

Patient Profile: Northern Flying Squirrels

By J. Kozak

It's not every day that a flying squirrel arrives at AIWC, let alone four of them!

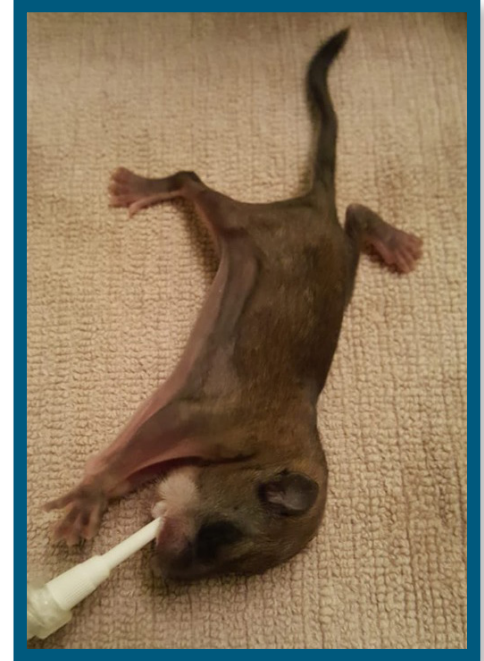
These four flying squirrel siblings were admitted in May after an arborist had accidentally disturbed their nest box. The arborist immediately put them back, but the mom failed to return to the location. That evening, with a severe thunderstorm rolling in and bad weather forecasted for the next several days, the decision was made to rescue the squirrels. They were two-week old orphans whose fur hadn't come in yet and their eyes were still closed. Upon admission to AIWC, they were placed on 24-hour care and fed specialized formula.

Since their arrival, their eyes have now opened, and they are getting solid foods such as blueberries, corn, lichen, fresh bark, and rodent blocks with their formula as they continue the weaning process. They also enjoy chewing on antlers as a calcium supplement. The squirrel siblings are moved to progressively larger enclosures as they continue to grow, where they can hide, play, run, and jump.

Despite the name of the species, northern flying squirrels do not actually possess the ability to soar through the open skies at will. They have furry membranes located between their wrists and ankles, known as patagia, that act as a form of parachute. This allows them to glide diagonally from tree to tree. Once they land on a tree, they climb up to jump and glide down to the next one. Their large, flat tails act as rudders, allowing for turns as much as 180 degrees while in the air.

If that's not remarkable enough, flying squirrels also have large, dark eyes that are specially adapted to provide sufficient night vision. They are nocturnal and are rarely seen outside of the hours between dusk and dawn. This species has many natural predators including owls and weasels. Domestic cats are considered an unnatural predator, and it's important that pet owners keep their cats indoors. This will go a long way in supporting our natural wildlife populations, including the often-unseen northern flying squirrel.

Once old enough, AIWC will release this family of squirrels back to the wild in a secluded, wooded area close to where they were originally rescued.



Northern flying squirrel baby being fed



Inquisitive northern flying squirrel patient



Northern flying squirrel pups practising their climbing skills

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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.

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Executive Director Update: Bear-y Exciting News!

By H. Lillie, Executive Director

Despite recent weather, this year's busy season started off with a boom towards the end of May! Already we have admitted 25% more patients than this time last year, received more calls to our Wildlife Hotline, and have reached over 1,700 individuals through our Wildlife Education Program. On June 12th, we admitted 33 new patients in that single day - our busiest day of 2019 so far!

Already this year AIWC has admitted species ranging from both red and Northern flying squirrels, downy woodpeckers, moose, white-tailed and mule deer, northern flickers, killdeer, and – very excitingly – an American black bear!

In 2018, we began evaluating what would be required for AIWC to rehabilitate black bear cubs under 12 months of age, which was once again a permissible species for rehabilitation in Alberta under the new Orphaned Black Bear Cub Rehabilitation Protocol that was released by Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) that same year.

After a year of evaluation and upgrades to our facility, we are happy to announce that AIWC is now permitted to rehabilitate injured and orphaned black bear cubs! We are committed to providing industry-leading care to all of our patients, and look forward to continuing work with Government of Alberta to ensure more wildlife get the help they need.

In May, we admitted our first black bear cub since receiving approval. Check out page 3 to find out more about the newest addition to our hospital.

Also earlier this year, the Board of Directors and myself created a new Strategic Plan to guide our operations, determining the goals of the organization and how we will prioritize our resources. This document will provide guidance to AIWC, its Board of Directors, management, employees and volunteers in pursuit of its vision and mission. If you would like a copy of our Strategic Plan, please email us at info@aiwc.ca or visit our website at aiwc.ca to view the digital file.

Thank you for your continued support of AIWC and Alberta's wildlife, it truly makes a difference to lives in need. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Holly Lillie

Executive Director



AIWC Admits First Black Bear Patient in Years

By J. Kaiser

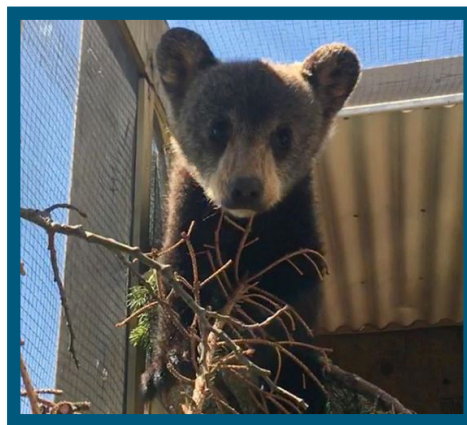
In 2018, the province of Alberta lifted a ban on the rehabilitation of black bear cubs that had been in place since 2010. Earlier this year and after a year of work and evaluation, AIWC obtained our permit to rehabilitate black bears under the new protocol (see page 2 for more info), and a week later we admitted our first black bear cub patient!

Found orphaned with no mother in sight she was transferred to AIWC for care in early June. Upon admission, she weighed just 3.6 kg (less than 8 pounds), and has a very healthy appetite, particularly favouring her species-specific milk formula and berries.

She will remain in AIWC's care until release in accordance with the provincial protocols. To sponsor her care directly, fill out and return the insert included with your newsletter or visit our online store at aiwc.shop. Thank you for your support of wildlife in need!



Black bear cub just after being admitted

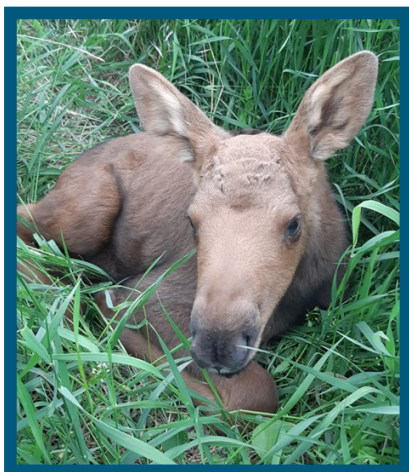


Black bear cub exploring outdoor enclosure

Sponsoring our bear patient, or any other current AIWC patient you see here or on social media, helps with the costs directly associated with their care and rehabilitation. As part of your sponsorship, you will receive a certificate, a glossy 8x10 photograph of your patient, and a tax receipt for the full amount of the sponsorship. Thank you for helping us to keep them forever wild!

Moose Calf on the Road to Recovery

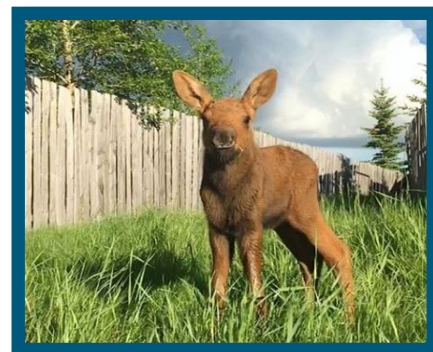
By J. Kaiser



After a fall down a hill, getting tangled in debris, and being separated from her mum and sibling, this moose calf was admitted to AIWC for care in early June.

A farmer in the Hinton area found and freed her, but unfortunately attempts to reunite her with family were not successful and after 24 hours the mum had still not returned. She was then transferred to AIWC's care after help from our colleagues at WILDNorth out of Edmonton.

She continues to do very well in care, with an incredible appetite and she enjoys running around the large outdoor ungulate enclosure where she will spend her summer. Fresh, leafy browse are always in high demand, and aspen and willow seem to be her particular favourites.



Community Engagement Update: Foundations for Future Biologists in Training

By K. Jansen, AIWC Education and Community Engagement Coordinator

Seeing interest spark in someone's eyes during a program is one of the most rewarding experiences an educator can have, and that feeling was very present during AIWC's World of Owls program at the Foundations for the Future Charter Middle School Campus at the end of May.

Our education team was asked to come in and present to Glynis Hunt's Grade 8 "Pet Perfect" elective, a course focused on gaining information about and advocating for animal welfare. Knowing this, I expected the students to be engaged and excited during the presentation, but what I saw was something truly special.



Student Brandon Osorio-Florez dissecting an owl pellet

In addition to asking many thoughtful and detailed questions, some of the students became very enthralled with the hands-on pellet dissection portion of the program. As explained to the students, sometimes biology isn't the most glamorous subject, but if you embrace the "gross-out"

factor, it can be extremely captivating. In fact, several of the students asked if they would be able to stay in the classroom over lunch for some extra time to fully dissect their pellets and ask more questions about animal biology. You could see these students' enthusiasm for wildlife biology blossoming, and three of the students (pictured below) actually began asking how they could go on to become biologists later in life!

As if these interactions weren't already proof that something special was happening, I received word a few weeks later that the Pet Perfect elective students had taken their newly-found passion for wildlife to another level, and decided to raise money for AIWC through a bake sale and donut sale fundraiser. I am so happy to have had a chance to work with these incredible future biologists, and hope to see some of them working at AIWC in the future.

Interested in sparking a passion for wildlife in your own students or after-school group? AIWC's Education team is taking bookings for both summer and school year bookings! If you are interested in booking an education program, please head to our website at www.aiwc.ca to fill in a program request form, or e-mail me at Katrina.Jansen@aiwc.ca.



Alexia Mills and Alisa Filonova dissecting owl pellets

SUMMER HOURS

AIWC is open every day from **9:00 a.m. to 7:00 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/

Downy Woodpecker Nestlings

By J. Kozak

This group of five downy woodpecker nestlings was admitted in mid-June after an arborist cut down their nest in the Spruce Meadows area, and they were unable to be reunited with their parents.

They are growing quickly in care and upon admission kept AIWC staff very busy with feedings every 20 minutes. Five growing woodpeckers sure can go through a lot of mealworms!

Downy woodpeckers are commonly found throughout the province, both in remote forests and developed areas, including city parks. While the main diet of this omnivore consists of beetles, ants, larvae and caterpillars, they will also feed on berries, seeds and sap.

Some features that greatly assist in acquiring this diet include having a pointy beak, a cushioned skull and a long tongue. Their beaks attract the most attention, since they are commonly seen (or heard, in this case) hammering away at trees or, at times, on the metal portions of chimneys. This would cause quite a headache for most; however, a thick, spongy bone surrounds the brain of a woodpecker and provides a cushion to forces created by the hammering. Their pointy beak provides the ability to puncture cavities into trees with great efficiency and the long tongue scoops up the insects found within the newly created holes.

For being one of the smallest of the woodpecker family, the downy woodpecker packs a large set of skills!



Downy woodpecker nestling waiting to be weighed



Downy woodpecker fledgling

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Caution: Potential Duck(ling) Crossing Ahead

By C. Bogstie

The easily identifiable mallard duck is the most abundant and widely distributed species of duck in North America, including Hawaii. They, along with the smallest dabbling duck species, the green-winged teal, are foragers who are often found in woodland areas particularly near lakes, ponds or other invertebrate-rich water habitats.

In the months of May and June of this year, almost 70 Mallard ducklings and three green-winged teals were admitted to AIWC for care. This is in addition to nine common goldeneye patients, three American wigeons, and a common merganser.

The majority of duckling patients were admitted in with very low body temperatures and low blood sugars, a condition which can be life threatening for young ducklings. Upon admission, debilitated ducklings unable to stand on their own are immediately placed in an incubator to stabilize their body temperatures and provided with subcutaneous fluids to ensure hydration. Additionally, they are also given oral dextrose in 15-minute increments by AIWC staff until they visibly brighten.

When they are able to stand on their own, the ducklings will continue their recovery in indoor enclosures; they are introduced to shallow wading dishes where they are encouraged to self-feed a diet of duckweed, waterfowl starter, bloodworms, and brine shrimp.

Once peeping, bright, and fully self-sufficient, the recovering ducklings are moved to AIWC's Brooder Room where they will work on their waterproofing while having access to a larger shallow pool. Once waterproofed, the ducklings are encouraged to start swimming and dabbling in one of the large indoor pools in the Aquatic Bird Building.

Once the ducklings have grown to healthy sizes and weights, they enter their final recovery step by moving to the AIWC's outdoor pools. Once adjusted to life outside, the ducklings are ready for release!

By the beginning of July, 25 mallard ducklings had already been released and dozens more duckling patients are entering their final stages of recovery, soon to follow suit.

At the end of summer, be on the lookout for the neutral-coloured "quacking" female and silent but vibrantly coloured male mallards, as well as several other species of ducks that call Alberta home, floating down the rivers in downtown Calgary or flying out of the alpine lakes in Banff.



Common goldeneye duckling recovering from a neck wound



Mallard ducklings enjoying the pool in AIWC's Aquatic Bird Building



This August Workout for Wildlife (WOW!)



On August 1st, 2019 AIWC is launching our first ever fitness challenge fundraiser!

Workout for Wildlife (WOW!) will run throughout the month of August, encouraging registered participants to reach their individually set fitness goals and collect pledges for AIWC.

WOW! is your chance to get outside and connect – to Alberta’s wildlife, to our natural environment, and to your own fitness goals!

Whether your target is to walk 5km every day, attend 3 fitness classes a week, cycle 300km, or log at least 30 hours of physical activity in the month, we invite you to challenge yourself for a good cause and with the support of your friends and family!

Your registration package comes with great AIWC swag and you can win great prizes along the way, from prizes for the top three fundraisers to biweekly random prize draws for participants throughout the month!

In 2018, AIWC provided care to over 1,000 orphaned and injured wildlife patients, with an industry-leading success rate of 49%. Each year the demand for our service grows as we admit over 120 different species in need of care, and answer hundreds of telephone calls from the public on our wildlife hotline. With your support, we can ensure that Alberta’s wildlife receives the critical care they need.

For more information and to register, visit: www.workoutforwildlife.ca

Rare Patient Alert! Boreal Owl Fledgling

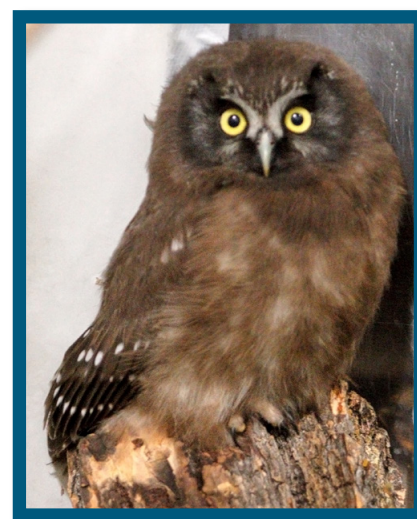
By J. Kaiser

Although common in the province, boreal owls are not frequent patients here at AIWC, let alone young fledglings!

This young owl was brought in from Canmore after he was found on the ground, being pecked at by other birds. Unfortunately, the parents of this owl did not return to protect or feed him, and after a 24-hour period it was determined it was best to bring this little one in for treatment.

Upon admission, he was found to be dehydrated and underweight. After just over a week in care, however, he was already self-feeding and moved to an outdoor enclosure where he can practice branching and working out his flight muscles.

Once he was old enough to hunt and fly on his own, a milestone he met on the first weekend of July, he was returned to a secluded area close to where he was found to resume his life in the wild!



Boreal owllet





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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.

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There are three 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; or
- Call 403-946-2361

The Alberta Institute for Wildlife Conservation (AIWC) plans to raise \$500,000 this year through fundraising campaigns and initiatives. It will cost the organization approximately \$25,000 to raise this amount. Funds raised will go to support AIWC's mission. For further information, please contact Holly Lillie, 403-946-2361.

WILDLIFE HOTLINE: 403-946-2361

Hawk Patient Looking 'Sharp' in Time for Release

By C. Slade

The sharp-shinned hawk (*Accipiter striatus*) is a small hawk with the males of the species being the smallest hawks found in the United States and Canada. Female sharp-shinned hawks are noticeably larger than the males, up to 30% longer and 50% heavier than their counterparts.

This adult female sharp-shinned hawk was discovered on the ground near Carstairs, Alberta on May 4th, 2019. The finder noticed that the hawk appeared disoriented and seemed to be unable to fly. The hawk was transported to AIWC where staff determined that she had a broken bone in her right wing. She was also exhibiting symptoms of head trauma; she seemed unable to maintain her balance and had a slouched appearance. Her injuries would be consistent with a vehicle collision on the highway near where she was spotted on the ground.

AIWC staff wrapped her wing to stabilize the broken bone, and she was kept in an indoor enclosure until June 2nd, 2019 when her wing bandage was removed and she was moved to a larger outdoor enclosure where she could fly and strengthen her flight muscles. On June 27th, after almost two months in care, she was released close to where she was found to continue her life in the wild.

Sharp-shinned hawks are widespread across North, Central, and South America. These hawks inhabit both conifer and deciduous woodlands and forests, sharp-shinned hawks hunt primarily by surprising and capturing their prey from cover or while flying quickly through dense vegetation. Sharp-shinned hawks feed almost exclusively on small birds, including many songbird species. They are preyed up on by larger raptor species such as red-tailed hawks and peregrine falcons.



Sharp-shinned hawk in outdoor enclosure

Missing myth busting? Send your wildlife questions to jennifer.kaiser@aiwc.ca and we'll answer them in an upcoming newsletter!