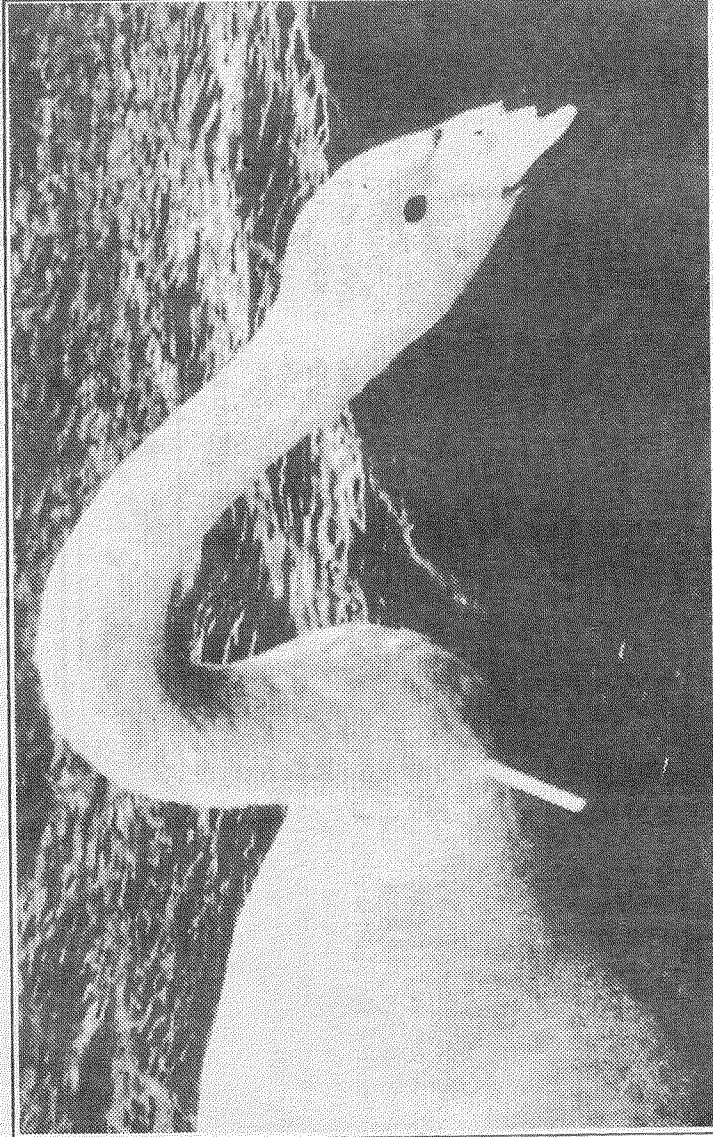


animals reflects demented state of modern society

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

Shakujii 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,

their children's emotional development will proceed normally. However, if they fail to exhibit love, their children will grow up unable to establish smooth human relationships," said Hirai.

The situation is made all that much worse because of poor housing environments, which prevent many families from owning pets.

"The current fuss is only the tip of the iceberg. There are many animals suffering away from the public eye," noted Mitsuko Masui, the director of Ueno Zoo.

For example, the fishing lines and hooks casually thrown into rivers and the sea by fishermen injure or kill countless pigeons, ducks, snipes and plovers.

Other cases

● In June 1989, the owner of a parking lot in Kawasaki was charged with violating the Protection and Keeping of Animals Law by cutting off one of the legs of a stray cat with a pair of garden shears.

● In July 1989, the headmaster of a elementary school in Nejime

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