

A Rocha South Africa  
**Annual Review**  
2021





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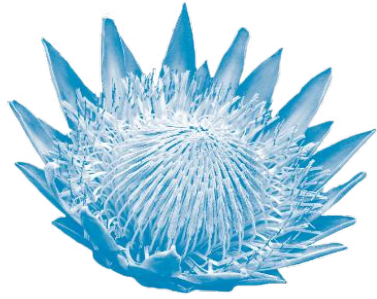
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Left: The 16<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of A Rocha South Africa was our first hybrid in-person-and-online AGM . Hosted by the Vrye Gereformeerde Kerk, Belville. We were able to maintain Covid protocols and run an effective Annual General Meeting.

Front cover: Winning image (wildlife category): 2021 A Rocha Global Forum Festival. Leopard photographed by Murray Tessendorf at Kuzuko lodge

# A



SOUTH AFRICA

# ROCHA

Conservation and Hope

**A Rocha South Africa is a national Christian organisation which equips, motivates and mobilises people to care for God's creation, through theology, sustainable livelihoods, research and projects.**

**Christian:** Underlying all we do is our biblical faith in the living God, who made the world, loves it and entrusts it to the care of human beings

**Conservation:** We carry out research for the conservation and restoration of the natural world and run environmental education programmes for people of all ages.

**Cross-Cultural:** We draw on the insights and skills of people from diverse cultures, both locally and around the world.

**Community:** Through our commitment to God, each other and the wider creation, we aim to develop good relationships both within the A Rocha family and in our local communities.

**Cooperation:** We work in partnership with a wide variety of organisations and individuals who share our concerns for a sustainable world.



**A Rocha South Africa is member of the international family of A Rocha organisations.**

INTERNATIONAL  
**A ROCHA**  
Conservation and Hope

A Rocha South Africa is a registered Non-Profit Organisation:  
NPO Number 038-193

and Public Benefit Organisation: PBO Number 930020406



## Chairman's Report

It has been amazing to see what God has been doing through A Rocha South Africa over the last year. We have slowly been reactivating the organisation in the light of the receding of the Covid pandemic. We are grateful to God for His sustaining and protecting hand through the pandemic. As a Christian, biodiversity, conservation organisation we see His hands as he has brought new projects and opportunities for us. (Eph 2: 10)



With A Rocha International family there is much ongoing work on a review of the Mission, Vision and Commitments. Please pray for wisdom as we (Murray and I) go to France in June 2022 to participate in the ongoing worldwide deliberations. The

new Covenant which governs the way the international organisation will be run has been operationalised.

We are more than midway through 2019-2023 strategic action document. Our regional Action Plans are amended based on the global and local circumstances we find ourselves in and we continue to work within them.



As you will see from our annual financials, we are still using reserves to sustain operations. Please add this as an item for prayer and action as we need to become net zero in our use of reserves.

I have been privileged to work along side a Board of Trustees who are committed to A Rocha, participate in the thought leadership and also in practical actions and in addition provide guidance and wisdom to the National Director. James Irlam has stepped down and we are looking for new Board members to strengthen and expand the Board. The portfolios are: Environmental Science and Research, NGO Sector, Community/Youth and Church/Theology. Please pray about these possible persons and send any names which may be appropriate.

Going back to John Piper's book titled "Coronavirus and Christ" I continue to pray that we would continue to be realigned with the infinite worth of Christ, that we would be salt and light in "creating good works in danger" and we will be used for God's glory in reaching the nations.

Yours in the extension of the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

David Gertzen

## National Director's Report

In considering the work of A Rocha South Africa during 2021, I have been encouraged at how much the A Rocha SA community has achieved during a year in and out of lockdowns and various challenges. During a time when volunteer events have been so difficult to plan in advance due to the uncertainties of the pandemic, we still managed to engage in biodiversity surveys, river clean-ups, nurdle hunts and birding events. Indeed, the number of volunteers attending many of our creation care events have been greater than we've seen in many years.

Our longest running conservation programme in Ferncliffe Nature Reserve now enters its 15th year and we applaud those who had the foresight to begin this restoration project in the very early days of A Rocha in South Africa. What started out as a tree planting exercise today exists as a forest filled with creatures that have made 'our corner of creation' their home. The Tortoise Project, our newest collaborative project, has also begun to bear fruit with the release back into the wild of the first batch of tortoise and the beginning of construction of tortoise rehabilitation enclosures.

The greatest strategic change within the organisation during 2021 came from the realisation that nature conservation in South Africa cannot exist apart from community development. Believing that A Rocha, as a biodiversity conservation organisation with a Christian ethos, is uniquely positioned to work through local community churches, the Board of



A Rocha SA made the decision to investigate opportunities for sustainable livelihood creation amongst resource poor communities in environmentally sensitive areas. In this regard research, planning and concept development has commenced during the year.

I remain highly appreciative of the support and guidance I have received from our chairman, David Gertzen and the Board of A Rocha SA. I am grateful for all the behind the scenes work done by our Administrator, Melanie Rood. I am thankful for the time and effort given freely to A Rocha SA by numerous volunteers. I am humbled by the knowledge that my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has sustained our organisation through two very challenging years.

As you read the following pages which contain an overview of a year in the life of A Rocha SA you will notice the community that A Rocha SA is on every page and the high importance we place on collaborating with like - minded organisations.

To each of you I say:  
thank you.

Blessings

Murray Tessendorf





## **Biodiversity Conservation Projects Ferncliffe Nature Reserve**

A Rocha South Africa has been involved in the restoration of a portion of the Ferncliffe Nature Reserve (Pietermaritzburg, KZN) since 2007. The long term restoration project seeks to return this Eastern Mistbelt Forest back to its former glory through indigenous tree planting and invasive vegetation removal. Volunteer events during 2021 included a mid-winter invasive vegetation hack, Arbor Day events, a citizen science biodiversity survey (Bioblitz) and guided walks through the forest. During 2021 A Rocha SA joined involved role-players to assess the reserve for the purpose of increasing its formally recognised protected status. A process was also begun to enter into a Voluntary Association with role players for the management of Ferncliffe Nature Reserve.







## Biodiversity Conservation Projects

### The Tortoise Project

A Rocha South Africa, in collaboration with FreeMe Wildlife, has embarked upon 'The Tortoise Project' with the goal of rehabilitating and releasing into the wild the four terrestrial tortoise species found in KwaZulu-Natal. With the approval of provincial wildlife authorities, FreeMe Wildlife has developed a nine month rehabilitation protocol which allows for the rehabilitation and release of the Natal Hinged Tortoise, Speke's Hinged Tortoise and Bell's (Eastern) Hinged Tortoise, with permits for the release of Leopard Tortoise pending.





A Rocha SA contributes to this project through the construction of custom built tortoise rehabilitation enclosures and assistance as required. Through generous funding by individuals and the supply of building material at cost price by Build-It Hilton, construction commenced on our first tortoise rehabilitation enclosure. This enclosure, the first of 10 such enclosures, will ultimately allow for up to 400 tortoise to enter into the rehabilitation programme annually. The highlight of the year was participating in the first release of 14 Eastern and Natal Hinged tortoise in Zululand. Continued radio monitoring of the released animals will monitor animal survivability and inform rehabilitation protocols.






## Community Based Conservation: A Rocha Action Teams.


A Rocha Action Teams are local teams of Christians who care for creation as an act of worship and obedience. Action Teams involve themselves with local expressions of creation care through practical environmental projects within their own community. These volunteer groups are currently active in KwaZulu-Natal (East Griqualand and Pietermaritzburg), Gauteng (predominantly Johannesburg) and the Western Cape (Cape Town region).







During 2021, Action Team events included a birding outing to Marivale Bird Sanctuary and Melville Koppies Nature Reserve; invasive vegetation clearing and tree planting at Ferncliffe Nature Reserve; ‘church in creation’ events in East Griqualand; river and beach cleanups (KZN and the Western Cape) and ongoing rehabilitation of a section of the Kuils River in the Western Cape.



A Rocha Action teams bring together people from across denominational lines to work together in caring for God's creation.



## Youth in Conservation A Rocha EcoYouth

A Rocha EcoYouth are A Rocha SA affiliated independent groups of Christian young people answering the call to care for creation and engaging their considerable energy to do so. A Rocha EcoYouth Groups consist of the 'Strandloopers' EcoYouth (Overberg region, Western Cape) and 'Footsteps to Good Hope' EcoYouth (Belville, Western Cape).





With programmes ranging from hands on environmental education, river and beach cleanups and longer term land rehabilitation projects, A Rocha EcoYouth make a positive contribution to the lives of young people and the places in which they live. During 2021, more than 250 youth participated in 5 river and beach cleanup projects in the Western Cape.





## **A Rocha Partner Organisation** **Phillipskop Mountain Reserve**

Phillipskop Mountain Reserve, near Stanford in the Western Cape, became a Partner Organisation of A Rocha South Africa during 2020. The 246 hectare reserve is owned and managed by Chris and Anna Whitehouse, who are committed to running the reserve as a conservation area.





Phillipskop's conservation achievements included:

- Increased total flora species count to 865 native species.
- Published a monograph on *Cliffortia*, one of the fynbos's large genera.
- Conducted an invasive plant clearing programme, resulting in the clearing of 8 hectares (ha's) of established Port Jackson Willow, 11 ha's of *Hakea*, and the removal of 100,000 Port Jackson seedlings from a 13 ha burn area.



A Rocha Partner Organisations (APO's) share A Rocha SA's ethos of caring for God's creation and commit themselves to achieve measurable goals in biodiversity conservation, stewardship of natural habitats and sustainable living. Partners are encouraged to set annual conservation targets, measure their progress and celebrate conservation achievements.







## Special Relationships

### Kuzuko A Rocha Memorial Bird Hide

The year saw the celebration of the first anniversary of the opening of the Kuzuko A Rocha Memorial Bird Hide. Situated at the Kuzuko Lodge, Greater Addo Area, Eastern Cape, the hide has wracked up a bird list of over 50 species in its first year. In addition to excellent bird photography opportunities, the hide provides a most tranquil environment to sit, watch and relax. During 2021, Kuzuko Lodge hosted two bird ringing (banding) events and an informative presentation on the importance of bird ringing by Dr Mark Brown (A Rocha Board of Reference). A team from Kuzuko also participated in the inaugural John Stott Memorial Birding day, contributing a count of over 130 species identified on the Kuzuko Reserve alone. A Rocha SA appreciates the special relationship we have with the Kuzuko Lodge and Kuzuko Foundation and look forward to future endeavors for the good of people and place.



**KUZUKO FOUNDATION**  
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION • SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION







## Church and Community

As churches begin to emerge from the Covid pandemic, increasing opportunity has allowed A Rocha SA to engage with the local church on numerous levels. This has ranged from creation care themed mens' breakfasts, creation care workshops for the African Enterprise Foxfire Team, engagements with pastors and church leaders in Gauteng and radio interviews on regional and national Christian radio stations.



Uniquely operating as a biodiversity conservation organisation within the Christian tradition, A Rocha South Africa is strategically equipped to engage with South Africa's largest religious grouping in matters of environmental care and biodiversity conservation.



## Governance

Despite the tumultuous year of Covid uncertainty and the political unrest that has gripped our nation, the Board of Trustees of A Rocha South Africa, continue to exert a stable and positive influence over the governance of our national organisation. This has ensured that, despite the challenges faced, A Rocha SA ended 2021 in a stronger and more stable position. The very positive trend of steady progress within the organisation is in no small part due to the consistency and leadership of our Board of Trustees. During 2021 we celebrated with Christine and Garth on the birth of their first son, Dominic Myles Cuenod, and pray that he will bring his parents a lifetime



**Christine Cuenod**

KZN Action Team &  
Board Secretary



**David Gertzen**

Chairperson & Gauteng  
Action Team



**Godfrey Harris**

Treasurer



**James Irlam**

Western Cape Action  
Team



**Martin de Wit**

Western Cape Action  
Team, Governance &  
EcoYouth



**Sydney Saayman**

East Griqualand Action  
Team & Global Church  
and Theology



of joy. We're also thankful for the service provided by James Irlam who stepped down as Trustee during the year in order to focus on completing his PhD thesis. James has been a valuable member of the A Rocha Board since 2017 during which time he oversaw the Cape Town A Rocha Action Team. We wish James all the best and pray for great resilience as he focuses on his studies. A Rocha SA remains appreciative of the time, effort and energy each member of the board of trustees gives to ensure the continued good governance of A Rocha South Africa.





## Acknowledgements

**Melanie Rood** has continued to serve A Rocha SA in her part time capacity covering administration, finance and communications. Despite suffering numerous personal losses due to the Covid pandemic, she has soldiered on admirably and for this A Rocha SA is highly appreciative. As we end 2021, Melanie has indicated her desire to step down as A Rocha administrator taking effect mid 2022. Her departure will leave a hole in the A Rocha team, especially as she is one of the longest standing members of the A Rocha team, having served as a Trustee prior to her employ with A Rocha SA.



**Estelle Home** has joined the A Rocha SA team as our volunteer web designer. Her involvement has included close working with the A Rocha International communications team on the development of updated branding guidelines and the adoption of a new website platform. The fruit of Estelle's labour will be evident during 2022 when the new A Rocha SA website goes live.





As a Non Profit Organisation reliant on donor funding from individuals and organisations, A Rocha SA places a high priority on good financial management and financial transparency. To this end our financial team of **Carl and Tori Neilson, Joshua Bean, Godfrey Harris** (A Rocha Treasurer) and **Melanie Rood** (A Rocha Administrator) ensure our finances are kept in good order. A special word of thanks goes to Carl, Tori and Josh who serve faithfully and effectively in a voluntary role. Starting in 2022, we welcome **Tanya Morton** on to the team as A Rocha bookkeeper and look forward to her streamlining our financial processes.

A Rocha SA welcomed **Mariska de Wit** to KwaZulu-Natal as our first short-term A Rocha volunteer. During her three week commitment Mariska recorded, edited and published video material, organised and ran a Bioblitz, got to visit and understand the goals of the Tortoise Project and enjoyed exploring some of KZN's attractions.





# Income Statement 2021

## A Rocha South Africa

### Detailed Income Statement for the year ended 31 December 2021

	2021 R	2020 R
<b>Revenue</b>	<b>185,684</b>	<b>137,212</b>
Book sales	1,100	1,090
General donations	98,393	93,129
Membership income	4,900	7,150
National director contributions	74,051	31,543
Restricted donations	7,240	4,300
<b>Other income</b>		
Interest income	9,090	15,002
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>194,774</b>	<b>152,214</b>
<b>Operating expenses</b>	<b>( 322 659)</b>	<b>( 206 853)</b>
ARI Global Service Fee	3,329	1,744
Audit fees	17,250	17,036
Bank charges	3,159	2,316
Computer expenses	-	993
Consulting fees	98,890	98,989
Depreciation	-	1,616
Donations paid	-	6,000
Event costs	-	200
Honoraria	-	519
Meeting costs	12,968	3,915
Printing and stationery	-	254
Publicity costs	21,630	3,280
Rent	11,000	12,000
Salaries and wages	151,759	55,122
Subscriptions	2,674	2,869
<b>Net loss for the period</b>	<b>( 127 885)</b>	<b>( 54 639)</b>

Audited annual financial statements in compliance with the Non-Profit Organisation Act 1997, independently audited by Savunde Accountants / AhvRJ.

Full report available from [info@arocha.org.za](mailto:info@arocha.org.za)



A Rocha SA would like to acknowledge the following organisations which have assisted us in various ways during 2021.

We are thankful for the part they have played in helping us further our work.



**Bank:**  
**Account holder:**  
**Account number:**  
**Branch:**  
**Universal branch code:**  
**International Swift code:**

First National Bank  
A Rocha South Africa NPO  
62918100380  
Midlands Mall  
250655  
FIRNZAJJ



## Connect With Us



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<https://www.arocha.org.za>  
<https://www.arocha.org/en/a-rocha-south-africa/>



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Snap here to pay



PROUD MEMBER



THE VOICE OF BUSINESS

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& MIDLANDS  
**CHAMBER  
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