

*I'd walk a mile...*

*...for a goose*



Above: A Canadian goose tries, unsuccessfully, to scare away two grazing camels.

### *'Man is the only animal that blushes, or needs to'* —MARK TWAIN

The peacocks are strutting about with the squirrels, showing off their fan-tails. The sea lions are huddling under a rock while workers feverishly put the finishing touches on the new marine mammal exhibit.

Groups of excited children growl at the tigers, and the tigers obediently growl back.

The snakes slither, a bear lounges on a rock, and the geese just wander all over the place.

It's springtime at the Detroit Zoo. The birds are squawking, the grass is coming out of hibernation and the wolverines are waiting for peanuts.

In the birdhouse, where some of the birds are free to roam through a tropical walk-through aviary, the pink flamingos huddle on their stilt-like legs near a small pool. In the next room, two parrots preen each other in a feathery version of the rites of spring.

Much of the ground is still muddy and what you can see depends on the fickle nature of the weather this time of year. But the summer's crowds are

nowhere in sight and the animals — some of them, anyway — take strolls around the grounds.

A pair of geese boldly compete for food with the camels and a king cobra snaps to attention when a child shouts.

"There's always a nice day where a crowd comes out," says zoo Superintendent Floyd Lodge. "That might surprise 'em. But they don't seem to react much differently."

Daily attendance at the zoo this time of year varies, "strictly depending on the weather," according to Lodge, from only a few hundred in the rain to maybe 3,000 in the sun. A nice day in July easily draws over 8,000.

With the lack of crowds, you can hang out with the emu as long as your heart desires; no one will get in your way. You can try striking up a conversation with a macaw; no one will think you're feather-brained. Or you can just sit down and have a picnic amid the peacocks.

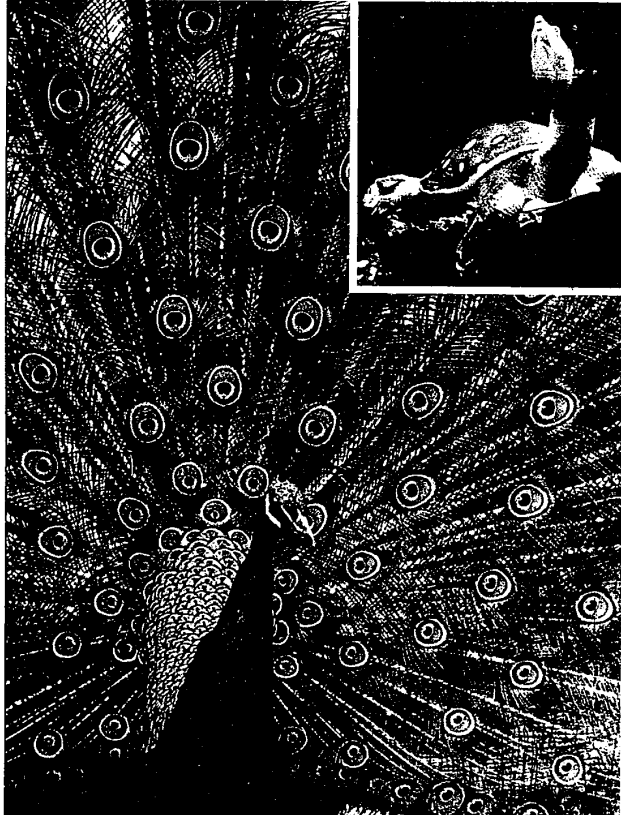
Zoo hours these days are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday. Ad-



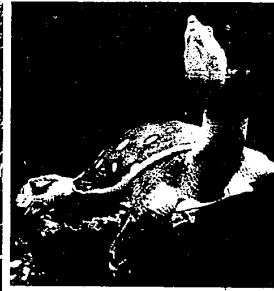
A tiger peers through his bars.

mission is \$2 for people 13 and older, 75 cents for 6-to-12-year-olds, and free for children under 5. Parking in the zoo lot, on 10 Mile Road a block west of Woodward, costs \$2.

Staff photos by Dick Kelley



Above: A peacock spreads his colorful tail in the wind. Inset: A soft-shelled turtle pops his head up for some air.



Above: A king cobra.



Above: A Formosan deer.



Above: The laid-back life style of a polar bear basking on a rock.