

Recovery Review

Quarterly Bulletin of the Alberta Institute for Wildlife Conservation

Wildlife Conservation through Education & Rehabilitation

Animals that are Canadian...eh?

~ by J. Dooley

The Beaver

Have you ever wondered why Canada's national animal is the beaver?

In the late 1600s and early 1700s, the early European settlers came to Canada to find a nation covered in beavers - somewhere between 6 and 7 million! Because European fashion at the time demanded beautiful fur hats, the beaver pelt trade became very lucrative, and the beaver became a symbol of Canadian industry. Both the Hudson's Bay Company and the province of Nova Scotia included the beaver on their coats of arms. The beaver also made its way onto the armorial bearings of many cities, a coin, a stamp, and became a symbol of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Despite – or perhaps due to – its fame and recognition, the Canadian beaver nearly became extinct by the mid-1900s. However, through conservation efforts and recognition of the beaver as a national symbol of Canada, the Canadian beaver has made a comeback and is now flourishing across Canada once again!

Unfortunately, beavers are no strangers to AIWC, both as in-centre patients and as requests for relocation by our rescue driving team. Beavers are architects of their environment, and can provide many benefits to the local habitat and other animals; however their design expertise can often be interpreted as a hazard or nuisance by land owners. Thankfully, there are many humane ways to interact with a local beaver population and preserve our national animal.



but was first named so by a Swedish botanist in the 18th century.

Every year the Alberta Institute for Wildlife Conservation relocates countless families of geese from downtown

office buildings to beautiful rivers and wetlands. Geese strive to build nests near water, away from other geese and on elevated areas, so downtown Calgary office buildings often appear to be the perfect locations for nesting, meeting all of these qualifications. Geese are also known to return to their previous nesting sites, so even though they are relocated one year,

see 'Canadian' continued on page 5



The Canada Goose

Though they carry the name, the Canada Goose is not a national symbol of Canada,



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UPDATES

VISION: AIWC strives to enrich the lives of Albertans by nurturing a strong appreciation and respect for wildlife.

MISSION/MANDATE:

To contribute to wildlife conservation in Alberta by:

- Providing comprehensive and humane rehabilitation programs for injured and orphaned wildlife;
- Promoting awareness and encouraging greater stewardship of native wildlife through engaging education programs;
- Researching wildlife issues that improve rehabilitation protocols and support the broader scientific community; and
- Helping people co-exist peacefully with wildlife by providing humane solutions for wildlife 'invasions' on personal and public property.

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Submissions/comments may be sent to the above address.

Forever Home Campaign ~ H. Duvall

Thank you for supporting AIWC!

On May 7, AIWC launched our "AIWC Forever Home" campaign, and we have been blown away by the support from our donors, volunteers, and the communities we serve! As of July 2, \$47,420 has been raised for the campaign, coming from 491 individual donors.

Every dollar counts, and Dr. Sovanna Khuong of Deerfoot Meadows Dental has agreed to match up to \$250,000 in donations!

Please spread the word about AIWC's Forever Home campaign; all funds raised through this project will go directly to our mortgage.

Our goal is to pay for the land in full as soon as possible to ensure we can fully dedicate fundraising efforts instead on the essential services we provide to wildlife in Calgary and the surrounding areas.

Visit our crowd funding page for an update on the amount raised at:

<http://aiwcforeverhome.causevox.com/>

All donations, whether they are made online or through phone or mail, are included in this amount.



Outdoor Education Programs ~ B. Wright

AIWC's Education Programs are becoming increasingly popular!

In 2014 AIWC presented 124 programs for schools, libraries, guides, scouts, and other groups, making it our most successful year... until now! By mid-2015, we had already booked 122 programs with no end in sight. Our summer is twice as busy as last year!

Part of our success can be attributed to now having four presenters. Their combined availability covers every day of the week plus evenings, opening our team up for many more events.

The presenter team includes Cheyenne Nadbrzezna, Diane Thomas, Nathalie Martel, and Sylvie Michaud-Romaniuk, and we wouldn't be able to do it without our many Education Ambassador Assistants (EAAs) who bring our amazing Education Ambassadors – Gulliver, the striped skunk, and Griffin, the red-tailed hawk – to our programs and wow our audiences.

For additional information or to book the team to visit your group, contact education@aiwc.ca or call the centre at 403 946-2361.

SUMMERTIME WITH YOUR PET

~ by K. Scatolin

Pets are an important part of people's families and it is important that your furry family member is able to enjoy the great outdoors areas with you this summer. Urban and remote parks are wonderful areas for both you and your pet to enjoy nature, but it is important to remember that these areas are also home to many wildlife species and are essential to their survival. Our pets can pose a risk to wildlife as much as wildlife can pose a risk to our pets.

First, it is important to know if your pets are allowed in the area you plan to take them. There are many sensitive areas within the regional parks where pets are prohibited, and it is the owner's responsibility to know which areas are prohibited. Nature reserves are refuges for native animals, so when it comes to protecting these precious places, consider leaving your four-legged friend at home. Of course, there are many parks where you're

squirrels and birds. When off-leash, dogs can quickly find themselves out of sight of worried owners, on the scent of a new wild friend. Keep in mind that many small animals, while tiny, can put up a big fight with sharp teeth, claws, and stink-bombing technology (skunks!), so it's best to prevent actual close-encounters whenever possible.

Even in the city, off-leash dogs can disturb ground-nesting birds such as quail, or chase, injure, and kill small animals like porcupines and deer. During spring and summer, pregnant wildlife and newborns can be particularly vulnerable to harassment or attacks from domestic dogs. Therefore, it is very important that pets are kept under control at all times, and this means on a leash! Leashes help to protect pets as much as wildlife – preventing them from becoming lost, from wilderness hazards, and from getting into unhealthy plants and foods. Finally, always remember to bring

plastic bags and clean up any of your dog's mess to help prevent the potential spread of diseases to the local wildlife such as coyotes.

House cats also love to enjoy the outdoors in these summer days. Cats are, by nature, instinctive hunters, so even when their human owners carefully meet their requirements for food and shelter, they will hunt. Domestic cats pose a huge threat to local wildlife populations such as small mammals and reptiles, and are the largest killer of songbirds in Canada, far surpassing



Baby ground squirrel admitted after being severely injured from a cat attack.

natural predators and other human factors. Not to mention, cats themselves are often at risk of being preyed upon by larger predators like coyotes

and or even large raptors like eagles or owls. Cats can also contract diseases like rabies from coming in contact with wildlife.

Whenever possible, the safest place for your cat is inside your home. To give your cat safe outside time, keep them in an enclosure or on a leash under supervision. At the very least, do not let them out in the early morning, the early evening, or at night, which are the most dangerous times for both cats and wildlife.

If your pet is ever bitten or hurt by a wild animal, consult a veterinarian to have the wound treated as soon as possible. And, if possible, always check on the health of the wild animal before leaving the scene. Every summer, AIWC receives numerous wild animals severely injured by pets, but their care and recovery would not be possible without the quick and compassionate action of their finders – and, in many cases, the owners of their aggressors.



Wounded Mourning Dove brought to AIWC after it was caught by a dog.

welcome to let your dog join in the fun as long as you agree to keep them under control and follow their specific rules –

know before you go!

Second, when out with your pup, always be aware: dogs will do what dogs do! This often includes running gleefully after small, fast-moving critters such as

Keep up-to-date with AIWC's LATEST NEWS by reading our blog!

<http://www.aiwc.ca/news-and-events/blog/>



AND follow us on



Facebook and Twitter (@AIWC)!

Wildlife Cruelty Bulletin

~ by N. Martel

When we hear the term “wildlife cruelty”, many of us think of current hot-button issues such as elephant exploitation or rhinoceros poaching. Although many people recognize that urban wildlife is often poisoned (for pest control) or trapped (for removal), few people think of wildlife as being bullied, harassed, or otherwise intentionally harmed. And yet, in the first four months of 2015, 17 separate incidents of cruelty occurred in and around Calgary – and these are just the ones we know about.

2015 has seen one goshawk, one goose, and two deer fall victims to arrow shootings, mostly in the southern parts of the city where parks are abundant. A bald eagle was poisoned in Acme, Alberta, while a skunk received the same treatment in Calgary. There were pellet shots, beatings, and clubbings. Geese were kicked after being offered food – by children. A moose was potentially poached. The list goes on, and it doesn't get any prettier.

Statistics, although tremendously helpful in shedding light on an ongoing problem, only reveal a portion of the issue. Historically, crimes against wildlife have not been consistently reported and therefore, it is difficult to assess the actual magnitude of the problem. For human crimes, this is referred to as the dark figure of crime – the unreported incidents. They are only known to either the perpetrator, or to the witnesses who have failed to report them.

It is critically important for everyone to report crimes against wildlife. The more incidents we become aware of, the clearer the true extent of the issue, and the more effectively we can design and implement policies for law enforcement and wildlife centres to adopt in an attempt to reduce such crimes. The reasons behind such abusive behaviours can become clearer too; for instance, knowing that a particular neighbourhood has many hares being shot with arrows can encourage a stronger enforcement presence, but also invites a broader examination of the area: are there various cultural ideologies about wildlife? Are there substance abuse issues? Is the area impoverished? Are the streets appropriately lit? Are there wildlife-human conflicts? As you can see, a multitude of questions can be asked to help us understand what drives crimes against wildlife.



Orphaned skunks at AIWC. Due to (largely unfounded) fears, skunks are often harassed and mistreated, despite not causing any real issues.

Being vigilant about crimes against wildlife is very much a community effort – but also a community responsibility. All wildlife should remain free of abuse, and only we can be their voice.



~ by H. Duvall

Ditch Witch Fundraising!

After listening to CBC and their segment “How to Own Your summer”, Heike Kretschmer, aka the “Ditch Witch”, felt inspired to do just that: own her summer.

“I always wanted to work more with horses,” says Heike, “ride more, and become more accustomed to handling them.” Close to Heike's home are the ditches of Horse Creek Road, which were filled with debris and garbage and she set herself the task of cleaning these.

“I experimented with various garbage bag contraptions,” continued Heike, “and off I went with a horse from my team of 4 very eager horses.”

After noticing all the bottles and cans, Heike decided to return them to the bottle depot and

donate the money to AIWC.

“I chose AIWC because when I found an injured owl, a volunteer arrived shortly after we called. Sadly, the owl had been injured beyond help and [AIWC] could only help her to pass the rainbow bridge,” said Heike. “I was amazed at the response, the care, [and] the dedication; it became my wish to help as much as possible.”

When the fifth anniversary of her father's death came, Heike also donated all the money she had found during those last 5 years to AIWC as “Pennies from Heaven” in memory of her father.

We cannot thank Heike enough for her support of AIWC! Not only is she contributing to AIWC, but she is also creating a clean and safe environment for wildlife. Thank you, Heike!

'Canadian' continued from page 1

they will likely nest in the same location next year. Thankfully, goslings will return to nest at the location where they learned to fly, so if there is a successful relocation, they likely won't have to be relocated the next year.

Goose relocations are quite tricky and require a team of 2-3 people. Once arriving at the location, the rescue team finds the goose family and makes sure that both parents are present and count the number of goslings (Canada Geese usually have 6 offspring). If there are fewer than 6 goslings, the team will attempt to locate the nest to ensure all eggs have hatched. If one parent is missing, the family cannot be relocated, as it is imperative not to separate the mother and father as Canadian Geese mate for life. In these cases, the rescue team will attempt to capture only the goslings and bring them to the centre for care until they are old enough to be released.

In order to relocate the entire family, the parents are caught first and simultaneously, with large fishing nets. Once the parents are captured, the goslings may scatter at first, but they return to a huddled group, which makes catching them much easier!

Once the release location is reached, the goslings are released first, followed by mom and dad. They will once again regroup and dad will usually leave with a clear show of his disapproval over the whole ordeal.



If you happen to come across abandoned goslings, a goose family who has nested in a dangerous area, or a beaver in need of relocation, please call AIWC directly to arrange a rescue or relocation: 403-946-2361

WILDLIFE VOLUNTOURISM

Help Protect Wildlife On Your Vacation

~ by J. Cooke



Now more than ever, people are craving a sense of purpose in their leisure activities and Voluntourism has become a growing trend. As you know, AIWC relies on a huge roster of generous local volunteers to operate, but there are many organizations that canvass and welcome international volunteers for even just short-term help.

So, while you're planning summer holidays, you might want to consider the many opportunities to improve environmental conservation or work with wild animals across the globe that you can make part of your vacation. Experiences can range from the relatively tame to the remote and wild, and you can participate for an afternoon up to several months.

Volunteers – skilled or with no experience – can join in an interesting variety of wildlife conservation projects based in exciting and exotic locations, such as assisting with the rehabilitation of elephants in Thailand; caring for orphaned monkeys in Africa; researching endangered species such as jaguars or turtles in Costa Rica; tracking lions in South Africa; collecting marine and other data in the Seychelles; bear watching in Northern Sweden or working with rescued animals at an animal shelter in the Ecuadorian Amazon, Peru or Vietnam.

There are also numerous opportunities here in Canada, such as the Turtle Rehabilitation Centre in Ontario, a busy trauma centre that treats over 650 turtles a year and incubates and raises hatchlings.

Bird lovers can participate in rescuing and rehabilitating owls and raptors in Greater Vancouver. Right here in Alberta you can hike off-trail through parts of Waterton National Park that others will never see if you volunteer for the scientific project studying the relationships between wolves, elk and the native grasslands.

Volunteer trips can vary widely in price and in the amenities. Most community-based organizations don't have the resources to provide anything related to your stay. It's very important to do your research, find a reputable organization and make sure you understand what is not included in the cost, such as in-country travel, accommodation and food. Websites such as earthwatch.org, podvolunteer.org and thegreatprojects.com are good places to start and can provide more information on the experiences mentioned here. Although many trips require volunteers to be eighteen years old or over, there are many organizations that offer family volunteering.

Across the world, many animal and plant species and the ecosystems that sustain them are under threat. Wildlife voluntourism is an opportunity to take part in vital conservation work, make a contribution and have an amazing, life-enriching experience, including the chance to interact with a different culture and gain a new perspective. Often all you need is a genuine love of animals and some enthusiasm.

SPECIES PROFILE:

FAQ:

GREAT GREY OWL

~ by C. Vavasour-Williams

The great grey owl (*Strix nebulosa*) is a very large owl, documented as the largest owl species in the world by length. From the top of their heads to the tip of their tails, adult owls average 72 centimeters (28 inches) for females and 67 centimeters (26 inches) for males. Even with their large size, these owls are outweighed by both the great horned (*Bubo virginianus*) and snowy (*Nyctea scandiaca*) owls. Great greys are also sometimes called the spectral owl, spruce owl, bearded owl, or sooty owl. The great grey owl is the provincial bird of Manitoba.

The great grey owl's range extends across the North American continent from as far east as Quebec to the western coasts of British Columbia and Alaska. Great grey owls are also found in Finland and Estonia and across northern Asia. These owls are permanent residents but may move south in search of food. They prefer northern climates with densely wooded areas that border meadows or bogs. Great grey owls are sparsely populated across Alberta and are most commonly spotted in the northern regions of the province.

These owls are most active during the early morning and late evening hours. They will perch for hours in a tree waiting for their prey. Their excellent eyesight and hearing make them formidable predators. Great grey owls prey primarily on voles but will also prey on shrews, weasels, hares, and grouse.

Deforestation is the greatest threat to this species; industrial logging and clearcutting have decreased the owl's natural habitat. Great grey owls depend heavily on densely wooded areas to hunt, build their nests and raise their young each spring. Nests are generally previously-used raptor nests, but these owls will also nest in broken-topped trees and in cavities of large trees. Nesting pairs will typically lay four eggs between March and May.



This great grey owl nestling was spotted sitting near the side of a road in Cremona, Alberta. There was no nest in sight so the owl was transported to AIWC. His examination revealed a small cut near the top of his beak and some minor bruising. He will spend the summer in AIWC's care growing into a healthy adult great grey owl. Then, one warm late summer evening, he will be released in a wooded area.

What do I do if I find a bird trapped in my garage, house, or shed?

~ by H. Duvall

At AIWC we often receive calls concerning wildlife, usually birds, trapped in houses, garages, or other areas.

Birds are visually orientated, so try to use this to your advantage when encouraging the bird to leave. If possible, darken the area where the bird is trapped, but leave a door or window leading to the outside open. The light from these openings should prompt the bird to leave on its own, since they will naturally fly towards the light. If needed, gentle encouragement can be used to guide the bird to suitable exits.

If the bird is resting and it is possible, you can place a hand towel or pillowcase over the bird; adult birds typically respond with the "freeze" response that will give you time to gently scoop the bird up into your hand. If the bird looks to be uninjured, simply take him outside and release him.

It should be noted that in situations like this, birds can stress easily, so when trying to release them, be sure not to enter into a frantic indoor pursuit that could risk the bird getting injured.

If you are unable to successfully release the bird, or, if upon catching him, the bird looks injured, please call our Wildlife Hotline: 403-946-2361.



Hummingbird released back into the wild!

Thank You

to all of the outstanding individuals, corporations, and foundations who generously contribute crucial funds to directly help wildlife in distress. To see our donor list online go to [AIWC.ca](http://www.aiwc.ca) and visit <http://www.aiwc.ca/individual-donors/> and watch your name move up the list throughout the year as you donate!

PATIENT UPDATES



BREWER'S BLACKBIRDS: This Brewer's blackbird and his four siblings were admitted as young nestlings in June and grew up quickly. Once they've all mastered flight and self-feeding, they'll be returned to the wild.



GREAT BLUE HERON – this great blue heron was in care for a couple of weeks after he was caught in netting that wrapped around his neck. After treatment for wounds sustained from the netting, he was happily returned to the wild.



SKUNKS: It's been a busy summer for skunks at AIWC! With over thirty skunk kits in care at once, fresh produce has been in high demand.



FERRUGINOUS HAWKS:

AIWC has already admitted four ferruginous hawks in 2015 which is incredibly unusual, since we often don't see any! Two were admitted as nestlings and are growing up fast – they will stay with AIWC until they are self-sufficient adults. Ferruginous hawks are an at-risk species in Alberta, with an estimated population of fewer than 700 pairs.



Alberta Institute for Wildlife Conservation

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www.aiwc.ca

MEMBERS ONLY Talk & Tour Dates!

Sunday, September 13, 2015

Time: 1:00pm – 3:00 pm

Presentation: “Loons, grebes, and oiled wildlife”

Learn about AIWC's practices for caring for loons, grebes, and oiled wildlife, and meet educational ambassadors Gulliver (striped skunk) and Griffin (red-tailed hawk).

AND

Sunday, October 18, 2015

Time: 1:00pm – 3:00 pm

Presentation: “Summer 2015 Review”

Learn about how our peak seasons of spring and summer have gone at AIWC and learn about the interesting patients we cared for. In addition, participants will meet educational ambassadors Gulliver (striped skunk) and Griffin (red-tailed hawk).

There is no fee for either presentation, and members are welcome to attend one or both dates.

Monetary donations (electronic donations can now be accepted on-site) and donations of the following items are most welcome: apples, lettuce, corn on the cob, frozen blueberries, kale, ground beef, cottage cheese, smelts, Kleenex, extra-large garbage bags, and puppy pads.

To register for either or both events, please call 403-946-2361 with your membership ID number or e-mail Holly at holly.duvall@aiwc.ca

**Not yet a member?
Sign-up online at aiwc.ca or
when you call to reserve your spot!**

MYTH BUSTING:

The Elusive Porcupine

~ by J. Kozak

During this edition of Myth Busting, I will tackle myths surrounding the wonderful mammal known as the North American Porcupine. Are they capable of shooting their quills? Do they hibernate in the winter?

The North American porcupine is classified within the order of Rodentia. A similar animal that shares this distinction is the beaver. In fact, the beaver is the only North American rodent larger than the porcupine.

Being herbivores, porcupines feast on leaves, twigs, barks and various plants. The claws that they possess allow them to climb trees! Despite their bulky appearance, porcupines are natural acrobats, able to balance on narrow branches using only their hind feet to grip, while their forelimbs assist them in eating.

The porcupine's distinctive features are, of course, its quills. How many quills do you believe an adult porcupine has? A hundred? A thousand? The approximate number is actually 30,000 quills! The quills are its defense mechanism. To put to rest the first myth: the porcupine does not and cannot shoot its quills. The only means to release a quill is if a predator comes in contact with it; only direct contact triggers their release.

Should you come upon a porcupine while hiking in the forest, which happens to be where the porcupine is commonly found, just know that it will likely ignore you unless you come too close – then it will point its quills in your direction until you have moved on. If a dog is curious enough to get too close to a porcupine and finds itself covered in quills, you should immediately bring the dog to a veterinarian. The quills can puncture deep enough or migrate within the body to be life-threatening, and removal should be left to a professional to safely ensure that the wounds are properly sealed. Do not cut the quills shorter before getting to the vet, as this will only make the removal process more difficult.

Of course, if the porcupine is also injured in an encounter with dogs or people, be sure to keep someone on scene in sight of the porcupine and contact your nearest wildlife rehabilitation centre so they can also receive needed medical attention.

The North American porcupine has its own unique traits: it can handle cold Canadian winters and, despite the second myth, will remain active throughout the year. During the winter months, they seek out dens within caves, decaying logs and hollow trees. So don't be surprised if you come across one in the middle of January!



Remember: should you find an injured animal, please call AIWC's wildlife hotline at 403-946-2361.

WILDLIFE HOTLINE: 403-946-2361