



# ANNUAL REVIEW | 2020 2021

**A ROCHA**  
Conservation and Hope



Black Guillemot, *Cephus grylle*. Credit: Peter Harris





# WELCOME

I am delighted to introduce this edition of the Annual Review, my first as Executive Director.

It is an enormous privilege to work with this ground-breaking family, present in 22 countries across six continents, working for the conservation of life on land and under the sea, addressing climate change and reaching tens of thousands in conservation and environmental education.

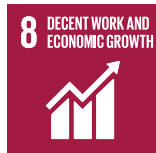
I have been a member of A Rocha since its beginning, but it was in getting to know the founders, Peter and Miranda Harris, that I fully came to see how caring for creation is part of who we must be to be authentic followers of Jesus Christ. Many of us owe a huge debt of gratitude to them. If A Rocha can influence Christians, there is the potential to impact every corner of the earth, to catalyse a global change of attitude, in partnership with the rest of the conservation world.

The world has reached a crisis point and we need everyone's involvement, doing whatever they are gifted to do.

We need campaigners, scientists, policy people, diplomats, volunteers, community activists and storytellers. We need many different skills, and we need people who will pray. Our work would not be possible without our supporters and partners. Please join us in any support, in any way that you can. Thank you.



**Dr Simon Stuart**  
Executive Director,  
A Rocha International



Throughout this review, you will notice the icons below appearing next to certain stories. These represent the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals, adopted in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly. We are proud of A Rocha's part of the global effort to meet these ambitious goals by 2030. For more information, please visit [www.arocha.org/sdgs](http://www.arocha.org/sdgs)

# Reasons to be hopeful –

## A Rocha's work around the world

**France:** Protecting the Southern Festoon butterfly

**Canada:** Building a toad bridge

**USA:** Hosting inspiring virtual events

**Switzerland:** Starting a biodiversity garden scheme

**Portugal:** Guarding the Alvor Estuary

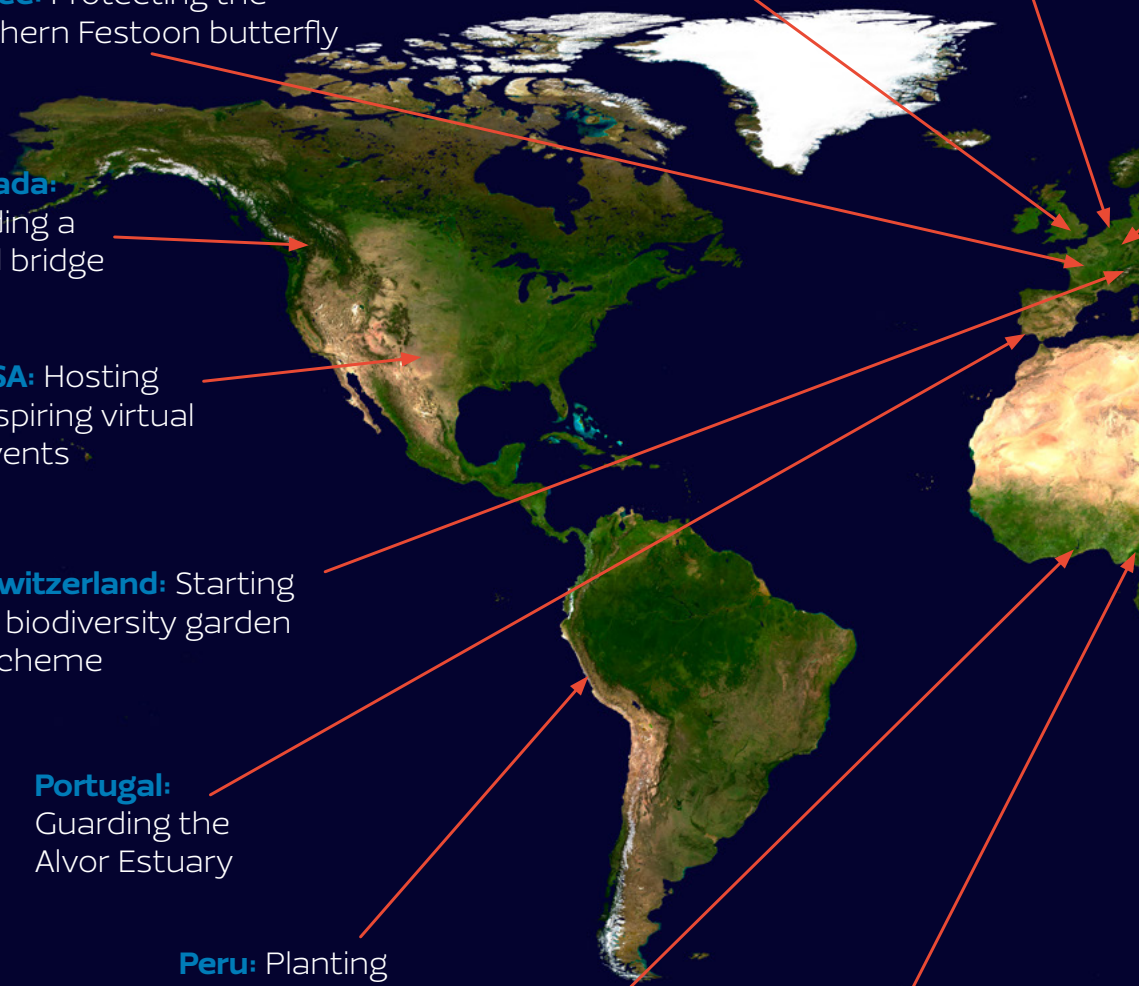
**Peru:** Planting trees in the desert

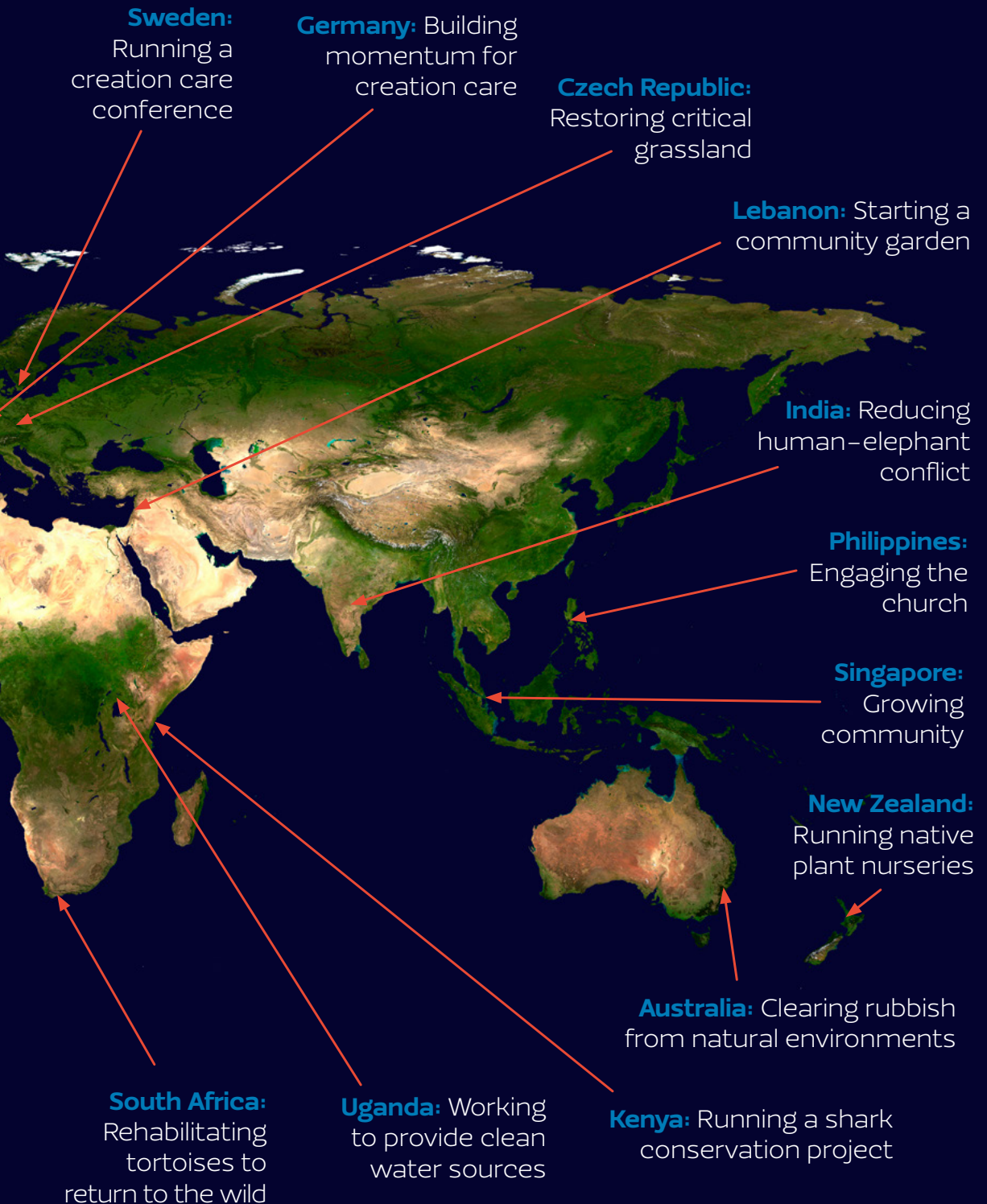
**Ghana:** Saving Atewa Forest

**Nigeria:** Planting indigenous trees in schoolyards

**UK:** Giving out the 1000<sup>th</sup> Eco Church award

**Netherlands:** Launching a nature challenge in lockdown







# Gifts with a Difference

## NEW GIFTS



[shop.arocha.org](http://shop.arocha.org)



**£30–£60**

### Coral care package

Your gift of a coral care package will help enable reefs to be monitored in Watamu Marine National Park, Kenya. By better understanding the bleaching response of corals, we can assist local park managers to make appropriate decisions to protect the reefs for the future – vital in this time of climate uncertainty.



**£5–£50**

### Tree hugger

Your gift of a tree hugger will ensure the trees A Rocha plants in Kenya, Peru and Uganda are kept watered and well looked after, improving their long-term chances of survival.

## COVID–19 Update

The impact of the COVID–19 pandemic on the A Rocha worldwide family has been severe. Field studies were curtailed, educational activities put on hold and income, particularly for A Rocha organizations with residential centres, fell substantially. A Rocha India, Peru and Uganda were under

extreme strain and in autumn 2020 we ran an emergency campaign to raise funds to meet their immediate needs.

We were enormously grateful and moved by your generous response. Almost £20,000 was raised. As a result, the good work done by the teams in those places has



continued. The crisis is far from over. We are so grateful for your ongoing prayers, encouragement and support. Thank you.

# Introducing A Rocha International's Board of Trustees



**Soohwan Park**

Chair of Trustees, former HR director & leadership consultant – South Korea/Canada

On 24 October 2020, the A Rocha Worldwide Covenant was officially adopted, signalling a new chapter in our life together. One outworking was an A Rocha International Board with elected members representing each region in which we work. We are proud and grateful of this extraordinary group of people and their servant leadership of our global work.

**Dr Florence Muindi**

Founder, President & CEO of Life in Abundance International – Kenya



**Prof Alfred Oteng-Yeboah**

Winner of the John C. Phillips Memorial Medal, IUCN's highest conservation award – Ghana



**Dr Jan van der Stoep**

Endowed Professor of Christian Philosophy at Wageningen University & Research – Netherlands



**Steve Tanner**

Chief Technology Officer, ecoRobotix – Switzerland



**Graham Wright**

Independent consultant and programme director focused on change management. Associate Fellow with Oxford Said Business School – UK



**Geoff Cowper QC**

Senior litigator – Canada



**Dr Rodel Lasco**

Executive Director of the Oscar M Lopez Center, multi-award winning scientist – Philippines



**Ben Lowe**

Activist, author, founding national organizer of Young Evangelicals for Climate Action – Singapore/USA



**Dr Hilary Marlow**

Biblical scholar at Cambridge University – UK



## A ROCHA AFRICAN FOREST PROGRAMME



On 5 June 2021, World Environment Day, the UN launched its Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, a global rallying cry to heal our planet. The message is simple and serious: if we do not start the healing process now, the future is likely to be far dimmer for us and for our children.

In the African landscapes in which A Rocha works, the pressure on the forests is relentless, driven by ever-

increasing demand for resources, locally and internationally. As you look across the continent there is a clear movement and desire to protect the remaining forests, restore degraded landscapes and plant trees to fight climate change.

Conservation is about hope. Through the work of our African Forest programme, this is expressing itself in several ways.

## Creating a future for forest landscapes in Kenya and Uganda

Despite COVID restrictions, A Rocha Kenya has had a busy year as we carry on our work with local farmers to promote regenerative agriculture, discuss environmental issues in schools and churches and protect key habitats for endangered species. We continue to focus on the vulnerable Dakatcha woodland, which is suffering from severe deforestation: in fact, A Rocha Kenya's

wildlife reserve in Dakatcha now stands at over 1,000 hectares, which is exciting! But it also highlights the need to integrate this reserve into the broader landscape, something we are discussing with key partners. Meanwhile, in Uganda, A Rocha soon hopes to start planned work in West Bugwe, regenerating, reforesting and planting 22,000 indigenous trees.



The boundary of the Kirossa reserve with the neighbouring pineapple farm. Nicholas Warren





## Raising the profile of data for conservation

Science underpins much of our work. We were therefore delighted to receive a grant from the Global Biodiversity Information Facility to digitise currently poorly accessible records on African butterflies, mushrooms, birds, mammals and trees. This project brings together five A Rocha organizations with six other key partners. Gaining access to this wealth of information will help the conservation of our four African forest landscapes.



## Climate Stewards – the right trees in the right place

Climate Stewards is currently working with four project partners in Africa: the Baptist Union of Uganda, Watersheds Ecosystem Conservation in Kenya, Mboni ya Vijana in Tanzania and A Rocha Ghana. Our partners are planting indigenous trees with communities, churches and schools, bringing multiple benefits. Not only do the trees lock up CO<sup>2</sup> as they grow, but these new mini forests are bringing back lost biodiversity as well as providing new sources of income and local environmental improvements such as soil enrichment, erosion control and reduced temperatures. These projects are all funded through carbon offsetting by individuals and organizations.

## Supporting each other

The international response to the threat to the Atewa forest is an illustration of how interconnected our world is today. African biodiversity and forest protection cannot only be addressed through local interventions. Local protection remains fundamental, but increasingly it needs to be reinforced by international collaborations like those we cherish across the A Rocha family.

## Atewa Forest for National Park

A Rocha Ghana continues to take a lead in the fight to protect the Atewa Forest from the threat of bauxite mining promoted by the Ghanaian government. Atewa is home to one of the highest recorded number of globally threatened species of any forest in West Africa. International publicity and pressure are increasing: IUCN adopted a motion in November 2020 to protect the forest, and statements from the BMW Group, Tetra Pak

and Schüco International have expressed concern. In April 2021 Atewa was added to the list of Alliance for Zero Extinction sites, meaning the forest now falls under the International Finance Corporation's off limits areas for project financing. Daryl Bosu from A Rocha Ghana says, 'Although the plan to mine is still in place, the government is clearly concerned about the mounting opposition.'

▲ ABOVE: Specimen of a Clarke's weaver collected in 1955 – an example of locked-up biodiversity data needing to be digitized.  
Nicholas Warren



A ROCHA

# MARINE CONSERVATION PROGRAMME



A Rocha's marine conservation work falls within four themes:

## 1 Biodiversity and Beauty

We study and protect species such as the Oi/Grey-faced Petrel *Procellaria cinerea* in New Zealand, the Halavi Guitarfish *Glaucostegus halavi* in Kenya, and the American Horseshoe Crab *Limulus polyphemus* in the USA. We protect habitats such as mangroves in Ghana, coral reefs in Kenya and sandy beaches in the USA. An exciting development is our new seabird conservation group working around the globe to bring together our national programmes that have seabird projects.

## 2 An Ocean of Hope not Plastic

An Ocean of Hope not Plastic reflects our global commitment to restoring habitats from plastic pollution, including coasts and their watersheds (lakes and rivers). Across the world we conduct citizen science nurdle hunts, and A Rocha USA and Portugal conduct dedicated microplastic research.

## 3 Climate Change

We work on climate change issues, both through wider climate efforts such as Climate Stewards, but also specifically studying coral reef bleaching in Kenya and many efforts globally to protect Blue Carbon sources, such as mangroves and seagrass beds.

## 4 Livelihoods and Wellbeing

Our Livelihoods and Wellbeing theme focuses on helping people enjoy the mental, physical and spiritual benefits of being on, in, near and under the water. A Rocha teams conduct rockpool tours, snorkeling trips, bioluminescent kayaking and beach gatherings. We also serve coastal fishing communities and those who rely on the ocean in several countries through livelihoods projects. The ocean is a gathering place for us to engage with and heal our relationships with God, each other and nature.



## Highlights:

A particular highlight of this year has been our Marine Governance project. In partnership with the University of St Andrews, A Rocha International and our teams in Kenya, Ghana and new partner Natoria Ahy in Madagascar, we are using an approach called a Governance Baseline Tool to bring together local communities and organizations. Our goal is to help them agree on courses of action that support both conservation and community wellbeing. We work to identify environmentally sustainable alternative livelihoods and then support people in transitioning to these new livelihoods, particularly amongst marginal groups.



Marine Governance works at the intersection of biodiversity conservation and sustaining human activities dependent on Marine Protected Areas. This approach aims to bring together stakeholders to develop a common vision for a given marine protected area. We have identified several alternative livelihood projects which were evaluated with fishing families participating in A Rocha Kenya's Farming God's Way programme and implemented as a valuable supplement to food and income security. One of the most valuable aspects of the project for our Kenyan team was the increase in responsibility given within the community as a key partner in managing the Marine Protected Area. Despite difficult circumstances, Natoria Ahy conducted several education events and beach cleanups that helped deepen relationships with the local community.



In Ghana, the Pratu river flows into the Muni lagoon, the central part of the Muni Pomadze wetlands Ramsar site. The Pratu provides ecosystem goods and services for more than nine communities. It is also the main ground water charge for the Muni catchment. It is currently threatened with chemical pollution from a paper manufacturing factory, and, further along, illegal damming by a company. A Rocha Ghana's subsequent actions led to a stakeholders' emergency meeting. As a result, the paper company has been directed to halt production, construct a waste treatment plant and commit never to discharge the waste into the river again. The company who built the dam was also ordered to destroy it to allow the river to flow freely.



## A ROCHA THEOLOGY & CHURCHES PROGRAMME



**A**s for everybody, 2020–2021 has been the strangest of years for A Rocha's work in Theology and Churches, with no travel but a substantial increase in online speaking opportunities. How else would it be possible for Dave Bookless to speak in South America, Ghana, Sweden and the UK in the same week?! At times it's been intense, switching cultures and mindsets to communicate effectively without face-to-face interaction, but it has also seen us reach entirely new audiences.

Here are some highlights of the last year:

- A Rocha International now has a Theology & Churches team! **Rachel Mander** (UK), **Samuel Chiu** (Canada) and **Prarthini Selvenidran** (Singapore) join **Dave Bookless** part-time in speaking, writing and representing A Rocha.
- A Rocha's Global Theology & Churches Programme has taken off, with regular online meetings involving nearly every A Rocha organization. We share wisdom and resources, wrestle with issues of creation care theology and effective communication, and are becoming a supportive, prayerful community of practice.
- The 'At Your Service' e-news for churches shares resources, and we are improving the resources and look of the 'At Your Service' website. Some recent additions that may interest you are 'All of Life', a professionally made series of four short videos from New Wine Netherlands, and a study guide to accompany the 12-part Lausanne Global Classroom on Creation Care. Sign up for the e-news for churches at [aroc.me/atyourservice](https://aroc.me/atyourservice)
- We participate in and influence global Christian networks. This year that's included helping to plan and lead two global Creation at the Crossroads conferences with the Lausanne Movement and World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), Rachel Mander writing a booklet on Integral Mission and Creation Care for Micah Global, Samuel Chiu helping lead Climate Intercessors in preparation for the United Nations global climate summit in November 2021, producing a theological statement on biodiversity for WEA and co-leading a conference on creation care for staff from mission agencies and UK theological colleges.




# John Stott Memorial birding day

 1089  
Species

 181  
Participants

 21  
Countries

 355  
Hours in  
the field

On 8 May 2021, in the centenary year of John Stott's birth, people from 21 countries around the world took part in the John Stott Memorial

birding day. This was a one-day event run by A Rocha to commemorate and celebrate our great friend and supporter John Stott's legacy as a theologian, pastor and birdwatcher.



## 8 May 2021

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



Some took part in a bird-themed spiritual retreat, others entered a photography competition, and we held a bird race during which a combined total of 1,089 species were recorded. Visit [johnstottbirdingday.com](http://johnstottbirdingday.com) to read about the experience and to find out about plans for 2022.

## Environmental Education

Our environmental education programmes have been limited this year by COVID-19, as many schools closed and some countries found virtual options were impossible due to lack of access to computers, internet and electricity. However, in April 2021, 16 A Rocha organizations came together as a community of practitioners in a week-long virtual conference. New resources have also been created, including a biodiversity toolbox with factsheets, lesson plans and community workshop materials addressing key environmental concerns that can be used and adapted in local contexts.



# Eco Church takes root in New Zealand



Photo credit: ARANZ

A Rocha Aotearoa New Zealand has welcomed the first group of churches to the Eco Church scheme, supporting churches to care actively for God's earth as an integral part of their mission. In partnership with the Para Kore programme, they have also launched a Zero

Waste programme which helps churches to reduce their waste through training workshops, resources and waste audits (the picture shows a group of the participants). To find out more about the Eco Church NZ project, visit their website: [ecochurch.org.nz](http://ecochurch.org.nz)

## Gardening for biodiversity

Many of us want to do something practical to benefit nature but it can be hard to know where to start. One way is to begin in our own gardens. In the urban and semi-urban areas in Switzerland, gardens and balconies can become small havens where multitudes of plants and animal life can be encouraged to set up home. A Rocha Switzerland



Photo credit: Randy Jorell

has launched a scheme, 'Jardin paradis vivant' (Living Paradise Gardens), offering personalized advice to promote biodiversity and



Photo credit: Bértrand Bender

training but also community gatherings and group activities around people's gardens.





# Safe roads for toads

In Canada, A Rocha has helped thousands of toadlets survive the danger of the roads by installing drift fences to guide the toadlets to safety. Every year toads return to the same wetlands to breed – crossing roads if necessary. After the eggs hatch and tadpoles turn to toadlets, it's their turn to make the trip back to the surrounding forests. By tracking their routes, A Rocha has not only ensured their safety but has also informed public policy so that now planners are designing toad-friendly roads and vegetative buffers to enable safe road crossings. Watch a video at [arocha.org/toad-in-roads](http://arocha.org/toad-in-roads)



Photo credit: Whitely Buckner

## Expanding conservation in northern Peru

A Rocha Peru's Dry Forest Program has expanded from their Pacasmayo site to the Calipuy National Reserve, La Libertad. Further expansion is being explored in other conservation areas in northern Peru, such as Salitral Huarmaca Regional Conservation Area, Piura and the Chaparri Ecological Reserve, Lambayeque. Two additional conservation projects have also been designed as part of the Natural and Cultural Heritage Conservation Program which aims to conserve and protect the natural heritage that is strongly linked to cultural practices of Peruvian communities.

The first is a project conserving a native cotton crop (*Gossypium barbadense*) and recovering ancestral production and spinning techniques to empower local craftswomen. The second is the Checo Project, aiming at restoring the Checo Gourd *Lagenaria Siceraria* crop in collaboration with farmers. The project will improve irrigation management and pest control while raising awareness of its value and vulnerability among farmers, and is preserving one of the oldest musical instruments of the Afro-Peruvian community, part of their cultural identity.



Photo credit: Ciro Flores Cabrera



# Restoring trees in Nigeria



In Nigeria, the Bible school in Foron is restoring a lost forest. When British missionaries first arrived

in Foron in 1907 their mission station, like many, was filled with trees, and had so many oranges, mangoes and grapes it was called 'a place of fruit for all'. Generations later the beautiful environment started disappearing when the trees were cut for firewood. This year, sponsored by the Nigerian Conservation Foundation and to commemorate the International Forest Day celebration, Eden, A Rocha's Associated Project in Nigeria, donated 50 trees to the local church councils and 100 to the Bible school that now stands on the old mission station.

# Growing network of Christian land managers

A Rocha UK's 'Partners in Action' is a collaborative network of Christian land managers demonstrating active care for the natural world: a way to participate in joint conservation work, share ideas and information and pray for one another. Despite the pandemic, new partners continue to join, like Stampwell Farm, an ancient fruit and livestock farm which has seen an annual increase in recorded plant, bird and insect species by using holistic grazing techniques and

ecosystem protection; or The Rock Christian Fellowship, a church

on St Helena in the South Atlantic, whose Seeds of Hope project will see packets of pollinator-friendly flower and vegetable seeds delivered to households on the island.

Ashburnham Place  
Photo credit: Jennifer Plummer



# Studying microplastics in Portugal

Microplastics are one of the most uncontrolled pollutants in our oceans. Ranging from 1–5mm, we are working to understand the types and sources of microplastics to stop their spread at the source. Along 21 transects on the beaches of Lagos, Alvor, Portimão and Ferragudo, an hour after high tide, the A Rocha team collects sand from a half metre square 5cm deep, sieves it with filtered seawater and places it in

high salinity water so the surface microplastics can be analyzed. The data is added to a global collection to raise awareness and inform coastal habitat management. Projects like this take place all over the world. Find out more about A Rocha's plastics toolbox on page 11.

Photo credit: Jasper Gerhardt



# A living tribute to A Rocha leaders

A year after the terrible road accident in South Africa that claimed the lives of Miranda Harris and Chris and Susanna Naylor, a new A Rocha Memorial Bird Hide was opened at Kuzuko Lodge as a symbol of remembrance and renewed commitment to the A Rocha family. Sitting on a previously desolate hilltop overlooking a specially created pond, over 50 bird species have been recorded there in the first three months. Murray Tessororf, National Director of A Rocha South Africa, says, 'It will be

Photo credit: Mike Bridgeford



buzzing with life: a fitting, living tribute to the lives of those who have meant so

much to so many of us. The good work they started continues.'

## A new chapter for A Rocha Lebanon

Colin and Audrey Gibson did not require much persuasion when they were asked to join A Rocha Lebanon as National Director and Engagement Officer. Colin says, 'It is a joy to use my environmental experience and skills in project management and fundraising and for Audrey to develop her passion for

Photo credit: Colin Gibson



outdoor education.' In Mekse in the Bekaa Valley, once the 'bread basket' of the Eastern Roman Empire, wildlife is returning after trees and a pond have been put in, with hopes for a community garden and beekeeping to help with sustainability and income generation. Audrey is getting children outside and

is producing Arabic creation care resources for churches in partnership, but notes, 'Lebanon is in the midst of a political and economic crisis. This is causing great hardship for many and we are very mindful of this as we engage communities in nature conservation.'



# ARI's 2020 financial review

68% went towards supporting A Rocha Organizations

8% was spent on fundraising

## Expenditure

8% was spent on communicating about A Rocha's global work

6% on admin

3% on governance

7% was spent on advocacy and representing A Rocha

Global income for A Rocha increased by 14% in 2020 to £6.4m.

We are profoundly grateful to all who have faithfully and generously funded our work this year. Thank you.

## Income

7% investments

11% churches

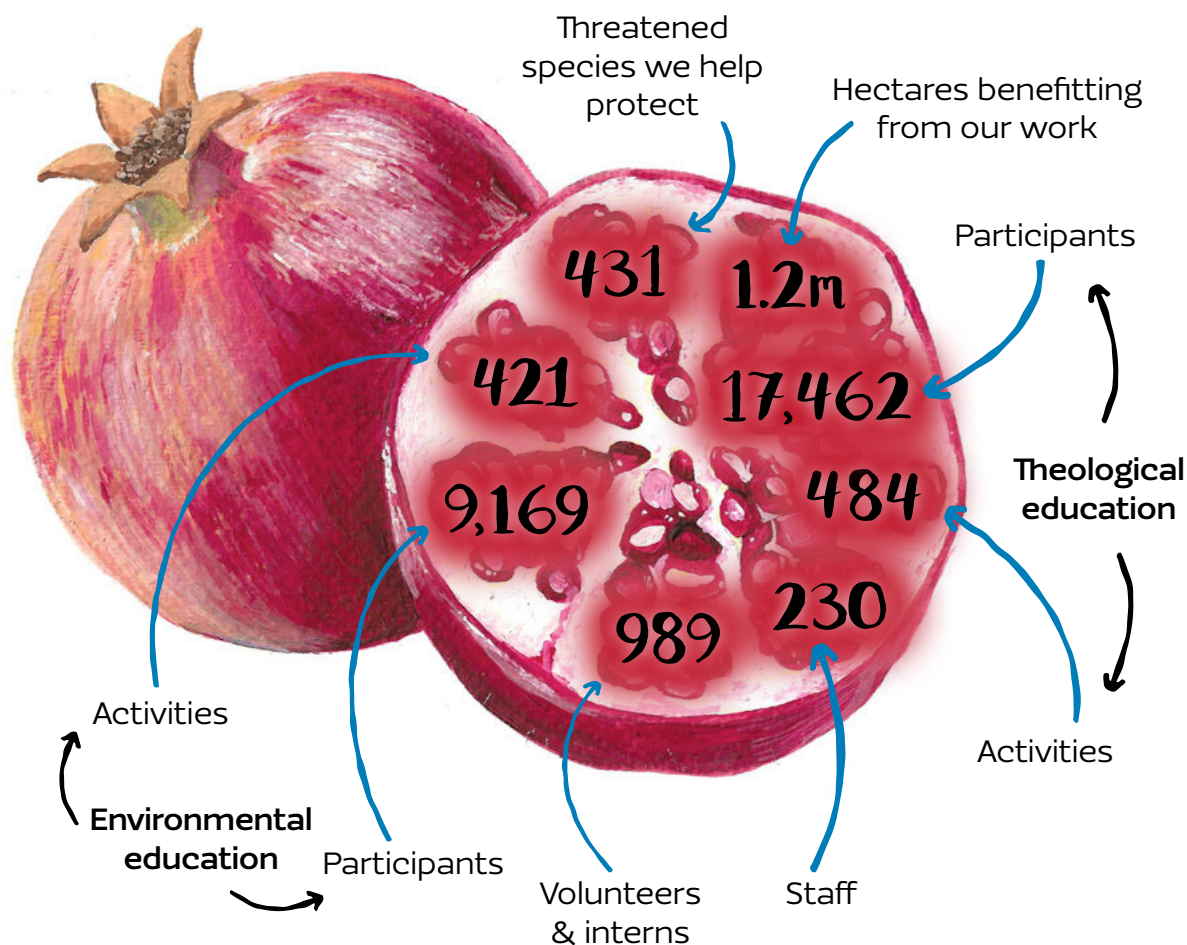
34% individuals

26% trusts

16% other

6% legacies

# The A Rocha worldwide family in 2020



## Giving online

We've made some improvements to our online donation form, including more payment options.

Visit [arochoa.org/donate](https://arochoa.org/donate)

The screenshot shows the 'Donate each month to' section of the A Rocha International website. It includes a dropdown menu set to 'A Rocha International', a photo of a hand feeding a bird, and buttons for 'Monthly' and 'Give Once'. At the bottom, there are currency and amount selection options.

Donate each month to  
A Rocha International

Monthly Give Once

GBP 10 20 50 Other

# Ways to stay in touch

## Field notes eNews

Sign up at [arochoa.org](https://arochoa.org) to get our monthly round-up of stories, news and links to resources like our blog, podcast and publications.



A Rocha has always been a voice of hope in the environmental space. The Field Notes podcast, hosted by Peter Harris and Bryony Loveless, is an exploration of the ideas, practice and experience making a difference on the ground, through conversations with people who really know what they are talking about. Listen wherever you usually find your podcasts.

[arochoa.org/field-notes-podcast](https://arochoa.org/field-notes-podcast)

## — A ROCHA — At Your Service

We have a brand-new quarterly mailing full of free creation care resources for your church from the A Rocha worldwide family.

Sign up at [aroc.me/atyourservice](https://aroc.me/atyourservice)

A Rocha International, 180 Piccadilly, London, W1J 9HF, UK.  
t: +44 (0) 300 770 1346 | e: [international@arochoa.org](mailto:international@arochoa.org) | w: [arochoa.org](https://arochoa.org)

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