

Project Update: September 2000

The hillside still changes with the seasons, bare and brown in dry times, green and flower-filled in the rains. Some of the road reserve has been fenced as two plots, and planted with trees. A motor industry group has leased part of the site (mainly a recent quarry, potential location for a nature centre), to demonstrate safe off-road driving. Part of their brief is to teach respect for the land on which they drive. They have undertaken to keep vehicles away from seasonal pools and rare plants, and built a barrier to stop casual access by other vehicles, thus protecting the most fragile areas. Different approaches are being tried to secure the site for conservation. The owners have said the land is available for sale or exchange. A proposal for purchase of the land and establishment of a nature centre and educational programme is being drafted. The National Museums of Kenya and Nature Kenya – a membership Society founded in 1909 – have also requested the Government of Kenya to consider exchanging other land for this site of biodiversity importance.

Meanwhile, I am working with the Bird Committee of Nature Kenya to produce bird checklists for other 'green' sites in Nairobi. Nature Kenya, the Ngong Forest Sanctuary Trust, two tour companies and three hotels are cooperating to offer bird-watching walks in Ngong Road Forest for tourists and visitors. The checklist of the common birds of the National Museums grounds in Nairobi will be in both English and Swahili.