

Recovery Review

Quarterly Bulletin of the Alberta Institute for Wildlife Conservation

Wildlife Conservation through Education & Rehabilitation

Fox Kits Frolic at AIWC

By J. Edwards

Foxes are nocturnal by nature and are usually most active at dusk. Wary of humans, they hunt at night and are rarely seen in the wild. But when they do venture out during daylight hours, it's a happy occasion for those hoping to catch a glimpse of these shy creatures.

The foxes at the centre are housed in a large outdoor enclosure, and staff and volunteers don't spend much time inside in order to prevent the animals from becoming habituated to humans. Still, it's possible to catch a glimpse of the baby animals, who are red with white-tipped ears, as they shyly peer out of their dens. As they have gained strength, the foxes have begun working on their own underground homes within the enclosure.

As they emerged into the daylight, two of the foxes, who came from the same litter, began turning summersaults over each other in the sunshine. They tumbled together like puppies in a litter, and it was a reminder that the red fox is the second-smallest native member of the wild dog family in Alberta, second only to the grey wolf.

The eight foxes AIWC has in care this year is a slight increase from the number that the centre rehabilitated last year. Most baby foxes that have been admitted this year were orphaned after their mothers were shot or victims of a vehicle collision.

Staff and volunteers also point to the warm winter and early spring as the main factor causing an overall increase in wildlife numbers this year.

Two of this year's eight kits have come from as far away as Grand Prairie, Alberta. Another three were



Fox kit frolicking in our mammal enclosure

orphaned when their mother was killed. In situations like this, our volunteer rescue drivers use humane live traps to safely catch the orphaned baby foxes, so they can be brought in for care.

Foxes are omnivores, meaning that in the wild they eat small animals, birds, and insects.

Each of the young foxes admitted to AIWC were fed specialized formula before moving on to solid foods. The cost of food alone for each fox kit is \$15 per day (which is \$120 per day for all eight kits) and adds up to a significant cost for AIWC, given that the foxes will spend many months at the centre before they can be released.

The kits are healthy and maturing normally,

but it's important to wait until fall to return them to the wild, when they will be better prepared to deal with the rigours of the environment.

If you would like to donate to AIWC to contribute to the care of the fox kits, contact the centre at (403) 946-2361 or visit us online: www.aiwc.ca.



Fox kit inside one of our enclosure adjusting to her new surroundings.



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UPDATES

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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Update from the Executive Director

By H. Duvall, Executive Director

What a whirlwind 2016 has been already! No day is ever the same at AIWC, and with each new day brings new challenges and successes.

Despite being open year-round, we have concentrated amounts of time when we are the busiest with our programs, whether it be our wildlife rehabilitation program, our wildlife education program, our volunteer program, or fundraising and creating more awareness about our organization.

For each of our programs, the busiest months tend to be from May to August, and this year is no different, although our patient numbers have dramatically increased. As of June 30, we already admitted over 1,000 animals to our centre. In contrast, July 24 was when we had admitted our 1,000th patient of 2015.

There are several factors we attribute to the increase in patient numbers, including greater public awareness about our organization. Secondly, the warmer weather this year has led to wild animals breeding earlier; we admitted our first great horned owl baby (owlet) a month earlier than normal.

With more patient admissions comes the pressure of needing more resources to support our organization. We are happy to welcome Miranda and Anna to the team as Wildlife Rehabilitation Technicians, Katrina, our Education and Community Engagement Coordinator, and Michelle, our Development and Communications Coordinator. We are thrilled to have a small but mighty team of staff and volunteers in place to carry out AIWC's vision and mission.

As the demand for our services grows, we are working to ensure AIWC's future. In April, the staff and board members met to work on AIWC's strategic plan for the next four years. It was a highly productive planning session with much accomplished, including an update to our vision and mission statements.

I am happy to announce AIWC's updated vision and mission statements. These will be our guiding forces for everything we accomplish at AIWC.

Thank you for your continued support of AIWC and ensuring that wildlife receive the second chance they so richly deserve.

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ADOPTION OPTION: *Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*

By C. Vavasour-Williams

The American red squirrel, *Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*, is a relatively small species of squirrel; the largest adults weigh only 250 grams. This species of squirrel can be found in most parts of Canada, and primarily inhabits coniferous forests, but they can also be found in deciduous woodlands as well as suburban establishments.

At the time of writing, AIWC admitted nine young red squirrels in 2016, six of whom have already been rehabilitated and released. The remaining squirrels, admitted on May 15, 2016, remain in care while they grow into healthy juvenile squirrels.

This young squirrel was found with her two siblings on May 13, 2016. The finder had been watching the three young squirrels and had not seen the mother for over 24 hours. Concerned that the squirrels may be orphaned,



the finder contacted AIWC and plans were made to transport the three squirrels to AIWC's facility in Madden, Alberta.

When first admitted, the red squirrels remained together in an indoor enclosure, and were fed specialized formula several

times per day. Now they live together in an outdoor enclosure where they can practice their climbing skills, develop muscle tone, and acclimatize to the weather. One warm summer morning, they will be released in a wooded area.

Adopting one of our red squirrel patients or any other AIWC patient helps with the expenses associated with their rehabilitation, including food and medication. As part of your adoption, you will receive an

adoption certificate, a glossy 8x10 photograph of your patient, and a tax receipt for the full amount of the adoption.

For more details and to adopt, visit us online at aiwc.ca/support-us/adopt-an-animal or call 403-946-2361.

Education Update: Flying High At Hawkwood School

By K. Jansen, Education and Community Engagement Coordinator

There are some schools that an educator can walk into and immediately sense that the upcoming program is going to be special. As I made my way towards the Grade 1 classrooms at Hawkwood School in NW Calgary, I got that feeling.

In anticipation of AIWC's arrival, the students had written detailed reports on Canadian species, researching the animal's biology and the threats that could affect them. The Grade 1 hallway was covered in drawings of the species that the children had researched, and sitting outside the classroom was a balloon animal - made into the shape of a bald eagle! This group had clearly done their homework.

The students were ecstatic to see someone from AIWC in person, and couldn't wait to learn all about how animals are rescued. We talked about how most of the animals at our centre are babies, and how they need lots of special attention; everyone was astonished to learn how some young animals, especially birds, had to be fed every 15 minutes!

After learning all about wildlife rescue and the work we do at AIWC, it was time to meet the star of the show. The story of Griffin the red-tailed hawk had been distributed to all of the classes, and it was clear that the students had connected to him. Upon seeing Griffin for the first time, one student asked if Griffin's right eye looked funny because the car hit him on that side, which was a very accurate observation! Seeing Griffin in person (or should I say, in hawk) was an eye-opening experience for many people. While reading about injured animals is a great way to gain knowledge, meeting Griffin illustrates how people can directly impact wildlife, and provides a memory that will last for years to come.

Following the wildlife rescue programs, which were delivered to all of the school's Grade 1 classes, the students, teachers and I went outside for a special presentation - an enormous cheque addressed to AIWC! All of the children had decided to raise money to help rescue wildlife, but, in the words of one teacher, they "didn't just go up to their parents and ask for 5 bucks." Instead, these dedicated Grade 1s asked their parents and neighbours for extra chores, and donated the money that they earned. One student went around his neighbourhood to ask for bottles and cans, and was able to raise over \$60 by himself! All together, these incredible, caring students donated \$622.45 to AIWC, which directly helps with the care and rehabilitation of Alberta's wildlife.

It is wonderful to see students and teachers connect with local animals, and become inspired to help wildlife in any way they can. The Grade 1s of Hawkwood School are a perfect example of how even the smallest people can make a big difference, and we are proud to have met all of these new wildlife advocates!

If you are interested in booking an AIWC Education Program for a classroom or group, please call: (403) 946-2361 or email: education@aiwc.ca. More information on the types of programs we offer can be found at: <http://www.aiwc.ca/education/topics>.



Photo courtesy of: Deb Campanelli, Teacher, Grade 1, Hawkwood School

Our Fiery Friend Flash

By S. Ruddock

Have you ever wondered who the great horned owl in AIWC's logo is?

That's our old friend, Flash! Originally admitted in 1995, the 3-month old owlet was one of the centre's first patients.

She may well have been out on her maiden flight when it's believed the young owl passed between two conductors at a Calgary substation, causing what's known as an arc flash or flashover (when electricity jumps across a medium). City electrical

workers dubbed her Flash in reference to the event, which sent 8,000 volts of current through the fledgling bird and knocked out power to 9,000 south Calgary homes for half an hour.

Suffering from severe electrical burns over a good portion of her body, it was surprising she was still alive. Centre staff went to work immediately to make sure Flash stayed hydrated and her wounds were clean. She was given antibiotics and fed by hand to prevent her from contracting an infection from the ten mice she was consuming each day.

Initially lethargic, Flash became the increasingly feisty and "indomitable spirit" that was so loved by staff, volunteers and the public. Letters of support came in from across North America, the city electrical staff that first found Flash adopted her, and newspapers throughout Canada ran her story.

Perhaps this notoriety influenced the decision to keep Flash on at the centre as a foster parent to future



patients when it was determined she would likely never fly again due to damaged wing tissue as a result of her burns.

During her tenure, Flash assisted centre staff with other great-horned owlets. She would bring them food until they were old enough to find it themselves, shelter them from the elements while in outdoor enclosures, and taught them to remain ever-cautious of humans. In 2004, after many years of service, Flash succumbed to a soft-tissue injury.

Like every patient admitted to AIWC, Flash was more than a brief spark; she was a flame who built a fire in the hearts of many. She reminded centre staff daily of what it means to be free and helped to shape the future direction of wildlife rehabilitation. We are lucky to know these creatures temporarily and be touched by them forever. We are reminded of the impact of each of the animals admitted every time we see an AIWC publication, with Flash glowing in her wildness in our logo.



Flash's wounds

Update From The Board: Every Wild Life Matters

By J. Kaiser

That is AIWC's new vision statement following our spring strategic planning session, and it speaks precisely to the heart of what AIWC does every day. Those simple words will be a guide for every decision moving forward, and AIWC has amazing plans for where we're going to go!

With increasing patient numbers each year - and 2016 so far being no exception - AIWC must also grow to meet the demands for our services. From facility and site upgrades that will help AIWC lead wildlife rehabilitation standards and practices internationally, to our wonderful education programs that teach the next generation of leaders about Alberta's wildlife, to helping AIWC become a household name that people know to contact when they find wildlife in distress - our goals are both ambitious and entirely achievable, with the help of our dedicated volunteers, donors, and supporters.

Our annual general meeting was held in May (if you missed it, the 2015 Annual Report can be found on our website: www.aiwc.ca/about/annual-report/), and it was bittersweet; we voted in a new volunteer board and welcomed new addition Corinne Jamieson as Treasurer, but also said goodbye to Tammy White.

Tammy has been a centre volunteer for fifteen years and served as Chair of the board for the past four years. Tammy's commitment and leadership guided AIWC through many ups and downs, and her dedication to AIWC - and its patients - has always served as the guiding force behind her. Her passion for wildlife is clear to anyone who's met her, and AIWC cannot say thank you enough for Tammy's many years of service. Of course, just because she's completed her tenure on the board doesn't mean she's done with AIWC altogether; you'll still be able find Tammy at the centre, feeding baby skunks or acting as an expert 'baby bird mum' to our nestling and fledgling patients!

Going forward, the board is honoured to serve AIWC and continue to grow its successes. Every wild life does indeed matter, and prosperity for AIWC means more wild lives benefitted by our expert care and more Albertans educated about our wild neighbours.

And we can't do it without you! Your help allows AIWC to help wildlife, and we thank you for your continued support!

AIWC 2016 Board of Directors

Jennifer Kaiser - Chair
Kayle Paustian - Vice-Chair
Peter Jurisic - Secretary

Corinne Jamieson - Treasurer
Katherine Pederson - Director
Ted Gilson - Director

Moya Rose - Director
Mary Lay - Director
Spencer Chaisson - Director

AIWC GIVES A HOOT & A HONK: Successful Fostering of Owlets & Goslings

By J. Metz

With their tell-tale tufted head, habitat ranging from the Arctic to South America, and wings that span well over one metre, the great horned owl is a formidable hunter, preying on such creatures as racoons, skunks, and small rodents. However, they too can be at risk and in need of AIWC assistance.

AIWC had a very busy spring with nine great horned owlets admitted to the centre during April and May.

Owlets are typically brought to the centre either when they are found without a nest nearby or when there is no sign of their parents within the immediate area.

After being administered fluids and provided with a diet of mice for the duration of their short stays, the owlets were each soon ready for fostering with a new family in the wild.

For a second year in a row, AIWC engaged an experienced tree climber and an owlet-fostering expert to find suitable nests in which to foster the young. Fostering of owlets in the wild is made easier as adult owls will provide food to any baby in the nest regardless of their biological relationship.

The result? Successful fostering and all nine owlets were returned to the wild!

Canada geese have also been aided by AIWC. Volunteer rescue drivers will often relocate both the parents and the goslings from where they nest, sometimes atop high-rise buildings in downtown Calgary, to a suitable body of water. Often, our

volunteer rescue drivers in the field perform this task, without the need for any of the geese to be brought to the clinic.

The highest demand for goose relocation was in May, with ten different goose families needing escorts to their new safe locations. With a family of geese having anywhere between five and nine goslings, the relocation is no small feat.

In addition to relocating whole families, goslings are also brought to the clinic for various reasons including, a member of the public taking them to a veterinary clinic; finding a parent goose deceased, or discovering goslings trapped in a building.

After being provided care in the forms of waterfowl-specific food, greens and bloodworms, heat lamps and water baths, the goslings are ready to be fostered out with new families in the wild.

The key to the successful fostering is that, like the great horned owls, geese will accept other babies into the family



Top: Great Horned Owllet
Left: Canada Goose Gosling



with little issue and, in fact, geese are known to babysit goslings for other geese. To date, all gosling fosters have also been a success!

It is an incredible benefit to foster baby animals with new, wild parents. Fostering allows AIWC to save resources for other injured and orphaned patients, and provides the young animals with the opportunity to grow up in their natural environment, with parents who are experts in teaching them the skills they will need as adults.

WHERE DID OUR DONORS APPRECIATION LIST GO? ONLINE!

Recognition of all of our outstanding community partners who generously contribute crucial funds to directly help AIWC help wildlife in distress has moved to our website:

<http://www.aiwc.ca/support-us/community-partners/>

Individual and corporate donors are also listed in our annual report, which can be found online at:
<http://www.aiwc.ca/about/annual-report/>

Unique Patient Alert!



This western painted turtle was admitted in June after being found with minor wounds in the Strathmore area. Less than a week later, his wounds were healed, and he was returned to the wild.

The western painted turtle is the only turtle species native to Alberta. They are an incredibly rare sight here at AIWC, so to have one admitted this summer sure was the buzz around the centre among staff and volunteers during his brief stay!

PRICKLY ORPHAN FLOURISHING IN AIWC'S CARE

By J. Cooke

A juvenile porcupine found abandoned in a back yard in June is now well-settled and gaining weight in care here at AIWC.

Initially, staff faced a challenge in getting her to take milk or solids, which was complicated by the fact that juvenile porcupines do indeed have quills. A typical feeding session involved the heavy gloves that staff must wear to feed her being punctured with quills! After a few sessions, however, the youngster adjusted and became comfortable with the bottle feeding routine. She is now also eating solids, including vegetables and fruit such as apples, carrots, and yams - her particular favourite. Staff are encouraged by her weight gain of almost a kilogram during her first month in care.

The porcupine is currently residing in an outdoor mammal enclosure, with the company of another young porcupine patient we admitted in July. Staff will begin to prepare them both for the wild by hiding food for them to forage for. They will each be released when they are old enough to fend for themselves.

Porcupines are Canada's second largest rodent; females may weigh up to 4.5 kg when full-grown. The 30,000 quills that they are armed with are actually hard-coated hairs with barbs on them. Contrary to popular belief, porcupines cannot "throw" or "shoot" their quills but, if cornered, they will lash out with their tails. Contact must be made, however, for a predator to be quilled by a porcupine.



Juvenile porcupine at AIWC

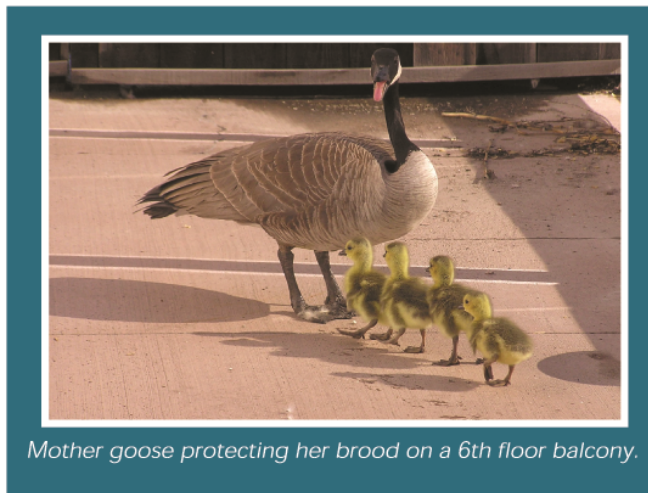
FAQ:

Geese and ducks have nested in a dangerous place and now the family is trying to get to water - what can I do to help them?

By K. Pederson

Mama and Papa birds choose their nesting sites to ensure safety from predators and the ability to be able to fly in and out of the nesting area for feeding. The rooftop of a downtown building or a well-hidden area under a garden shrub may offer a quiet and harassment-free area to roost and be only a 30 second flight to their chosen body of water but, unfortunately, they don't realize they will have to **walk** out with their new babies. Outside of baby season, they don't have to navigate around buildings, roads or barriers on foot!

Canada geese usually make their nest building intentions clear in the downtown core. Each year, AIWC receives calls from people that have watched the courtship, nest building, and finally the patience of the goose



Mother goose protecting her brood on a 6th floor balcony.

family as they start their new family. Urban duck families are less obvious to us as they tend to nest in more sheltered areas and they better fit into their surroundings.

And the day has finally arrived! The goslings and ducklings have hatched and are on the move! They will spend the first 18 to 24 hours drying off in the nest, and then they need to get to water.

Goose and duck relocation is not for the faint of heart and is best done by experienced people, like our volunteer rescue drivers. The main goal is to keep the family together; while the

little goslings or ducklings are easy to corral, doing so will distress the mother if she is not captured first. In many cases, the only way to water is by crossing a busy roadway. The best way to assist in these cases is to call AIWC and stay with the family until we arrive. Do not attempt to capture the birds; quietly prevent the mother from crossing and, if possible, keep them corralled until help has arrived.

If you are able to lead the new family to water without capturing them, remain calm and move slowly. Enlist the help of co-workers or neighbours and arm yourself with butterfly nets to help guide them. While escorting the ducks or geese, be aware of dangers along the way such as sewer grates or off-leash pets.

With just a little help and teamwork, we can make sure our feathered neighbours successfully make it to water, where the little ones will remain in the care of their parents until they learn to fly.

AIWC BABY BEAVER PATIENT GOES VIRAL

By J. Kaiser

Our baby beaver patient was admitted on June 27, 2016 after being found on a Calgary-area golf course, far from any body of water or family of beavers. He was all alone, very small, and had an injured tail, and it's AIWC's suspicion he may have been picked up - and then dropped - by a predator. Upon admission, he was estimated to be about 4 weeks old, and a plan to feed him specialized formula, get him lots of branches to chew on, and ensure he had ample pool time was formed.

He (or she; an x-ray is required to determine the sex of our patient) is doing well in care and is expected to remain at the centre for 2-3 years while he grows up and learns all of the skills a beaver needs to thrive - including learning how to build a lodge. That is the same amount of time he'd be with his parents in the wild.

On Wednesday, July 6, AIWC posted an adorable video of the beaver kit enjoying some pool time and personal grooming on our Instagram account (@albertawildlife). It instantly became our most popular post on that platform, garnering thousands of views and re-posts from other prominent accounts in the first day.

The next day, we also added the video to our Facebook page, and that's where it really took off! Thousands of people liked and shared the video, and in less than a week it reached over a million people on our page alone! Our little beaver kit was an instant online sensation!

Local news was quick to pick up the story, with features in the Calgary Herald, 660 News, the Metro, Global News, and CBC. Not long after, prominent online platforms such as The Huffington Post, BuzzFeed, The Daily Mail, Unilad, Mashable, and The Weather Channel also picked up video, sharing the story of our beaver patient with their subscribers. International requests to post our video came from places such as the United States, Germany, and Taiwan, and he was even featured on a morning news show in Australia!

A cute viral video may not actually solicit a lot of donations, but it still served as great publicity for the work we do here and the patients we feature. The more people who know about AIWC, the more wild lives we can help.

Millions of people have now been able to share the joy in this endearing patient (who manages to hit himself in the face with his own tail - twice!). And we here at AIWC were blown away to see our little 36-second video travel around the world.



Our beaver kit patient enjoying the pool.

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,

Instagram (@albertawildlife) & Twitter (@AIWC)



Talk & Tour: **MIGRATION**

Sunday, October 23, 2016 • Time: 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm • Location: On-Site at AIWC

AIWC Member \$10/person • Non-Member \$15/person



Osprey patient in care at AIWC, May 2016

Directions can be found on our website under "Contact Us" (www.aiwc.ca)

How do Alberta's wildlife know where and when to migrate? Where do wildlife migrate to? Do animals return to the same place every year? Learn all this and more in our Migration on-site talk.

Following the presentation there will be a guided tour of sections of our wildlife hospital and time to meet our educational ambassadors, Gulliver (striped skunk), and Griffin (red-tailed hawk).

Donations of the following items are most welcome: apples, lettuce, oranges, corn on the cob, frozen blueberries, kale, ground beef, cottage cheese, smelts, toilet paper, Kleenex, paper towels, extra-large garbage bags, and puppy pads.

To register, visit our website aiwc.ca under "News and Events", e-mail us at education@aiwc.ca, or call us at 403-946-2361.



Alberta Institute for Wildlife Conservation

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www.aiwc.ca

MYTH BUSTING:

BECOME A MEMBER OF AIWC

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. All new and renewed memberships will be valid until March 21, 2017.

Your membership 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

Here are four ways to renew/purchase memberships:

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

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

Fledgling Birds

By T. Collins



Top: Group of fledgling black billed magpies

Left: Fledgling American robin

Myth #1: You can't touch baby birds because the parents will reject them.

Fact: Birds have a very dull sense of smell. Fledglings have specific calls that the parents will recognize. If a human is hanging around, they will not answer that call until the human leaves. It is perfectly okay to move a baby bird who might be in danger to a safer area - your scent will not scare away the parents!

Myth #2: If the bird isn't in the nest, it has been abandoned.

Fact: Fledgling birds are supposed to be out of the nest! The fuzzy youngsters are at that special age where they are exploring the world before they can fly in the sky. The parents will usually be watching over their fledglings during this stage, still feeding and protecting them. Birds will 'fledge' for approximately two weeks before they're able to fly.

Myth #3: All baby birds are fledglings.

Fact: Just like human children, birds go through different stages as they grow up. Nestlings are those little ones that must stay in the nest, do not yet have any feathers, and are completely dependent on their parents to

provide for them and keep them warm. Fledglings are the next stage, where they are free to move around on the ground, are covered in fuzz, and are growing in their feathers. Other birds, such as geese and ducks, do not go through the nestling-to-fledgling stages, born more independent from their parents than songbirds, but still reliant on them for warmth, protection, and to learn how to find food and fly.

Myth #4: If they're out of the nest, they can defend themselves.

Fact: A fledgling's only defense against predators is to hide or have their parents drive the threat away. Because they cannot fly yet, they cannot readily make an escape - especially from the domestic cat and dog. If you come across a fledgling bird while out walking or in your yard, consider staying away from the area for the next few days, until the youngster has moved to a new location.

Myth #5: An injured or sick fledgling should be taken inside to rest.

Fact: All wildlife are susceptible to stress and that stress can make any injury or illness worse. Picking up a fledgling even they need help, and taking them inside your home, could cause them to panic, since indoors is not a natural or familiar environment to them. That is why all of our volunteer rescue drivers are trained to provide minimal stress to the animal in need being transported to our clinic for care. While waiting for pick-up, orphaned or injured birds should be confined to an appropriately-sized box, with holes for air circulation, which will serve as a safe, dark, low-stress place for them to wait, with as little human interaction as possible.

As always, if any wild animal that you find appears to be injured or orphaned, call AIWC's Wildlife Hotline right away for help and arrange a rescue.

WILDLIFE HOTLINE: 403-946-2361