



Recovery Review

Every wild life matters

Quarterly Bulletin of the Alberta Institute for Wildlife Conservation

Vol. 24 / Issue 3 / Summer 2017

What to do if you find a baby animal

By J. Dooley

Each summer AIWC admits baby animals who have been needlessly separated from their parents and their home in the wild by well-meaning members of the public. What many people don't know is that it is normal, in many cases, for baby birds and mammals to be left alone while their parents are out looking for food.

In most cases, mom and dad in the wild know best how to care for and raise their offspring – and they are the best equipped to do so! Usually, these young animals have a much higher chance of survival without human interference.

Of course, if you see any wildlife of any age with obvious injuries, please call us for help!

Baby Birds

First, ask yourself if the baby has feathers. If the answer is 'yes', leave them there. At this stage, they are a fledgling and it is normal for them to be on the ground; this is how they practice flying, and mom and dad are probably nearby, bringing them food regularly.

If the baby has no feathers (is "fluffy" or "naked") and is a song bird or bird of prey, they are a nestling and should not be on the ground. Look around for the nest, and if you find it, place the baby into the nest and watch for 15-20 minutes to see if the parents come back. Don't worry, they won't be scared off by your "scent" – that's a myth! If you can't find the nest, please call us for help.

If the baby has no feathers and is a duck or a goose, look to see if the family is nearby. If they are, place the baby near the mother and wait to see if she accepts them. If the family does not claim the baby within 45 minutes, or if you can't find them, call us for help!

If you find a baby bird that has been attacked by a cat call us for help even if they appear to be uninjured, as a cat's saliva has bacteria in it that can be fatal to animals.

Hares

Baby hares (jackrabbits) are born without scent so that their mothers can safely leave them alone for a number of hours while they are out foraging food. It is not unusual to find these animals on their own throughout the day – in fact, it is perfectly normal!

If you find a baby hare in a window well, on a roadway, or another dangerous place, move them to a safe place nearby. Don't worry, their mothers won't reject them if you've touched them.

If you find a baby hare that has been attacked by a cat (even if they appear uninjured) call us for help; a cat's saliva has bacteria that can be fatal to other animals.



Juvenile black-billed magpies



Canada goose goslings



Juvenile white-tailed prairie hare

Continued on Page 3...



Box 68, Madden, AB T0M 1L0
(403) 946-2361
info@aiwc.ca
www.aiwc.ca

Update from the Executive Director

By H. Duvall, Executive Director

Did you know that it takes six months for us to prepare for our peak seasons of animal admissions and care?

Our peak season spans from May to August, where we can admit up to 30 new patients in a single day. Preparation for this busy time includes: ordering specialized formula for orphaned babies, hiring summer students and interns, training new volunteers and staff, repairs and maintenance at our facility, and updating patient treatment and husbandry protocols.

This year we had a small reprieve from the early baby boom we experienced last year and started admitting wildlife babies at the typical "normal" time we expect: mid-May.

So far in 2017, we have already admitted over 1,000 injured and orphaned animals. Some of our patients include a North American porcupine, American mink, pine siskin, northern pygmy owl, mallard, and tree swallows.

Our dedicated staff, volunteers, supporters, and donors are crucial to the successful operations of AIWC. Without our small but mighty team, we would not be able to realize AIWC's vision and mission: every wild life matters.

One such devoted supporter and volunteer was Heather MacEwan Foran. Heather spent more than a decade volunteering with AIWC directly in our wildlife hospital, and she continued to be a dear friend and supporter of AIWC long afterwards. We are deeply saddened by Heather's passing and our sincere condolences go out to Heather's family and friends. You were one of a kind, Heather. Thank you for your tireless work to aid wildlife.

We are constantly humbled by the determination and support of everyone involved in AIWC's operations. Your support continues to help injured and orphaned wildlife, 95% of whom are admitted due to human-related activities. Thank you for your time, your contributions, and your passion. We could not help injured and orphaned wildlife without you.

Sincerely,

Holly Duvall, Executive Director



VISION:

Every wild life matters.

MISSION:

AIWC is committed to the rescue, rehabilitation, and release of injured and orphaned wildlife. We provide expert advice and education that fosters an appreciation of wildlife.

Volume 24 / Issue 3 / Summer 2017

What To Do - Finding Baby Animals:	1,3
Education Update:	4
Red Fox Pups:	5
Halloween Owler:	6
Rare Patient Alert:	7
AIWC's Upcoming Talks:	7
Myth Busting:	8

EDITORS: J. Kaiser, A. Wingenbach

DESIGNER: D. Cresswell

PRINT: Little Rock Printing

CONTRIBUTORS:

J. Cooke, J. Dooley, H. Duvall,

K. Jansen, J. Kaiser, J. Kozak

PHOTOS:

AIWC

Submissions/comments may be sent to the above address or emailed to jennifer.kaiser@aiwc.ca

What to do if you find a baby animal (continued)

Skunks

AIWC has admitted nearly 80 skunk kits for care this summer, mostly because their mother was trapped and relocated or killed, leaving the babies orphaned. Call us for help and advice when:

- You find a litter of baby skunks and mom does not return within a couple of hours. Be sure to count how many there are so we can keep track of them!
- You find a baby skunk during the day with no family nearby. This would be very unusual, since skunks are primarily nocturnal.

As baby skunks get older, they may start to venture out of the den, so it is important not to kidnap them, and not to relocate any adult skunks during the spring/summer months, which can orphan their babies.

Do not attempt to handle skunks yourself. It is a myth that a mother will not accept a baby that has human scent, but baby skunks can bite and there is a possibility they could be carrying rabies.

Did you know: Skunks can spray as early as 3 months old, but it can take up to 10 days to replenish their scent, so they only use it as a last resort.

Fawns

Like hares, deer fawns are born without scent and left alone by their mothers during the day. She returns several times per day to feed them, and then leaves again so she does not attract predators to their location.

If you find a deceased adult deer with babies nearby, call us for help.

Porcupines

Porcupines usually only have one baby per litter and they don't generally stray far from mom. If you see a baby porcupine all alone and the mother doesn't return within an hour, call us for help!

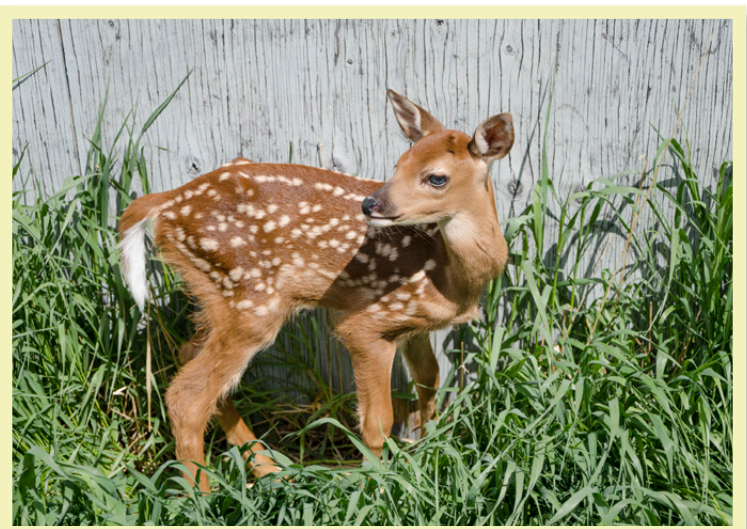
Squirrels

Squirrels can have up to five babies per litter, and if you find one alone it is often because mom is in the process of moving her pups. Mother squirrels also often leave the nest unattended while they are out foraging for food. If mom doesn't return for her baby in a couple of hours, call us for instructions.

If you find injured baby squirrels or if they have fleas, fly eggs/larvae, or have been attacked by a cat, call us for help and advice.



Tiny skunk kit being fed



White-tailed deer fawn in outdoor enclosure



Education Update: Education Sessions with the Junior Forest Wardens

By K. Jansen, Education and Community Engagement Coordinator

While most of our education programs are conducted within a school, community centre, or other building, the workshops requested by the Junior Forest Wardens required a slightly more... *natural* setting.

During this year's Junior Forest Warden National Campout in Blood Indian Park, AIWC ran several different sessions for the Wardens, aged 6 to adult. Because Blood Indian Park is a low-service area, the sessions had to be designed to be low-tech, portable, and, most importantly, outdoor-friendly! All of the AIWC sessions took place in the instructor's campsite, with a canopy providing some much needed shade during the 30+°C days.



Blood Indian Park is in a beautiful location, with a thriving wetland and surrounding grasslands that provided excellent birding opportunities. Owing to the great wildlife-viewing possibilities, it was also the perfect spot to conduct our Wildlife Biology Workshop. This session focused on illuminating some of the many ways that wildlife biologists study animals in the field, including transects, track identification, mark-recapture studies, and more. Participants were also led on a short walk to put some of their newfound skills to the test, and were able to identify the tracks of several animals, as well as some animal scat.



One of the most entertaining workshops (from the instructor's perspective, anyway) were the "Call of the Wild" sessions, which introduced participants to the methodology of learning bird, mammal, and amphibian calls. As any experienced wildlife enthusiast knows, learning calls can be a challenging and time-consuming process; however, one of the best ways to help cement a call in your mind is to attempt to imitate it yourself! Imagine a group of mostly adult campers imitating the call of an American bittern, and you will understand why AIWC had so much fun during this session!

While AIWC has many excellent pre-made programs, we are also happy to customize new programs and workshops based on your group's needs. If you are interested in booking an AIWC Education Program for a classroom, birthday party, or other group event, please give us a call at (403) 946-2361, or email us at education@aiwc.ca.



Red Fox Pups Flourishing in AIWC Care

By J. Cooke

Three baby red foxes (kits or pups, as they are known) are doing well after being admitted at the beginning of May as newborns just days apart.



Two of the kits had been dragged out of their den by a domestic dog. The third kit was admitted after a member of the public found the lone fox in her yard.

The foxes' weight has risen from 650 grams to 2.9 kilograms on a diet of protein such as quail, mice, eggs, and smelts, interspersed with fruit such as blueberries. When fully

grown, male foxes may weigh up to 10 kilograms.

These adaptable members of the canine family are solitary hunters whose diet consists mostly of small mammals, including voles, mice, and squirrels, which they supplement with a wide variety of seasonal foods such as plants. In the wild, the kits would typically be weaned once they are about one month old, and the parents would begin bringing back small game for them to play with, so they can learn how to eat and eventually how to hunt for themselves.

The fox kits at AIWC are wary of people (a good thing!) but have become attached to one another. For these three, it is the AIWC staff and volunteers who bring them their meals, while our patients watch, hidden in the long grasses of their outdoor enclosure.

Foxes are the most widespread canine species in the world. They are

found in all provinces and territories of Canada, and they can survive just about anywhere – from the countryside to urban environments. They are also the only type of dog capable of partially retracting their claws like cats do! They also have vertical pupils, another cat-like feature that allows them to see at night.

The fox pups at AIWC are scheduled for release in the fall, giving them time to adapt to the wild before winter arrives.



Follow AIWC online!

Like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter (@AIWC) and Instagram (@albertawildlife)!



AIWC Presents
our first ever

HALLOWEEN OWLER

Put on your costume
& join us for a
family fun event

- 👤 Treats
- 👤 Concession
- 👤 Face painting
- 👤 Bouncy house
- 👤 Halloween crafts
- 👤 Costume contest
- 👤 Educational activities
about animals in care at AIWC

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2017

11AM - 2PM | \$12/PERSON | \$40/FAMILY of 4+

Location: At AIWC, near Madden: 25244 Twp. Rd 282 | Map & directions at www.aiwc.ca

All proceeds support Alberta's injured and orphaned wildlife.



Want more AIWC articles?

Read our weekly blog!

Visit <http://www.aiwc.ca/news-and-events/blog/> to read more
about AIWC events and local wildlife news!



Rare Patient Alert: *Bushy-tailed Woodrat*

By J. Kaiser

This baby bushy-tailed woodrat (also known as a packrat) was admitted in early July after being found in a vehicle that had returned to Calgary after a trip to the mountains. Bushy-tailed woodrats are the only native rat found in Alberta, and although AIWC has cared for some adults in the past, this is the first baby we have admitted, and she sure has been the talk of the centre!

As a young baby, she is fed specialized formula every three hours, and will gradually be moved onto solid foods as she grows up. She will remain in our care until she is able to survive on her own, and then will be released back to a home in the Rockies.



Baby bushy-tailed woodrat snuggling in blankets



Baby bushy-tailed woodrat being bottle-fed

Join AIWC at our upcoming Talk & Tours!

Beautiful Bats

Sunday, September 24, 2017, 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Did you know that Alberta has not one, not two, but nine species of bats that call this province home? Join us for a one-hour presentation on Alberta's local bat species, including where they live, how they survive, and what you can do to help bats in your area.

Where: All of our Talk & Tours are at our centre, just outside of Madden, AB: 25244 Twp. Road 282.

Map and directions can be found on our website: aiwc.ca

Admission:

\$15.00/person for AIWC members \$20.00/person for non-members

These events fill up fast and registration is required, so be sure to book your spot today!

Register online: <http://www.aiwc.ca/news-and-events/upcoming-events/>

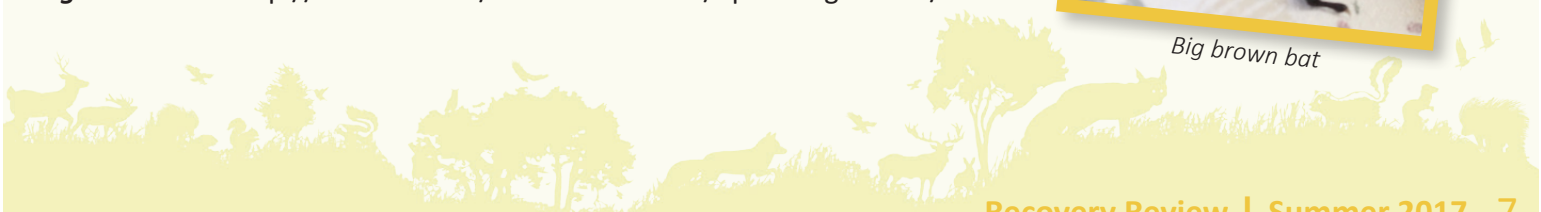
Sweet Slumber

Sunday, November 5, 2017, 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

AIWC's November Talk and Tour session focuses on the many different species of wildlife that choose to sleep through the winter. We will discuss what animals can hibernate, how they actually stay alive during hibernation, and what you can do to ensure that hibernating wildlife in your area remain asleep and undisturbed.



Big brown bat





Box 68, Madden, AB T0M 1L0
(403) 946-2361
info@aiwc.ca
www.aiwc.ca

AIWC MEMBERSHIPS

Buy Your Membership Today!

By purchasing an annual membership, you support local wildlife, conservation, and education at AIWC for a yearly fee of \$35 per person or \$45 for a family.

Your membership fee entitles you to:

- A mailed, paper copy of The Recovery Review, our quarterly newsletter;
- Our emailed ENews;
- Discount prices on AIWC merchandise;
- Discounts at local businesses; and
- The opportunity to participate at the AIWC Annual General Meeting.

There are four easy ways to purchase or renew your membership:

- Complete and mail in the membership section of the insert attached;
- Complete the secure online form at aiwc.ca;
- E-mail info@aiwc.ca; or
- Call 403-946-2361

WINTER HOURS

Effective September 1, AIWC will be back to winter hours; open every day from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. to admit wildlife in need of care.

For after-hours assistance, please refer to our website for more information:

www.aiwc.ca/wildlife-hospital/after-hours-assistance/

WILDLIFE HOTLINE: 403-946-2361

Myth Busting: Feeding Bread to Geese & Ducks

By J. Kozak

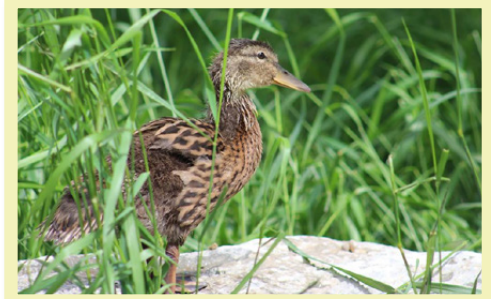
Many people seek out a waterfront or shore side as a place to relax, socialize, and play, and we share these spaces with many native species of shorebirds and waterfowl, including ducks, geese, and gulls.

Often, bread proves to be a successful luring-agent, bringing these animals within close range for interaction, and even, at times, leading to a common relationship where the birds regularly return to the area, knowing that they'll have easy access to food.

What could be wrong with that?

The natural diet of geese and ducks includes a wide range of nutritious, naturally-found food including plants and insects. Foraging is an essential skill, which becomes part of the natural process of a gosling or duckling maturing to adulthood. They naturally seek out food in a range of areas, providing an overall diverse diet, which meets their nutritional needs. Foraging also avoids potential spread of disease among bird populations, which can occur at over-crowded feeding sites.

Unfortunately, birds used to relying on humans and bread for food can lose these skills or be dependent upon one area for their meals. Some waterfowl can become so accustomed to feeding



Mallard duckling

sites they will go so far as to delay their migration, remaining in cold climates to their own detriment.

In addition, bread is not a good food source for wild birds. It is not part of their natural diet, and though it might fill them up, it does not contain the nutrients they need to survive, leaving them to suffer from malnutrition and possible starvation.

"Angel wing" can also be caused by feeding waterfowl a poor diet; it is a condition where the bird's wings unnaturally angle outwards from their body, and is suspected to be caused by a diet based in carbohydrates. Birds with angel wing are unable to fly, and therefore unable to migrate or easily escape predators.

In short: keep wildlife wild. Certainly go out and enjoy nature and our wildlife neighbours, but be sure to leave the breadcrumbs at home.

GO GREEN IN 2017!

Receive the Recovery Review straight to your inbox, saving paper and postage!

To add yourself to the email distribution list, please send an email to info@aiwc.ca

