

# Call of the Wild

There are studies and plans and infinite good intentions about the Central Park and Prospect Park and other city zoos, but in the meantime the animals sicken and die without proper veterinarian facilities under archaic conditions of imprisonment that bear no resemblance to their natural habitats.

According to Parks Administrator Edwin Weisl, rehabilitation of municipal zoos is under way, but there is little visible result. Brutal attacks on penned animals by sadistic visitors to the zoo; protests of outraged keepers and a high death rate among the inmates have spotlighted the inadequacy and even the cruelty of existing conditions.

These outdated zoos should either be eliminated or totally redesigned for small native or domestic animals in a suitable and humane setting. The city is well aware of the need and is trying to do something about it. But redesign and reconstruction take money, which New York doesn't have, and speed, which the city also notoriously lacks.

It would be far better if an experienced private group took over the zoos for the city, using municipal and other funds; in fact, such action in the form of transfer and gifts may be the only practical solution. Much that is inappropriate and inhumane could be phased out. Suitable, localized borough exhibits of small animals and animal behavior could be substituted.

But immediate action is required. Behind the gay balloons and surface charm of New York's small zoos are cages and conditions that have no right to exist. Cruelty to animals should not be municipal policy or public entertainment.