

Patient Updates: A Pair of Bears Return to the Wild!

By K. Schmitz

As some of you may remember from our Spring newsletter, AIWC had been caring for two black bear cub patients so far in 2020. Our first patient, a 10-month-old male, was admitted in December 2019, severely emaciated and in very poor condition. Our second patient was a young cinnamon-coloured female admitted in February 2020. Unfortunately, both of these cubs were found in similar circumstances: alone in the winter, when they should have been hibernating with their mothers.

There are many potential causes that result in orphaned cubs, including insufficient resources, fires, and floods, as well as interactions with humans where bears can be injured, killed, or displaced. Fortunately, both of these young bears were admitted into our care and were able to be safely rehabilitated in time for spring.

It is very important that bear cubs are rehabilitated properly while in care, which is why our staff ensure very limited human interaction, and provide the bears



Cinnamon-coloured female black bear climbing



Male black bear cub in outdoor enclosure

with proper den materials, places where they can climb and explore, and necessary foods like berries, eggs and small amounts of meat. Our two bear cubs were slowly introduced to one another during their rehabilitation as well, which can help to reduce stress and improve the recovery process.

Earlier in May, after successful rehabilitation, we are happy to share both of our bear cubs were released back into the areas where they were originally found. Our male patient gained 53lbs during his 155 days in care, and our female gained 34lbs during her 68 days in care. With both bears strong and healthy, we will be thinking about them as they return to life in the wild and continue to grow.

Their success wouldn't be possible without the support of our wonderful AIWC community and readers like you! Thank you for all you do to help support Alberta's wildlife in need.

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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.

Our Vision:

Preserving the legacy of wildlife.

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Executive Director Update

By Holly Lillie, Executive Director

Rarely do we know what to expect in an upcoming year. We do know the summer will be busy, we know we will get calls about baby hares, but it is very hard to predict much else in wildlife rehabilitation. What we have learned is that nature goes on, even in light of a pandemic impacting humans.

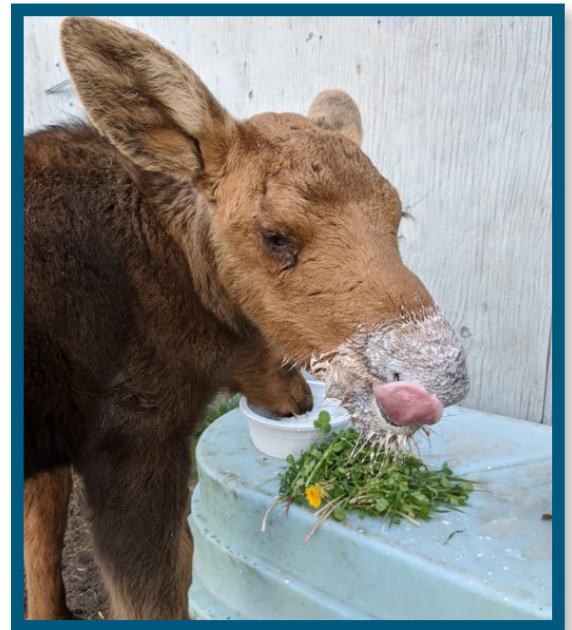
So far, we have seen a 27% increase in the number of animals admitted to AIWC, compared to the same time in 2019. We are attributing the increase to more people spending time outside in nature, but we also know that urban expansion and changes to the environment impact our wild neighbours more and more every year.

Nearly 200 animals are receiving care at our hospital currently. Ranging from two moose calves (twins!) that were rescued after their mother was killed in a vehicle collision, baby Wilson's Snipes, Mountain Bluebirds, Northern Shoveler, and more.

Your support ensures each of these animals receives the care they need so they can return to the wild. I cannot thank you enough for the generosity you have shown AIWC during this difficult time. Thanks to you, we have been able to stay operational and live out our mission of rescuing, rehabilitating, and releasing injured and orphaned wildlife. We truly could not do it without you.

Thank you for your continued support during this crisis. I hope you and yours are safe and well.

Sincerely,
Holly Lillie
Executive Director



One of the moose calf twins in care, enjoying her formula



Sponsor a Patient: Black-billed Magpie

By C. Slade

At the time of writing, AIWC has already admitted 96 Black-billed Magpie patients in 2020! During the summer months, the majority of magpies admitted are juveniles. One Black-billed Magpie fledgling was found sitting on the ground in the backyard of a residential property in northeast Calgary on June 25th. Unable to fly away when approached, the concerned finder called AIWC.

At AIWC, staff examined him and determined that he was possibly suffering from head trauma, as an otherwise healthy fledgling who had not yet mastered the art of flying. He had been introduced to several other fledgling magpies already in care, and together they will spend the next few weeks learning to fly and practicing foraging for food, before being released back where they were found.

Sponsoring one of AIWC's magpie patients, 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 8×10 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!



Juvenile Black-billed Magpie

Wildlife Rehab During COVID-19

By Erin Casper, Rehabilitation Manager

While no area of animal care is easier done alone, we know when rehabilitating wildlife, it takes a village. From the members of the public who report or bring in an animal, to our veterinary clinic partners who are often the first point of contact and stabilization, to the many staff and volunteers who care for the animal while admitted to the wildlife hospital, several people contribute to any one animal's journey through the rehabilitation process. This was a big concern when Albertans were encouraged to stay at home and self-isolate due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Would animals in need be found in time? Would our veterinary partners still be able to keep their doors open for wildlife in need? And would our staff be able to keep up with patient care without the much-needed help of our dedicated volunteers?

In March, many of these questions did not have answers. We began implementing new protocols and acting as pragmatically as we could. We restructured to enable some staff to work from home, and were fortunate that certain members of our team were able to transition into new roles as rescue drivers, animal care assistants, and hotline assistants to fill in the gaps left by our strong volunteer team. We implemented an isolation process for every new animal admitted, and introduced even more stringent sanitization procedures in the daily clinic upkeep.

To our surprise, those questions that concerned us at the beginning of the lockdown began revealing themselves to have more positive answers than we anticipated. The pandemic did not stop members of the public from reporting injured wildlife and bringing them in, our veterinary partners continued to care for the wildlife that came through their doors with compassion, and our staff were able to manage the ever growing workload of animal care as we entered wildlife baby season. By mid-May, our exacting restrictions had paid off, and we were able to start the carefully considered process of reintroducing volunteers on-site in a safe and manageable way.

While times have been difficult, the most positive part of this experience is that it has showed what a strong community we have in Alberta that rallies around the welfare of wildlife. To every donor, rescuer, volunteer, veterinary partner, and member – we could not have made it through these trying times without your support. Our team has treated almost 1,000 patients since the beginning of the lockdown, and we can say this with certainty: every time we open that kennel or box to release another animal back to the wild, it feels that much sweeter knowing how fortunate we have been to be surrounded by a community that has given us the support to continue doing what we do: putting wildlife back where they belong.

From all of us at the AIWC Team, thank you.



Education Update: Climate and Creatures and the Mayor’s Environment Expo!

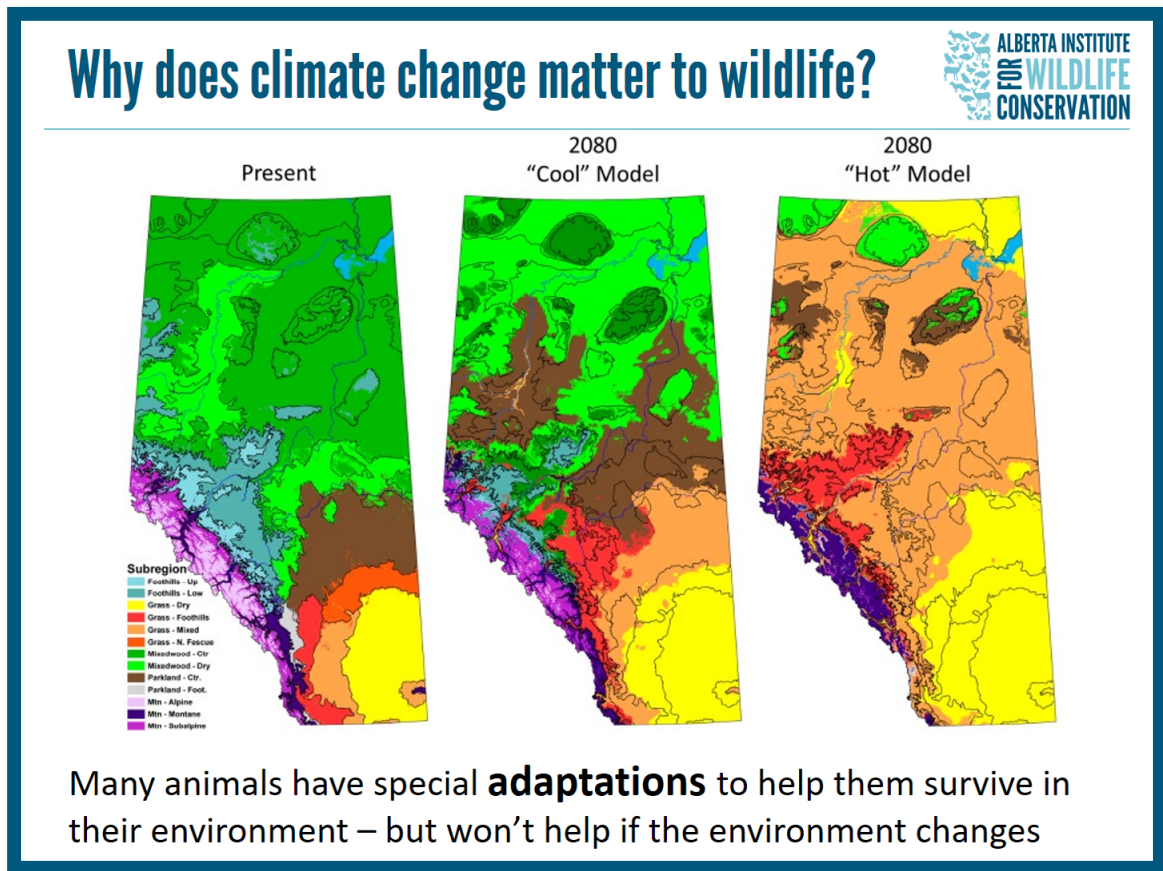
By Katrina Terrill, AIWC Community Engagement Manager

AIWC has been delivering education programs during the Mayor’s Environmental Expo for many years, and this year was no exception. However, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the expo was structured differently from past events, and this year it took place entirely online. While we missed seeing the students in person, having the presentations in a virtual format meant that more people were able to join in, and we were able to interact directly with nearly 200 students during the live virtual sessions!

This year’s Mayor’s Expo was focused specifically on climate change, and so we developed a special presentation for our session attendees that concentrated on how local wildlife species in Alberta are being affected by climate change. We put the spotlight on amphibians, such as spadefoot toads, who are no longer able to reliably breed due to increasing temperatures and a drier climate in much of their home range. We also investigated how migratory bird species, who rely on the wind currents to help carry them between their summer and winter habitats, will be impacted by shifting climate. Finally, we also learned how climate change is causing changes to many habitats, and leading to both the rise of new species and the potential extinction of others.

While modern climate change is a serious issue that threatens many of our wildlife species, there are lots of things even the youngest Alberta citizens can do to help! By using less (of everything) in our day to day lives, talking to our friends and family members, and writing to our elected representatives to call for greater climate action, we can all make a difference to the rapid pace of climate change.

If you’d like to check out AIWC’s Mayor’s Expo “Climate and Creatures” session, you can do so on the Expo website at www.calgary.ca/mee, or head straight to the video link at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v1DfhsEqyP8&feature=youtu.be>!



Patients Paired for Optimum Care

By R. Selkirk

Here at AIWC we're privileged to be able to rehabilitate one of the most acrobatic native Albertan species: red squirrels. While known for their incredible agility and cunning ability to infiltrate bird feeders, red squirrels face a number of challenges in the wild including disease vulnerability and predation.

One of our squirrel patients came to us this spring from Black Diamond and was found to be suffering from minor wounds following a bird attack. As luck would have it, we received a second squirrel patient on the same day: a suspected orphan found hiding underneath a car in SW Calgary. Underweight and dehydrated, the



Juvenile red squirrel patient in outdoor enclosure

Calgary patient was paired with our Black Diamond patient as part of their supportive care plan.

Thankfully, our two red squirrels admitted on May 24th recovered well indoors and were moved to an outdoor enclosure two weeks later. After another two weeks in care, they were released together on June 22nd, which is an outcome worth celebrating!

We understand it can be tempting to try caring for an injured or orphaned animal on your own, especially those as cute as these red squirrel patients, but by resisting this urge and arranging for the animal to be admitted to a wildlife hospital as soon as possible, you'll also give them an opportunity to be grouped with other recovering individuals. Even the highest quality of care is stressful and, by grouping patients of the same species together, we can reduce their stress and greatly increase their chance of successful rehabilitation.

If you find an injured or orphaned animal, you can help reduce their stress straight away by abstaining from giving them food or water and avoiding all interactions such as holding the animal, taking pictures, or exposing them to children and household pets. By simply putting the animal in a safe enclosure and placing them in a quiet dark room until help arrives, you will help the animal stay calm and have a better chance at recovery.

Don't forget to call our Wildlife Hotline if you find wildlife in distress or in need of help! 403-946-2361

GO GREEN IN 2020!

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

Follow AIWC online!

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



Look Who's There – A Great Horned Owlet!

By C. Bogstie

Known less for their appearance and instead for their legendary “who-hoo” greetings, the great-horned owl is one of Canada’s most common large birds of prey.

As early nesters, Great Horned Owls typically take possession of the previous year’s nest from another bird, such as hawks or crows. Great Horned Owls live in monogamous pairs equally responsible for incubating their eggs until hatching. As with other large raptors, owlets are highly dependent on their parents in the early stages of life, making them incredibly vulnerable.

Earlier this spring, an incredibly sick Great Horned Owlet was found under an active nest in Drumheller next to her deceased sibling. Once rushed into care at AIWC, the owlet was given fluids and pain medication and was left to rest in a nest made of towels, with a heating pad beneath. The owlet was bleeding consistently from her feather shafts even after 24 hours, so AIWC staff collected blood samples. Tests indicated her blood was unable to clot – a result of rodenticide (a poison used to control rodents). The staff at AIWC concluded the owlets were fed contaminated prey, which resulted in second-hand poisoning.

After she was diagnosed, the young patient was treated with fluids, and intramuscular injections of Vitamin K to aid in blood clotting functions. During this time, she was tweezer-fed mice several times per day and monitored closely for growth and stabilization.

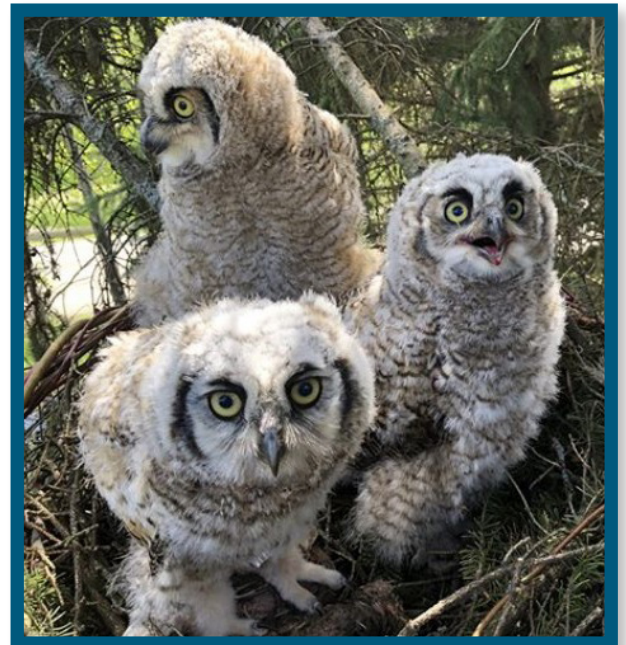
After fourteen days in care, the decision was made to introduce her to an owl family in the wild to be fostered, since her age was reaching the end of the window for re-nesting and her condition had considerably improved.

She was released in rural Alberta, placed in a nest with her new siblings, and the landowners continued to monitor her health to ensure she continued to thrive, and we are happy to report she did!

Though we are lucky this patient’s story has a happy ending, that is not always the case, and this serves as a reminder to everyone that secondary poisoning from rodenticide is a very real risk to our pets and wildlife and we encourage everyone to seek out safer alternatives. Please never hesitate to contact our Wildlife Hotline for information on how to peacefully coexist with all of our wild neighbours – big and small.



Great horned owlet patient



Great horned owlet with her new foster siblings

AIWC Reader Feedback Survey 2020

Hello! AIWC would like your feedback! Please take a few minutes to provide your opinions and help us improve our newsletter. As a thank you for completing this survey, participants will be eligible for a 25% discount code in our store at <http://www.aiwc.shop>! Your discount code will be emailed to you upon receipt of your completed survey. You can participate in one of three ways:

1. Click on the link: <https://survey.sogosurvey.com/r/4edTDY>
2. Fill out the survey below, scan and email it to: jennifer.kaiser@aiwc.ca
3. Fill out the survey below and mail us your response to:
AIWC Newsletter, PO Box 68, Madden, Alberta, T0M 1L0

1. Overall, how would you rate the Recovery Review newsletter?

- Excellent
- Good
- Okay
- Needs improvement
- Dissatisfied
- Other (Please specify) _____

2. What is your level of interest in receiving this newsletter on a regular basis?

- High
- Somewhat high
- Take it or leave it
- Somewhat low
- Low
- Other (Please specify) _____

3. How satisfied are you with the layout of the newsletter?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Not satisfied
- Other (Please specify) _____

4. How satisfied are you with the overall content of the newsletter?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Not satisfied
- Other (Please specify) _____

5. Please rank all the following sections (1=favourite, 7=least favourite):

[Please rank all options.]

- ___ Patient stories
- ___ Executive Director Update
- ___ Education / Community Engagement Update
- ___ Ongoing Fundraisers
- ___ Upcoming Events
- ___ Wildlife Myth Busting
- ___ Staff/Volunteer profiles

6. After reading this newsletter, how likely are you to increase your involvement with or donate more to AIWC?

- Very likely
- Likely
- Not likely
- Other (Please specify) _____

7. After reading the newsletter, do you understand all of the ways that you can get involved (volunteer, give food/supplies, attend a public awareness event, schedule an education event, etc.) or donate to (individual, corporate, fundraiser, sponsor a patient, shop AIWC merchandise) AIWC?

- Yes
- No
- Other (Please specify) _____

8. How did you first hear about us?

- Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)
- Word of Mouth
- AIWC website
- News
- Other (Please specify) _____

9. Please share with us the main reason you support AIWC (if applicable):

- Utilized AIWC's services
- Donation Drive
- Saw AIWC's website online
- Feel passionate about AIWC's vision and impact
- Other (Please specify) _____

10. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements (circle your response):

(a) When considering donating money, AIWC is my first thought.

Disagree Neutral Agree

(b) The process of donating is easy.

Disagree Neutral Agree

(c) I feel fulfilled by donating to AIWC.

Disagree Neutral Agree

(d) I plan to donate again next year.

Disagree Neutral Agree

(e) I would recommend donating to AIWC to my friends and family.

Disagree Neutral Agree

(e) I like the image that AIWC conveys.

Disagree Neutral Agree

11. Please identify your age range:

- <25
- 26-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+

12. Which social media sites do you utilize regularly?

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Twitter
- YouTube
- Snapchat
- None of the above



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 select AIWC merchandise;
- Discounts at local businesses; and
- The opportunity to participate in the AIWC Annual General Meeting.

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 at 403-946-2361.

Oh Deer! Spring Wildlife Myths

By H. Lippmann

On a June morning, at different spots of our rural Alberta property, I found two very young fawns when mowing thick grass. There was no adult deer in the area, and I could have very easily believed that something was wrong.

Perfectly healthy young wildlife species are often being brought to AIWC as it is assumed that they have been orphaned. Baby animals, such as these fawns or baby hares, have no scent and are therefore well protected when hidden, even though they are alone. Mothers are caring for them on a regular basis, cutting their visits short to not draw attention to their offspring. These visits can be spaced out with several hours between them, causing us to believe that we need to intervene.

If you find a young hare or fawn alone, please look twice at the situation. Is it sitting on the road? Or being trapped or attacked by domestic dogs or cats? In those cases, of course it is in the animal's best interest to intervene by moving them to the nearest safe space. Don't worry! A mother will not reject their offspring because of your scent, and it is always preferable to leave healthy baby animals in the wild with their natural parents, where they have a much better chance at survival instead of being brought into care unnecessarily.

Of course, if the animal is visibly sick or injured, or no parents come to check on them in over 24 hours, please call AIWC to verify that help is required and AIWC's expert personnel will walk you through the next steps.

In my case, I left the fawns in their places, and I was delighted to watch the mother deer (doe) as she stopped by a few times during the day, circling the area every time to make sure that no threat was around before approaching each fawn. At dusk, the family was reunited as she urged her babies to follow her to a new location.



White-tailed deer fawns



Juvenile white-tailed prairie hare

SUMMER HOURS

AIWC is open every day to admit wildlife in need of care.

May - August: 9:00a.m. – 7:00p.m.

September - April: 9:00a.m. – 5:00p.m.

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

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