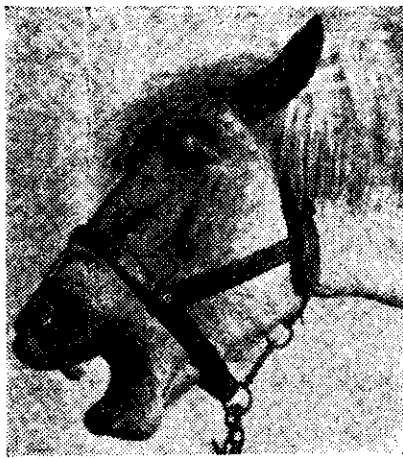




GOAT



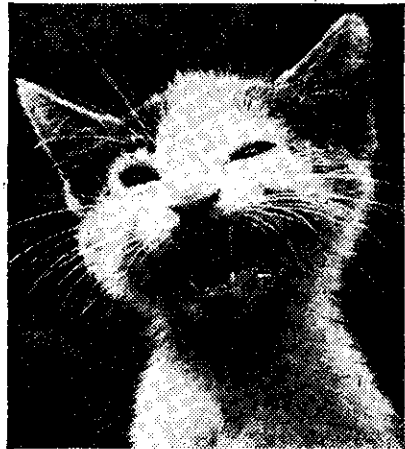
HORSE



BABOON



CRESTED DUCK



KITTEN



HIPPOPOTAMUS

## A BIG DAY FOR THE ANIMALS

*EACH year October 4 is celebrated by animal lovers throughout the world as World Day for Animals. The annual celebrations were first inaugurated in 1928, and despite difficulties caused by the depression and the second world war, encouraging progress has been made in the campaign for promoting animal welfare. This particular date was chosen by men and women the world over because October 4 is dedicated to St. Francis of Assisi. In New Zealand, the period of celebration has for some years been extended to one week. This year "The Listener's" thoughts turned to the wild animals in captivity, so we sent a representative to make some inquiries from the curator of the Wellington Zoo. One question we omitted to ask was whether animals have a sense of humour—but our illustrations, for which we are indebted to the "New York Times Magazine," rather suggest that they have.*

**T**RADITION has it that when an elephant dies he treks alone to some dim inaccessible part of the country and there lies down to die on the bleached bones and gleaming ivories of his ancestors. If you should be lucky enough to find this sacred place you would become fabulously wealthy, so ran the travellers' tales. But it is very probable that the only foundation of truth in this legend is the fact that all animals possess the instinct to crawl away and die in obscurity. It would be only natural, as the centuries went by, that elephants should die on ground already holding the bones of elephants, but this coincidence can be traced not to an urging for an ancestral burying-ground, but simply to the fulfilment of the instinct for death in obscurity.

Legends about animals die hard, but the instincts of animals die harder still. Even the most domesticated cat treads round in a circle before it sits down, instinctively pushing down the undergrowth which clogged the path of its ancestors. But what happens to animals in captivity? Can they still manage to live normally, even though most of their instincts are curtailed? Or do they develop a new intelligence which over-rides their instincts? To find the answer to such questions as these, we visited the curator of the Wellington Zoo and the veterinary surgeon who attended Nellikutha the elephant, and in Nelli we found part of our answer. Nelli had died of intestinal ulcers after an illness of a fortnight, in which time she had received the most careful attention which keepers and veterinary surgeon could give her. Now it is the natural instinct for animals to struggle for preservation against man's interference at all costs.

But the veterinary surgeon said, "Nelli was the most gentle big animal I have ever treated in my life. She was helpful and understanding. She looked at me when I came in and observed all my actions, as though she knew what I was doing. I could tickle her tongue without her showing any agitation."

### An Elephant Sometimes Forgets

The elephant could not be allowed to lie too long on one side during her illness because her great weight retarded her circulation. Three times she was hoisted by block and tackle and turned over.

"That was the most nerve-wracking time," continued the veterinary surgeon, "seeing her hanging suspended in the air. But still she didn't fight. Her intelligence was such that she knew and appreciated what we were doing." Now that was in contradiction to every instinct, for the sick animal in the jungle must fight for recovery alone. Even his companions of herd or pack turn against him. He is a danger to the community, therefore they kill him, or drive him forth from their midst. The wild animal trusts nobody. Yet in captivity he quickly learns, through kindness, to submit to any amount of handling.

"On Sunday Nelli became sick," the veterinary surgeon was finishing. "On Tuesday, a week later, she dropped her head, rolled her eyes and died peacefully. And every one of us, and particularly her keeper, who had stayed with her day and night since she became ill, grieved to lose such a lovable animal."

### Coats, Colours and Bumps

But we were still interested to know how else animals were affected by captivity, and the curator supplied us with some of the answers. The greatest difference between wild animals and zoo