

Mainichi Daily N

Wednesday, August 15, 1990

Published In Tokyo And Osaka

Terrorized Monkeys Driven To Baldness

SAKAI, Osaka — Stress has driven 50 rhesus monkeys to baldness according to authorities at Ohama Municipal Park.

The monkeys have been terrorized by pranksters shooting at them with air guns and throwing firecrackers into their open enclosure.

Three baby monkeys have lost almost all of the hair on their bodies and most of the other monkeys show varying degrees of hair loss, according to the monkeys' keepers. The seaside park has a 110-year history, and is visited by 300,000 people annually.

The monkeys' stressful conditions have worsened particularly during the past one to two years as a number of youths shooting at them with air guns and throwing firecrackers at

them has increased.

To remedy the situation, the municipal authorities are now considering erecting a high wire fence around the enclosure. The present "monkey island," used for keeping monkeys since it was built in 1937, consists of a 500 square meter manmade hill surrounded by a moat, with a 1-meter-high concrete wall.

Yasuaki Sakakibara, a veterinarian from the Tennoji Zoo in Osaka, who examined the Taiwanese rhesus monkeys, said that fear and stress from the explosive sounds must be the cause of their maladies.

"Monkeys are prone to building up stress and becoming neurotic because of their high intellectual levels. They are also inclined to pull out their own hair when frustrated."