

## Help! I have a family of skunks in my yard!

By A. Blaxley



Nature is waking up after a long winter, and that includes one of Alberta's most misunderstood creatures – the skunk. Every year, AIWC receives many calls about orphaned and injured skunk babies, called kits. Skunks play an important role in our province's ecosystem. Here's how you can help skunks have a safer spring and reduce the number of kits AIWC admits:

### ***Secure all food sources***

Skunks are omnivorous, meaning they eat both plant and animal material, adapting as seasons change. Insects and rodents are a large part of a skunk's diet, but they can also eat eggs, small ground-nesting birds, berries and roots and other materials - including garbage. In urban areas, unsecured waste is a skunk-buffet. Put all garbage/recycling/compost in sealed containers and feed pets inside to reduce the chances of attracting skunks.

### ***Keep your yard waste and litter free***

The best way to avoid an unwanted skunk is to make your home as unattractive to them as possible. Keep outside areas free of debris, wood, rock or lumber piles, cut grass frequently, close openings under concrete slabs, porches, crawl spaces, and old cars. There are a number of repellents that can discourage wildlife, but preventing them from settling in the first place is the best approach.

If skunks have already moved in, spring is not the time to try and remove them, as they are often with kits that may be left behind when the adult skunk is trapped or moved.

### ***There's something in the air***

While skunks can be smelly, their defences are more annoying than hurtful. The skunk is also quite a docile creature, usually spraying only as a last resort, preferring instead to retreat from danger. However, mother skunks are more protective of their babies, especially during this time of year and may spray at any sign of perceived danger.

### ***Keep in mind***

AIWC does not recommend trapping skunks. Skunks that are relocated have a poor chance of survival due to unfamiliar territory. Relocating the mother will mean her kits will become orphaned, and it will also free the area for other skunks and animals to move in. There are also municipal and provincial rules and regulations regarding trapping and wildlife management.



Wildlife is an important part of our province; we share the land with all Alberta's animals.

For more info on living with skunks and what you can do, visit [aiwc.ca](http://aiwc.ca). If you have found injured or orphaned wildlife (including skunks), call us directly at 403-946-2361.



Box 68, Madden, AB T0M 1L0  
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# Update from the Executive Director

By H. Duvall, Executive Director

Spring has sprung, and with it comes the return of migrating birds back to the province and the birth of wildlife babies!

Each year it takes up to six months for our staff and volunteers to prepare for our "busy season". This includes tasks such as: ordering milk formula for orphans, recruiting new volunteers, spring cleaning our wildlife hospital, maintenance tasks, and updating animal care protocols.

Our busy season typically runs from May to August, but in the past year we have seen this extended, starting in April and going until late September. We attribute some of this to the weather; last year we admitted goslings 4 weeks earlier than normal, but also that AIWC is becoming more known in the communities we serve.

Last year we cared for over 1,000 wildlife babies! The species of wildlife babies we admit can vary greatly, and we never know what animals we will admit each day. Preparation is key in ensuring we are equipped to care for the variety of species we admit each year. In 2016, we admitted 137 different species of wild animals!

Typical species we admit each year range from robins, to ravens, to foxes, and to great horned owls. In the busy season, this often includes caring for nestling songbirds. Did you know that they need to be fed every 15 minutes from 7am to 9pm? Missing even one feeding is detrimental to the development of these birds, and we rely heavily on our summer staff and volunteer team to ensure each feeding is met.

We anticipate spring and summer 2017 to be yet another busy year for us at AIWC. It is because of **you**, our supporters, that we are able to provide wildlife with a second chance. Thank you for your continued support!

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.

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## Adoption Option: Canada Goose

By C. Vavasour-Williams

The Canada goose is the most common waterfowl species in North America. This species is found in the arctic and temperate regions of the continent, preferring to congregate on or close to freshwater rivers and lakes. Canada geese are commonly spotted near lakes, rivers, ponds, agricultural fields, city parks, golf courses, airports and greenspaces. They have been introduced in Britain, New Zealand, Argentina, Chile and the Falkland Islands. Canada geese have successfully adapted to living in urban environments. They are sometimes considered a pest species due to their grazing of farmer's crops, as well as issues with their noise, droppings and aggressive territorial behaviour.

In Alberta, Canada geese arrive each spring to breed and raise their young

before migrating south each fall. During the spring and summer months, Canada geese feed by dabbling in bodies of water where they consume a wide range of aquatic grasses. When not dabbling, Canada geese can be seen grazing on a variety of wild grasses in open fields and manicured grasses of large urban lawns. During their fall migration south and during the winter months, Canada geese rely more heavily on berries, seeds and harvested agricultural grains.

On March 18, 2017, this adult Canada goose was spotted at the intersection of Deerfoot Trail and Peigan Trail in southeast Calgary. The goose was transported to AIWC where staff discovered that she had sustained injuries to her right wing. She was missing feathers on her wing and had an open, bleeding wound. Her wing was



*Injured Canada goose in her enclosure*

swollen and drooping, and staff suspected that she might have a broken bone. Luckily, further examination revealed that she did not have any broken bones, so staff began treating her wound and applied a bandage to minimize the chance of infection. She will remain in AIWC's care until her wing has completely healed and she is once again able to fly. Thank you for helping us to keep her forever wild!

## Enter Our "Feeders for Feathers" Contest

- Join in the fun! Build a bird feeder!
- Registration takes place from **May 1st to May 20th**. If mailing in registration, it must be mailed in by **May 12th**. If registering online, you must register by **May 20th**.
- Registration fees are \$20.00 per person and are due upon registration.
- Bird feeders can be hanging or free standing.
- **Only** non-toxic materials (paint, wood etc..) can be used in the construction of your bird feeder.
- Completed bird feeders must be dropped off on **May 27th between 2 and 4 pm** at one of the following locations to be considered in the contest:

**Wild Bird Store - D3, 8330 Macleod Trail SE, Calgary**

**Deja Brew - 205 1 St E, Cochrane**

- Bird feeders **must** have builders full name and contact information securely attached to them.
- Bird feeders will be judged on creativity and functionality by members of the public. 1st, 2nd and 3rd place contest winners will be contacted and announced on social media on **May 31st**.
- Prizes will be awarded to the top three builders and their bird feeders will be utilized by area birds on the AIWC property.

\*Note: any feeders entered in the contest will **not** be returned to builders

Detach and send completed entry form to:

**AIWC, BOX 68, MADDEN, ALBERTA T0M 1L0**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry: \_\_\_\_\_

Method of Payment (circle one):

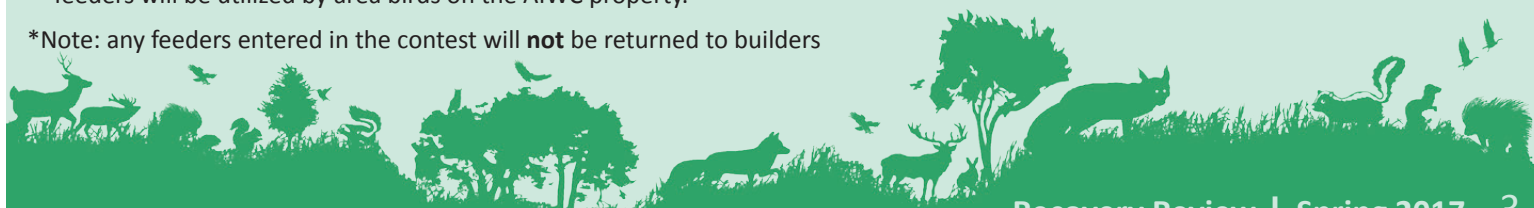
VISA / Mastercard / Cheque: (payable to AIWC)

I have included my registration fee: Yes ☐

Non-toxic materials (paint, wood etc) were used for this feeder:  
Yes ☐

What location will you drop your bird feeder off at:

Deja Brew, Cochrane ☐ Wild Bird Store, Calgary ☐



# Education Update: Investigating Owls at Royal Oak School

By K. Jansen, Education and Community Engagement Coordinator

Becoming a lifelong steward of the environment often begins at an early age, as children become conscious of the animals living all around them and how their own actions can affect other living things. The Grade One classes at Royal Oak School are already on this path, as the students are currently focusing on learning more about the wildlife living nearby. As part of their studies on local animals, the Grade Ones decided to ask AIWC to come and deliver a series of special presentations about one of the animals they investigated – in this case, owls! Our mission for these presentations was to explore the unique and wonderful world of Alberta's 11 owl species by engaging the students' senses of sight, hearing, and touch to fully experience the incredible lives of owls.

owls different from any other kind of animal. We then introduced Alberta's 11 owl species to the classes, listening to each owl's individual voice and even practicing some of our own owl calls - the Barred Owl's call, which sounds like they are saying "who cooks for you, who cooks for you all?" was a particular favourite!

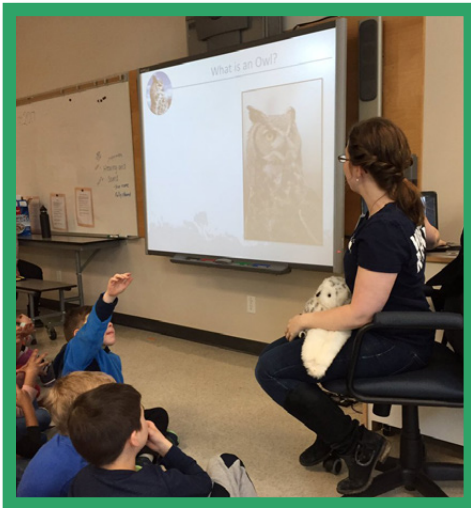


After exploring several of the adaptations that help owls survive in the wild, we then dove into the topic of food. The Grade Ones did a great job of brainstorming, and came up with many of the things that owls like to eat, including mice, rabbits, other birds, snakes, and even skunks! For the grand finale, AIWC brought in 50 owl pellets that had been regurgitated by our patients over the winter, which the Grade Ones dissected all by themselves. Using gloves, forceps, and wooden stakes, the students successfully extracted many different kinds of animal bones from the pellets, and used a dissection guide to determine what kind of animal their individual owl had been snacking on!

Every presentation ended with tons of questions from the Grade Ones who, after being introduced to the amazing world of Alberta's owls, wanted to learn even more about them. The members of AIWC's education team live for moments like this, where we can see the passion for wildlife being kindled right in front of our eyes! We know that the Grade Ones at Royal Oak School are going to continue to explore the natural world all around them, and hope that they will always remember their first introduction to Alberta's owls.



Hands on experiences like AIWC's World of Owls program are a great way to engage young learners, and stimulate a life-long passion for the environment in young conservationists. 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](mailto:education@aiwc.ca).



We began the presentations by looking at different pictures of owls, and talking about what made



## Dan Measor: *The Resqman!*

By K. Pederson

AIWC is proud to share the news that Dan Measor was awarded the 2016 Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers. This is an official Canadian decoration of honour, and incorporates and replaces the Governor General's Caring Canadian Award. Dan received his medal and official documentation late in 2016.



*Dan Measor with his award*

Dan is primarily a Rescue Driver for AIWC. In his 14 years of dedicated volunteer service he has helped over 5,400 animals. He gladly imparts his knowledge of safely capturing injured and orphaned wildlife to the volunteers that will follow in his footsteps. Dan is also skilled in accessing a situation in the field; many times, an animal can be left with their natural families and Dan is trusted to make that call. He is great at making people feel at ease, thanking the finders and public for doing the right thing and calling for help, explaining what they can do if this ever happens again, what AIWC can do to help, and explaining

what is best for the animal in a particular situation. To quote Dan "rescue driving is in my blood". The extra hours he contributes, on top of his regular volunteer driving schedule, shows that wildlife and AIWC patients are his number one priority.

In addition to the front-line work of rescue driving, Dan is a tireless champion for AIWC. He promotes AIWC in the community and works hard to spread the word.

He takes care of the recycling at AIWC (sorting and taking to the various depots), and is always on hand to pick up animal food and supplies.

Congratulations on a very well deserved honour, Dan. We are so happy for you and grateful for all that you do.

Thank you from everyone at AIWC!



*Dan's 2016 Sovereign's medal for volunteers*



# Wildlife Baby Shower Wish List

By H. Duvall

Below you will find our most needed items to help us through our busy season from May until August. Items can be dropped off at our centre throughout the month of May on any day between 9am and 6pm. If you have any questions about the items below, please contact us at [info@aiwc.ca](mailto:info@aiwc.ca).

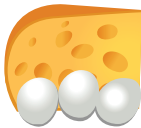
## Produce:

- Fresh/frozen blueberries
- Mountain ash berries
- Saskatoon berries
- Oranges
- Apples
- Carrots
- Yam/sweet potato
- Peppers
- Zucchini
- Lettuce
- Kale
- Corn on the cob
- Frozen corn kernels
- Snap Peas
- Mushrooms



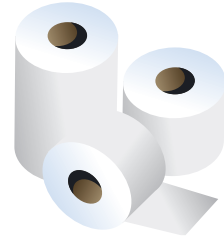
## Meat/Dairy:

- Lean ground beef
- Night smelt
- Eggs
- Yogurt
- Cottage cheese



## Cleaning Supplies:

- Paper towels
- Toilet paper
- Extra large garbage bags
- Recycle bags
- Kleenex
- High efficiency laundry soap (unscented and phosphate free)
- All-Purpose Cleaner
- Dish-washing liquid
- Hand soap
- Mops
- Mop buckets
- Brooms and dustpans



## Misc. Supplies:

- Good quality cat or kitten dry food
- Mirrors (for patient enrichment)
- Long-handled butterfly nets
- Heating pads
- Puppy pee pads
- Small whisks



## Did you know?

Over 1,000 wildlife babies are admitted to our centre each year! All of these supplies will go to support their wellbeing until they can be released back into the wild.





## Patient Profile: Prickly Pair of Porcupettes

By T. Collins

Many animals are having their babies this season, including the porcupine. Porcupine mothers usually only have one baby at a time. These baby porcupines are called porcupettes. Porcupettes are born with their famous quills; however, at the time of birth, these quills are soft, and must dry out prior to being used as a defence mechanism.

Porcupettes are also born ready to follow their innately solitary parent around, learning how the world around them works. Sometimes, because of this animal's solitary nature, a porcupette is accidentally left behind by their mother.

AIWC believes this is what may have happened to the porcupettes that were admitted last summer. One of the

two orphans AIWC admitted was found in a backyard. After examining the porcupette, AIWC happily discovered that there were no signs of health issues.



*Porcupette pair*

AIWC requested a second porcupette from the Wildlife Rehabilitation Society of Edmonton so that the two could spend their time together at our facility and help each other learn what they would have been taught by their mothers. Together, the two porcupettes enjoy the friendship of one of their own kind. AIWC will be able to release these two young porcupines back into their natural habitat early this spring season!



*Porcupette being bottle-fed*

**Mark your calendars and come out to  
AIWC's Garage Sale & Bottle Drive  
at AIWC, on Saturday June 24th!**

Drop in anytime between 10:00 a.m and 4:00 p.m.

Bring your returnable glass & plastic bottles, as well as your pop cans, juice & milk cartons!



Enjoy refreshments while you search for your garage sale treasure!

We look forward to seeing you — rain or shine.  
(Please bring cash only for garage sale purchases, thank you)



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AND follow us on Facebook,  
Instagram (@albertawildlife),  
& Twitter (@AIWC)!





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## AIWC MEMBERSHIPS

**Don't Forget To Renew Your Membership!**

AIWC memberships expired on March 21, 2017. 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 and events;
- 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](http://aiwc.ca);
- E-mail [info@aiwc.ca](mailto:info@aiwc.ca); or
- Call 403-946-2361

## SUMMER HOURS

Beginning May 1, AIWC will be open every day from **9:00 a.m. to 8:00 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/](http://www.aiwc.ca/wildlife-hospital/after-hours-assistance/)

## WILDLIFE HOTLINE: 403-946-2361

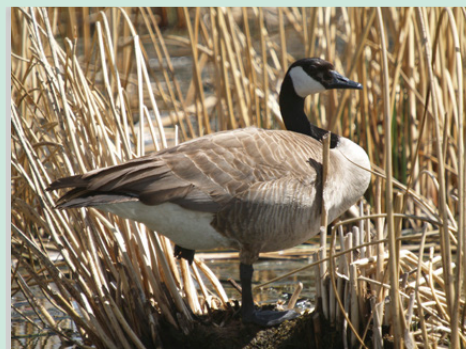
### Myth Busting: Nesting Geese

By J. Kozak

If there is common knowledge about Canada Geese, it's that they fly in a 'v' pattern, communicate with a distinct honking sound and love to torment my father. Well, the latter is more of a personal struggle that my father has by offering a yard that is a perfect location for nesting. There is also the belief that pairs of geese are notorious for picking terrible, or even dangerous, locations to raise their family. This particular issue falls under this edition of 'Myth Busting'.

Canada Geese can tolerate a wide range of habitats and are highly adaptable. When selecting a nesting site, they look for safe views, an abundant food source and a good walkability score, aka being within walking distance to a nearby source of water. Most often, they will repeat a family tradition by choosing the same location that they were brought up in during their youth, as long as the area still remains undisturbed. Golf courses, public parks, farmland and even parking lots fall under the category of fitting these needs.

Baby geese, or goslings, can walk within hours of hatching. 1-2 days after



Canada Goose

the goslings have hatched, the family will make their way, by foot, toward a nearby water source where they will spend the remainder of the season prior to migrating as a family.

In closing this edition of myth busting, remember that generations of experience have led to geese choosing safe locations to raise a family. As long as there is an area where the whole family can travel by foot to a nearby body of water, then chances are the location is acceptable enough.

Interested in more wildlife Myth Busting with AIWC? Be sure to sign up for our July 30th Fact or Fiction Talk! To attend, please register on our website at: [www.aiwc.ca/news-and-events/upcoming-events/](http://www.aiwc.ca/news-and-events/upcoming-events/)

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