

A photograph of two owls perched on a tree branch. The owl on the left is a Screech Owl with vibrant orange-brown plumage and large, round, yellow-ringed eyes. The owl on the right is a Spotted Owl with mottled grey and white feathers and similar large eyes. They are surrounded by lush green foliage and tree branches.

INTERNATIONAL REVIEW
2017/18

INTERNATIONAL
A ROCHA
Conservation and Hope

Annual Review 2017/18

Our heart

At the heart of A Rocha is our work to enable Christians, of all denominations, to care for the earth. Across the world, our conservation projects work with and through communities. We are involved with churches, universities and bible colleges, and our long-term scientific research provides context for people to experience the realities of conservation.

Looking back

Reflecting on the past year, I'm aware of a significant moment when public awareness of conservation was heightened. Sir David Attenborough and his team brought vivid images of the marine world into homes thanks to the BBC's Blue Planet II series. Viewers in a number of countries were able to experience creation, and connect with and see images of the raw beauty of nature, all narrated by a single, trusted voice. For A Rocha, this focus on creation was further confirmation of why we have been performing environmental education and scientific monitoring for over 30 years.

For many viewers it was the first opportunity to understand the impact of plastic pollution on the marine environment. A Rocha's work addressing the problem of microplastics inspired a number of supporters to get involved – some undertaking huge personal challenges in the process. Matt Burke raised over £1,800 by completing a superhuman 250 km ultramarathon

Taking time out from the 2018 Leaders' Forum in Portugal to hunt for microplastics on a local beach. (Mel Ong)

through the Namibian desert, while Henry Porpora and Ed King cycled over 1,050 km from Paris to Nice raising both awareness and £1,135 for our appeal.

The year ahead is sure to bring further challenges. The fight continues to protect Ghana's Atewa forest from mining and Portugal's Alvor Estuary from inappropriate and illegal developments. At the same time, many A Rocha teams continue to live with the effects of climate change.

As climate scientist Dr Katharine Hayhoe explained at the 2017 John Stott London Lecture, 'The problem is not making people believe the science; it's making them care.' And so, successful conservation has to be about collaboration. It's why A Rocha teams around the world continue to build relationships with governments, international agencies, churches, scientists, musicians, schools, colleges and so many others. Please pray for God's wisdom for these connections so that more people join us in caring for the planet.

In 2015, world leaders agreed to 17 goals for a better world by 2030. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have the power to end poverty, fight inequality and stop climate change. Look out for the SDG symbols to see how A Rocha's work is addressing these goals.

Enjoy reading and thank you for your support.

Chris Naylor

Chris Naylor
Executive Director,
A Rocha International (ARI)



(Mel Ong)



Dr Katharine Hayhoe delivered the 2017 John Stott London Lecture (Artie Limmer)



Fundraiser Matt Burke (Matt Burke)



Restoring biodiversity in the Alpilles region

Two species, formerly thought to have disappeared from the ancient marshes of the Baux Valley in southern France, have been rediscovered. A healthy population of Southern Water Voles *Arvicola sapidus* has been discovered living in the Ilon Marsh. The last evidence of its presence here was in 2010. Protected in France since 2012, the Southern Water Vole is classed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List of threatened species and it occurs nowhere else in the world outside of France and the Iberian Peninsula.

A prolonged period of heavy spring rains led to an even more astonishing discovery, when a group of A Rocha France volunteers photographed a female Western Spadefoot Toad *Pelobates cultripes*. It is listed as Vulnerable on France's Red List of threatened species and exists only in a handful of locations in the region.

The main threats to both populations are the degradation of their habitats and the accidental introduction of non-native predators. This wonderful discovery in the Baux Valley has encouraged the team of A Rocha France in their work to restore the biodiversity of the Alpilles region.



Southern Water Vole
(David Pérez)



Western Spadefoot Toad (Thomas Alterr)



Conservation and community

Bannerghatta National Park is a thriving centre for ecotourism and conservation. The park's proximity to the city of Bangalore provides an opportunity for raising conservation awareness and attracting volunteers for conservation.

For A Rocha India, this has involved running ecology camps for local schools, organizing public talks in the city and training 30 new forest guards. They have also conducted major research into mammal populations (especially tigers) in the park using camera traps, resulting in the publication of both a scientific paper and an important book describing the mammals of Bannerghatta. Avinash Krishnan, Research Officer for A Rocha India says, 'We were delighted to find so many large mammal species thriving in the park, despite being so close to the big city.'

Surveys examining agriculturalists' use of the landscape have given us a clearer understanding of the human-elephant conflict and have given us ideas for creative ways, such as bee-hive fences, that could help solve these issues.'

In alerting members of the corporate, educational and professional communities to the plight of Bannerghatta's wildlife, A Rocha India has been central in building a community that places far greater importance on conserving the habitats that wildlife requires.

Peter Harris, President and Co-founder of A Rocha pictured with the newly published *Mammals of Bannerghatta National Park* (Mel Ong)



Avinash Krishnan (centre) with A Rocha India colleagues at Bannerghatta National Park (Jeremy Lindsell)



Camera trap image of Tiger *Panthera tigris* (A Rocha India)

Bringing hope through creation care



A Rocha has been a member of the Lausanne Movement for many years. Dave Bookless, Director of Theology for A Rocha International, says, 'Through the regional creation care conferences, it's been wonderful to see the Lausanne creation care initiative building into a truly global movement with over 100 countries actively engaged. It's been particularly exciting to see non-western Christian voices talking about creation care from their own cultural contexts.'

The European conference drew 80 delegates to A Rocha's centre at Les Courmettes, where participants were challenged on lifestyle choices and encouraged to keep the Sabbath: even activists need to remember to pause, recharge and re-centre in Christ.

Dave adds, 'The embodiment of the values under discussion, within the context of A Rocha France and the beauty of the surrounding nature, gave the week a wonderfully holistic connection between thinking and doing.'

The Cape Town conference coincided with the city's worst-ever water crisis. Dave concludes, 'I was greatly encouraged by the response of the many

Christians I spoke to in Cape Town. Many had been deeply challenged about their attitudes to water, and were determined that they would never go back to previous wasteful habits.

Importantly, it was an opportunity for Christians from around the world to demonstrate our faith in God as Creator and Sustainer of all living things, and as the source of the living water that never runs dry.'

The Oceania Conference on Creation Care and the Gospel sought to catalyze a movement of Christians who will develop and strengthen creation care partnerships and initiatives throughout the South

Pacific. Delegates were encouraged and deeply challenged by the voices of indigenous and Aboriginal Christians. Aso Loapo, a Congregationalist Minister, from the island nation of Tuvalu said, 'Our cry is from those who belong to the land and oceans. We cannot simply get up and move as we have strong links to our motherland. We must be responsible Christians in taking care of God's creation. We need mature cooperation with the western churches, to advocate on our behalf.'



Pacific Islanders and Aboriginal Australians enjoying the Oceania Lausanne Creation Care conference (A Rocha International)

Growing Eco Church

A Rocha UK's Eco Church continues to go from strength to strength. With over a thousand churches now registered, nearly 300 of which have already achieved awards, the programme helps Christians across the UK care for creation as an integral part of their faith. Following interest from other countries, preparations are underway to pilot Eco Church internationally. A Rocha UK is working in partnership with A Rocha International and other national organizations to develop ways of customizing the programme for different languages and cultures. For more information, contact ecochurch@arocha.org

Delegates attending Lausanne's European conference (A Rocha International)



Creation Care in the Middle East

Working with the local municipalities of Mekse and Qab Elias, A Rocha Lebanon is bringing much needed green space for people and wildlife to the growing conurbation swallowing up Bekaa Valley farmland. By planting a mixture of indigenous and fruiting trees and shrubs, with laid out paths, streams and ponds, a fly-tipped waste land is turning into a haven for butterflies and birds and an opportunity for school children to learn about their environment right on their doorstep. Once the plantings are mature, the larger plot in Mekse will provide a unique, urban, green space for the local community, planted for them to enjoy and remember their place in God's creation.



Viscous Globe Thistle
Echinops viscosus
(A Rocha Lebanon)



Small Pearl-bordered
Fritillary *Boloria selene*
(Embert Messelink)



Planting trees and
shrubs at Mekse
(Martin Bernhard)



Hope for the fledglings

Over five years of seabird monitoring on Mt Karioi, no Grey-faced Petrel or Oi / *Pterodroma gouldi* has successfully fledged, due to introduced predators like stoats, feral cats and rats – until this year!

Once hatched, the hungry chick is left alone in its burrow for up to two weeks at a time while the parents head out to sea to find crustaceans and fish before returning to the burrow to bring back to their young, leaving them vulnerable to hunting predators.

A team from A Rocha Aotearoa New Zealand monitors burrows for breeding activity and maintains a network of predator traps around the breeding burrows to protect the chicks.

Project Manager and Co-Director Kristel van Houte says, 'Imagine our delight when we discovered seven chicks had successfully fledged for the first time since predator control was implemented.'



Grey-faced Petrel or Oi (A Rocha Aotearoa New Zealand)



Encouraging each other

Environmental Education Officers from A Rocha's African organizations in Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda came together at Mwamba, A Rocha Kenya's field study centre, for a week-long conference on Environmental Education. A Rocha International's Environmental Education Coordinator Angela McKay explains, 'It was useful to network and understand developments in each organization. We covered subjects such as plastic pollution, recycling, and the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as discovering more about the work undertaken by A Rocha organizations and exploring A Rocha International's Microplastics Toolbox.'

We saw an injured turtle at Watamu Turtle Watch and heard more about the problems caused by plastic litter in the oceans. We also observed a demonstration of how to make a sack garden; a great way to grow vegetables when you don't have lots of space.'



Learning how to make a sack garden (A Rocha International)

Making meadows flourish again

A Rocha Netherlands has recorded the first sightings of the rare Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary butterfly in the beautiful forest meadow De Slenk in Lettele.

The appearance of these three 'Silver Moon' butterflies is a wonderful sign of hope for the team involved in the conservation management of this site, assisting the Royal Dutch Natural History Society.

After A Rocha's tending and restoring of the meadows, the area is flourishing today with a large variety of plants, insects, mammals and mushrooms.

Atewa Forest

Campaign grows to protect forest reserve

Over 100 species of birds, mammals, amphibians and plants thriving in Atewa are globally threatened or near threatened with extinction; a number are found nowhere else on earth. Yet the government of Ghana has expressed the intention to sacrifice the forest for bauxite mining.



A group of renowned Ghanaian musicians have released a song 'Atewa till Eternity' to support the campaign to save the forest reserve. The collective travelled to the Netherlands together with A Rocha Ghana to mobilize the Ghanaian community there to support the Atewa forest campaign. You can listen to the song here: aroc.me/atewa-till-eternity

Atewa Forest (Jeremy Lindsell)

Leading experts back Atewa campaign

World-renowned biologist and environmentalist E.O. Wilson has written to the President of Ghana to highlight the unique biological value of the forest and the destruction that mining would cause. Professor Wilson reminds His Excellency President Akufo-Addo about Ghana's commitments to international agreements on biodiversity and sustainable development, and refers to the public support for a National Park at Atewa. Several international conservation organizations – including Amphibian Survival Alliance, Birdlife International, Global Wildlife Conservation, Rainforest Trust, the RSPB and WWF, together with A Rocha – have also written to the President of Ghana urging him to protect Atewa.



Walking for Water (A Rocha Ghana)



(Adam Leaché)



(Sheila Smith)

Atewa Community Walk for Water

'Community members walked 95 km from Atewa forest to Accra to protest that their clean water sources would be polluted should bauxite mining begin. Over six days, they carried water from the Ayensu, Birim and Densu rivers that take their source from the Atewa forest and supply water to 5 million people including the capital, Accra.

Arriving on World Water Day, the walkers had several stops to present petitions to key traditional chiefs, District and Municipal Chief Executives and key opinion leaders, with the final petition going to the President. The walk attracted huge media attention, giving massive visibility to the Atewa campaign.'

Seth Appiah-Kubi,
National Director of A Rocha Ghana



(Jeremy Lindsell)

Atewa provides a habitat for at least two species classified by the IUCN with their highest level of extinction threat (Critically Endangered): the Togo Slippy Frog *Conraua derooi* (above), and the plant *Aubreggrinia taiensis*. Three more species are expected to be classified as Critically Endangered once assessed: the White-naped Mangabey *Cercocebus lunulatus* (left), the Afia Birago Puddle Frog *Phrynobatrachus afiabirago* (above left), and the shrub *Monanthotaxis atewensis*.

Mapping birds, encouraging bees

The Red-faced Crombec *Sylvietta whytii* was recently mapped in the Dakatcha Woodlands inland of Malindi, marking the first recorded sighting of the coastal race of this African warbler for 40 years. A Kenyan endemic Hinde's Babbler *Turdoides hindei* was recorded in Nairobi suburbs, more than 50 km away from its previously known distribution. In addition to this, a Blue-spotted Wood-dove *Turtur afer* in Mau-Narok on the western edge of the Rift Valley is the most easterly record of the species in Kenya.



Waders in Kenya (Ben Porter)

These sightings have been recorded for the Kenya Bird Map (KBM), a major conservation project from A Rocha Kenya, the National Museums of Kenya, Tropical Biology Association, Nature Kenya and the Animal Demography Unit of the University of Cape Town. The project enables scientists and conservationists to better understand changes in biodiversity and identify the key threats.



Learning about pollinators

With over 1,100 species, Kenya has amongst the richest bird diversity in Africa. Beyond simply describing bird species distribution, the findings published in KBM will help detect any decline in species, as well as the effects of changing climate or human land use, helping direct future avian research and conservation.

Nashville A Rocha inspires local communities to create habitats through Pollinator Garden Parties in the spring and autumn. The gatherings are usually held in private homes with hosts inviting friends and neighbours. Nashville A Rocha and a volunteer gardener lead the conversation about helping pollinators. Participants are invited to purchase a garden kit consisting of locally-grown, reasonably-priced native flowering plants, with instructions on how to plant their gardens at home. They learn why and how to give pollinators the food and habitat they need by planting a pollinator garden, as well as other tips for sustainable gardening.



Mapping one of the world's oldest Marine Protected Areas



Sweeper fish *Pempheris* sp

A Rocha Kenya has completed a four-year study to collate all available historical information and establish the current status of the biodiversity and habitats that exist within Watamu Marine National Park. Although protected for 50 years, there has never been a comprehensive inventory of species, nor documentation of the range of habitats found within its boundaries.



Eagle Ray *Aetobatus narinari* (Gary Ong)

Blacktip Reef Shark *Carcharhinus melanopterus* (Kydd Pollock Marine Photobank)



Dr Robert Sluka, Lead Scientist for A Rocha's Marine and Coastal Conservation Programme, says: 'The data show that there are 13 species classified as threatened according to the IUCN Red List, as well as five that are Near Threatened. Six of these species are elasmobranchs (sharks, rays and guitarfish), six are bony fish (Teleosts), plus four sea cucumbers (Holothuroidea), one seagrass and one coral species. We also found a species of sweeper fish that experts suspect is new to science.'

We have produced the first habitat map of any Kenyan Marine Protected Area. We found that there are nine habitat types within the park, with seagrass as the most dominant and coral reef as the least widespread. This emphasizes the importance of non-coral habitats and the need for more research into the ecology and conservation importance of these habitats.'



Blue-spotted Stingray *Taeniura lymma* (Bob Sluka)

Environmental stewardship in Winnipeg and beyond

Near East Braintree, at the edge of a boreal forest, is an environmental retreat centre and living lab set in 90 hectares of forests, meadow and river valley. 'This is an emerging project designed to inspire people to care for places in our province,' says Scott Gerbrandt, Manitoba A Rocha Director.

This unique combination of sensitive, yet accessible, wildlife habitat offers a way of connecting people to place. Here students, interns, guests and volunteers from around the world come to be immersed in compassionate Christian engagement with creation.

'We are also establishing a strong presence in Winnipeg to create both community and a sense of hope in our care of creation by arranging hikes, bird watching, camps and café-style gatherings. Our work here will focus on conservation science, environmental education and sustainable agriculture. By combining practical action and education, we are bringing hope through Christian stewardship of both people and places.'



Tamarack Cones *Larix laricina* (A Rocha Canada)



Partners in Peru

Peru's dry forests, one of the most threatened ecosystems in the world, are crucial in protecting endangered species and combating desertification and natural disasters such as floods and drought.

A unique collaboration has given fresh hope that these precious dry forests can be restored. A Rocha Peru and energy company ContourGlobal have been working together over the last four years to restore this habitat and promote social development in and around ContourGlobal's wind farm at Talara in northern Peru.

The resulting project was designed and implemented by A Rocha Peru, together with eight neighbourhood councils adjacent to the wind farm, along with support from ContourGlobal and Conservamos por la Naturaleza. These restoration efforts have led to native birds (such as the endangered Peruvian Plantcutter *Phytotoma raimondii*) nesting once again, and have prompted native plants to flourish.

Since the partnership began in 2014, 12 hectares of dry forest have been reforested on ContourGlobal's wind farm site. Local people, such as Zulema (pictured below), are now committed to restoring dry forests.

A series of videos entitled 'Harvesting Hope' has been produced by Conservamos por Naturaleza telling the story of the partnership project. See aroc.me/harvesting-hope

Camille Allan, Executive Director of A Rocha Peru, says, 'The partnership has given community members the opportunity to learn the importance of dry forest restoration, and many of them have become local environmental leaders.'

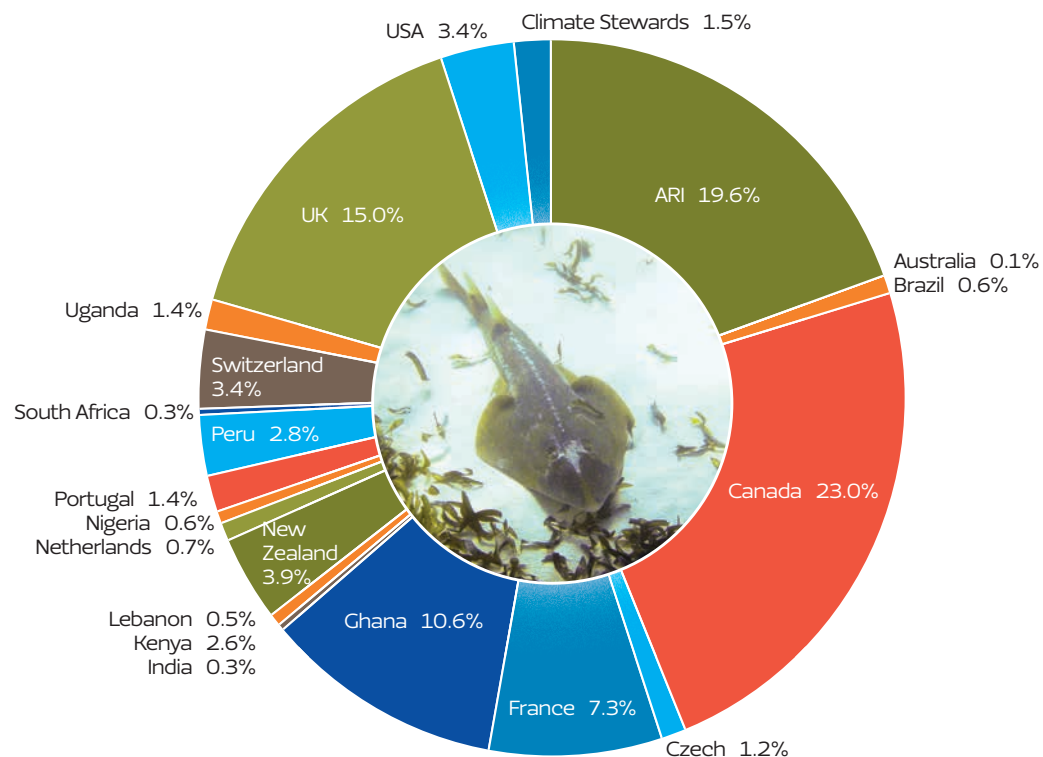


Peruvian Plantcutter (A Rocha Peru)

A Rocha's global income

Thanks to the generosity of many individuals, churches and trusts, A Rocha's global income rose by 14% to just over £5.2 m in 2017. This essential support enabled us to increase the scope of our scientific research, environmental education, theological teaching and community based conservation across the globe. In this way, we have been able to make progress restoring habitats and protecting species, reducing poverty, empowering women, and improving community health.

Although income rose globally, this increase is not reflected in every A Rocha organization. France, Switzerland, UK and Climate Stewards have seen income grow significantly, in contrast to Peru, USA, Ghana and A Rocha International where it has reduced. With added funding A Rocha International would be able to increase our support to other A Rocha organizations, prioritising where it is needed most.



The pie chart shows the undesignated income for A Rocha International (ARI) and the total income for the National Organizations.

Guitarfish *Rhinobatos rhinobato* (Bob Sluka)

Our projects help us meet at least 12 of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and with your continued support we could do even more.

The chart overleaf shows income sources and highlights the importance of individual donors. The total income for A Rocha International was 3% lower than in 2016. The number of smaller, regular donations from across the globe has increased during the year but these have not matched the larger, one-off donations that were received in previous years.

The income from trusts and foundations has increased from 14% to 19% of ARI's income due to two substantial donations to fund core costs from US foundations and continued funding from the A.G. Leventis Foundation for the conservation of the Atewa forest in Ghana.

Through appeals to tackle marine plastics and fund environmental education activities, you have helped us develop a Microplastics Toolbox, encourage and

equip 30 coastal cleanups and resource Kenyan teachers to teach their students about local environmental issues.

You have also supported A Rocha projects through Gifts with a Difference, our online catalogue of alternative gifts, bringing positive impacts to people and nature. Coventry Vineyard Church in the UK raised enough funds to purchase 63 bio-sand filters, offering nearly 1,200 people access to clean, safe drinking water, reducing the need for charcoal fires meaning fewer trees are cut down and habitats are protected. 'Bio-sand filters are such a significant way to bless a whole family – and a community,' says Vicki Sutton, Senior Pastor. 'We're really not a massive church with huge resources, but Gifts with a Difference enabled us to genuinely make a difference.'



Find your perfect Christmas gift at shop.arocha.org



'Women from the Sosoni Farmers' Group in Dakatcha Woodland, Kenya have been practicing Farming God's Way for three years, but already an average harvest brings in more than twice the income they received with conventional farming methods. Mulching helps to retain moisture, so they need to water much less frequently – only three times per week. It also reduces weeds and increased the soil's fertility.'

(Sarah Young)

Expenditure, income and fundraising

Almost 73% of ARI's expenditure relates to staff employment costs. As the income for ARI for 2017 has reduced, staff who have retired have not been replaced and their workload has been shared among existing staff.

Over two-thirds of ARI's expenditure was spent on supporting A Rocha National Organizations, advocacy and representing A Rocha globally at scientific and theological conferences.



Rachel Salmon

This August saw Rachel participate in the Reykjavik half marathon to raise money for A Rocha Kenya's conservation programs. Despite being a reluctant runner, Rachel trained for and completed the race – and raised over £700 in the process. Thank you, Rachel, and big congratulations on completing it!

Jacobus van der Linden

18-year-old A Rocha South Africa supporter Jacobus van der Linden's 977 km walk, from the Namibian border to the Cape of Good Hope, inspired others to participate in God's care for His creation. Jacobus's blog, which included a diary and observations on a range of topics, such as shorebirds, pollution, kelp forests and devotions, received more than 16,000 page views.

During the trek, Jacobus recorded the locations of the African Black Oystercatcher *Haematopus moquini* (2018 South Africa Bird of the Year) which he then shared with Birdlife SA. The data will contribute to the South Africa Bird Atlas.

African Black Oystercatcher
Haematopus moquini
(A Rocha South Africa)



Anna Fàbry

Anna is an artist in Prague, who has been using her talents to raise money to support the work of A Rocha Czech. Selling her beautiful work in the form of postcards, prints and stickers at a Christian fair in September, she raised a wonderful 2200 koruna (about £78) for A Rocha Czech. Thank you for your contribution, Anna!



A ROCHA INTERNATIONAL'S INCOME



A ROCHA INTERNATIONAL'S EXPENDITURE

2017

the A Rocha year in
numbers

Our AMAZING teams...

Interns 80
Volunteers 653
Staff 125 (FTE)



...have done
AMAZING
work in 2017

SPECIES CONSERVATION

135

Number of species
we help that are
threatened or
at risk nationally



97

Number of species
on IUCN's Red list
helped by our work



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

865

Number of activities
(eg. assemblies, camps,
school group visits)



26,777

Number of
participants



HABITAT PROTECTION

175,747

Number of hectares
where we advise, have
management control or
responsibility



1,149,762

Number of hectares of
other land area benefiting
from our research and
conservation
activities



THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

450

Number of speaking
engagements at
churches and
conferences



37,953

Number of participants



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

Front cover photo: Dakatcha Woodlands is one of the most important sites for wildlife conservation in Kenya and is home to the globally endangered Sokoke Scops Owl *Otus ireneae*. A Rocha Kenya is working with farmers from villages neighbouring the forest, equipping them to generate income by using local, natural resources without over-exploiting this vital habitat. (Sarah Young)