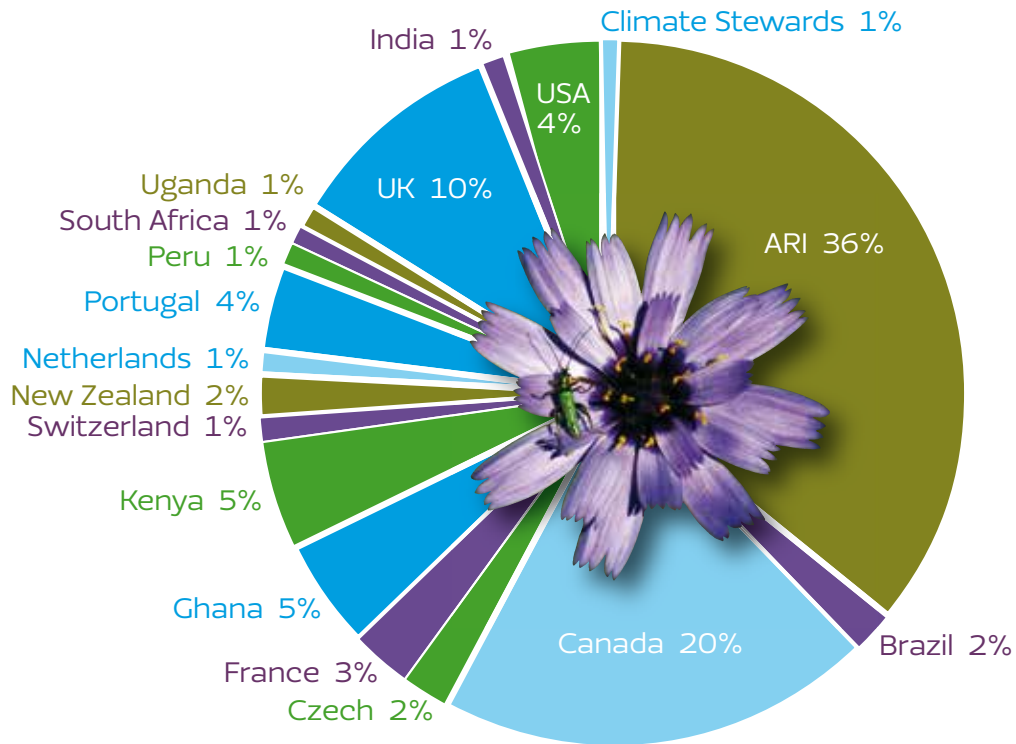
A Rocha Canada runs a guest house in the Pembina Valley, and in September 2013, added a much-needed Interpretive Centre to serve as the hub for school visits, church retreats, business meetings and special events. Strategically located within 2,000 acres of native woodland, between a provincial park and a Bible camp, and near the head of the centre's network of interpretive trails, there is a special focus on ecological interpretation. The building is fully winterized with in-floor heating and a large wood-burning fireplace. Other features include modern washrooms, audio-visual equipment and a small office.

FACTS

- 19,000 people, of all ages, took part in A Rocha environmental education activities in 2013.
- A Rocha runs eight residential field study and environmental interpretation centres: Canada (2), France (2), Czech Republic, India, Kenya and Portugal.



FINANCIAL REVIEW 2013



A Rocha's Global Income

A Rocha's global income for 2013 was £3.6 million, which is 3% less than in 2012. The chart shows the undesignated income for A Rocha International (ARI) and the total income for the National Organizations (except Bulgaria, Finland and Lebanon whose income was under £15,000). The decrease is partly due to the rise of the British Pound against the currencies of some National Organizations (especially the US\$ and Euro).

In addition, the final year of ARI's three-year Leadership Funding Programme significantly reduced the income of some teams. The results of

this funding programme have been assessed and it has clearly been a significant step in making some National Organizations more sustainable.



Asian Elephants

(Shutterstock)

Several National Organizations, particularly Ghana, Portugal and New Zealand, have seen significant increases in project grant funding. In Ghana, grants enabled the team to convene a major international conference, well attended by government officials, which was a major step in their programme to protect the Atewa Forest, one of the most important rainforests in West Africa. (See page 10)

During 2013, the Operations Directorate worked with National Organizations to develop strategic plans and robust monitoring and evaluation systems.

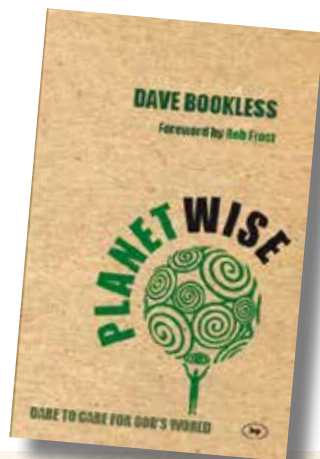
Donations from our faithful, regular donors plus one-off gifts allow ARI to employ the equivalent of 12.8 full-time staff and there are 94 staff employed across the A Rocha family. In addition, we are grateful for the 723 volunteers who contribute their time to help us manage or advise on the preservation of over 1.1 million acres of land across the globe.

We are deeply grateful to all those who have helped us protect threatened species and important habitats around the world. We could not do the work without you!

Please enable us to translate PLANETWISE

Planetwise by Dave Bookless (ARI's Director of Theology) gives a biblical overview of why we should care for creation. Since publication in 2008 it has been reprinted several times and Dave has heard from Christians who have been challenged to take action from places as far-flung as Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, Pakistan, Rwanda and Guatemala.

It has already been published in Dutch, and plans are underway for French and German versions in late 2014, and Chinese in 2015, with proposals for others, but first we need to find the funding. We are working with national Christian publishers and other organizations to keep costs to a minimum:



- **Chinese £10,000/US\$ 17,000** will help fund translation, publishing and promotion, making *Planetwise* available to 1 in 6 of the world's population.
- **Spanish £20,000/US\$ 34,000** will enable Christians across most of South America to read *Planetwise*.
- **Portuguese £30,000/US\$ 51,000** will put *Planetwise* in the hands of the Brazilian church.
- **English budget edition £45,000/US\$ 76,000** will allow a simpler version to be made available to millions of Christians across India, Africa and other regions.
- **Beyond this, the sky is the limit!** We have proposals for *Planetwise* to be translated into Czech, Hindi, Mongolian, Swahili and even Pidgin!



Please donate online at:

www.arocha.org/donateplanetwise

or contact the International Office. With your help, *Planetwise* in Portuguese could reach Brazilian Christian communities who hold the key to the protection of the Amazon and its amazing wildlife.



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Registered Charity No. 1136041 Company Registration No. 6852417

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

Editor: Barbara Mearns

Front cover photo: A Rocha France is continuing their long-term study of the European Roller *Coracias garrulus*. (Edmund Fellowes)