

Cruelty to animals reflects demented state of modern society

MARU/CHI 84

Mainichi Shimbun

The plight of the pitiful duck with an arrow in its back focuses attention on what has become a national problem — cruelty to animals.

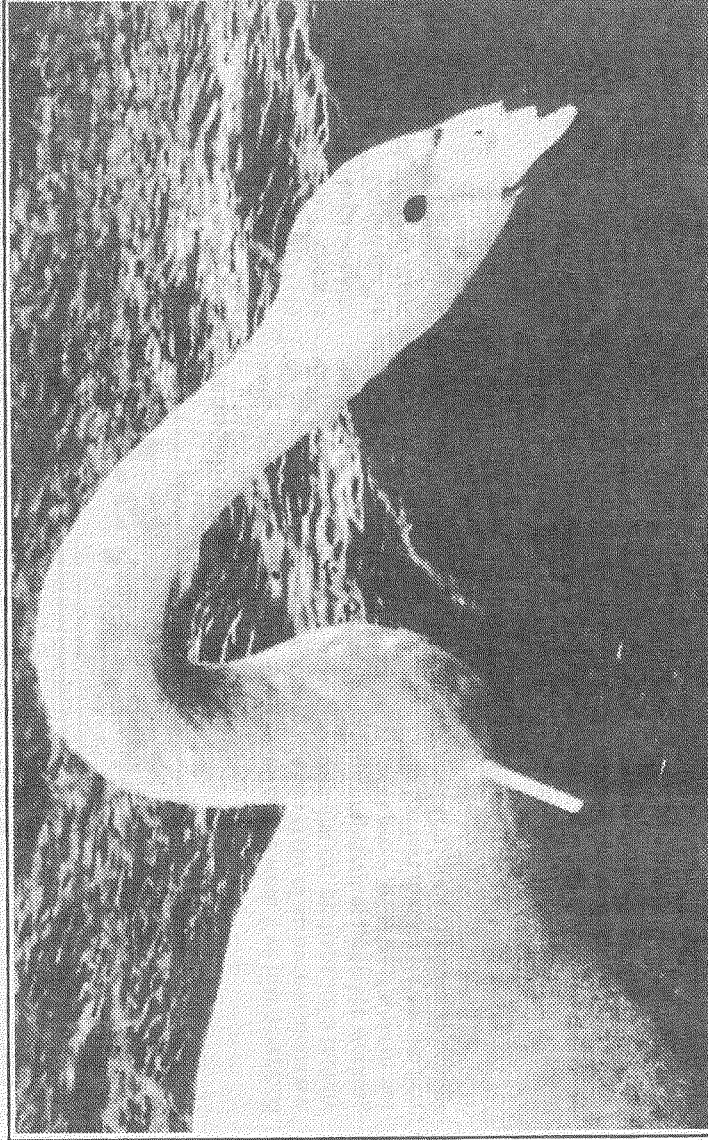
Pigeons have had their legs severed, rabbits have been buried alive, and kittens have been thrown to polar bears for the amusement of a growing number of demented individuals.

The numerous injuries that have been inflicted on animals may be a reflection of the mentality of modern society, according to experts.

Kimiko Ono said that about 3,000 ducks flock to the Shakuji River each year, but so far three have been killed by arrows, casting a shadow over their urban haven.

Ono, 51, is the proprietor of a bakery in Kita-ku, Tokyo, who has been feeding the ducks on the Shakuji River twice a day for 10 years. She gives them bread crumbs.

The pintail duck that has become the focus of evening news programs was first spotted on the



A swan spotted recently on the Mogami River in Sakata City, Akita Prefecture, with a rod piercing its neck.

Shakuji River. Someone had shot the duck with an arrow from a bow gun.

Concerned officials from Ueno Zoo began a rescue effort on Feb.

1, but were not able to capture the wounded duck until Feb. 12.

"The ducks are terrified and don't eat as much food. Spring is almost upon us, and they'll have

to return to faraway Siberia. How will they fare without the right amount of nutrition?" asked Ono.

Susumu Oda, a professor of

mental hygiene at Tsukuba University, said he believes the incident is a manifestation of today's social ills.

"Animals have been tormented and ill-treated for a long time. However, this particular incident is abnormal because it was not an attempt to hunt a game bird. The person merely wanted to satisfy his desire to injure the bird," said Oda.

Oda noted that a man recently arrested for the serial kidnappings of small girls had tortured cats when he was a child.

"Basically, the failure to distinguish between good and evil, and the failure to show feelings of kindness toward strangers form the backdrop for cruelty toward animals. People who torture animals in their childhood generally step up their degree of cruelty as they grow up," said Oda.

Nobuyoshi Hirai, a professor emeritus at Otsuma Women's University and an expert in child psychiatry, said that the mistreatment of animals can be blamed on faulty home education.

"If parents exhibit love for their children while raising them,