

Conservation at the Local Level

Anna Merz, FPS Consultant in Ghana, writes:

The Nkabin hills are a group of six small granite outcrops between 1000 and 1310 feet high, covering about 1150 acres in a heavily farmed area only seven miles north of Kumasi, the capital of Ashanti. They are beautiful and especially interesting in that they are one of the very few places near Kumasi with a small viable wildlife population that is easy to observe. My husband and I have paid regular visits to these hills since 1968, and usually see sizeable parties of black and white colobus and mona monkeys. These are easy to watch as they move below in the thick, untouched forest in the narrow valleys between the hills. There are bushbuck, black duiker and red flank duiker, and many species of birds, particularly in the dry season from November to April.

The land is Ashanti Traditional Land, which is held by four Odikros and two Wing Chiefs under the Asantehene who is the consenting party. Hitherto the fact that the top of the highest hill in the group is of religious importance to the nearby villages has led indirectly to the protection of the animals. However, with the huge population growth plus the breakdown of traditional customs it becomes more difficult to rely upon the area's sanctity for its protection.

We have found it possible, by compensating the local chiefs, to make agreements with them not to extend their farms into the hills and to prevent hunting within their boundaries. The Department of Game and Wildlife, which have shown great interest in the hills, have given us their support, and intend to make the inner 452 acres a game sanctuary. The Asantehene who is also a founder and life member of the Ghana Wildlife Society, has given the full weight of his authority to the area's protection, and has proposed that the Nkabin Hills should be named as a wildlife sanctuary in memory of his predecessor Nana, Sir Osei Agyeman Prempeh II.

International Zoo Yearbook

The small section devoted to conservation in the 1975 *International Zoo Yearbook*, Vol. 15, edited by Nicole Duplaix-Hall (Zoological Society of London, £11.00, US \$27.50; paperback, £8.00, \$20.00), includes an account of the Tijuca Bank of lion marmosets in Brazil by Magnanini, Coimbra-Filho, Mittermeier and Aldright. Twenty-eight animals of the three highly endangered lion marmoset subspecies are held in the Bank: *Leontopithecus r. rosalia* the goldenlion (16), *L. r. chrysomelas* the golden-headed (6), and *L. r. chrysopygus* the golden-rumped (6). The golden-rumped was rediscovered by Coimbra-Filho in 1970 after being believed extinct since 1905, and was at first thought to be fairly safe where it was found, but after some local farmers had experimented with defoliant on a windy day, completely defoliating part of the marmoset's range in the State Forest (and possibly killing some), six were taken to the Bank. The plan for a reserve for these marmosets submitted to the Government in 1971, has still not been approved. Without it, say the authors, the marmosets will, like Père David's deer, survive only in captivity. The reference section of the Yearbook includes the useful census of rare animals in captivity, designed to help zoos, among other things, 'to draw up a co-ordinated international breeding policy': one zoo with a single male, for example, and another with a single female can arrange inter-zoo matings. Information on how many zoos have done this would be valuable.