



Recovery Review

Every wild life matters

Quarterly Bulletin of the Alberta Institute for Wildlife Conservation

Vol. 25 / Issue 1 / Winter 2018

Our 2017-2018 Over-Wintering Patients

By J. Kaiser

North American Beavers

Our female beaver patient who was admitted in 2016, and our male beaver patient who was admitted in June 2017, are both with us for what will be their last winter here at AIWC. Currently spending winter in the den they built together in their shared outdoor enclosure, they will be released together this spring in a few short months.

American Crows

Each admitted as juveniles, one admitted in July and the other in November 2017, these two American crows are suffering from very poor feather condition, which prevents them from flying. They are overwintering together in a large outdoor enclosure, where we ensure they receive a varied diet and lots of exercise. They will each need to go through a full feather molt before they can be returned to the wild.

Swainson's Hawk

This Swainson's hawk was admitted in August 2017 after being found near a roadway in northeast Calgary. Upon exam, it was discovered he was very dehydrated and emaciated, and showed signs of injuries associated with blunt trauma. He regained his appetite quickly, but his ability to fly required more recovery time, and he could not be released in time for migration in the fall. He will remain in care until the Swainson's hawks return to our province in the spring.

Red-tailed Hawk

This red-tailed hawk was admitted in September 2017 after being found lying on the ground, not flying away. She was discovered to have a fracture of the right radius (wing) and some other wounds. After a few weeks of care, the bandages could come off, and she could be moved to an outdoor enclosure for flight conditioning. Unfortunately, she did not recover in time to make her migration with the other red-tailed hawks, and will remain in care until the spring.



American crow patients



Swainson's hawk patient



Female North American beaver patient



Male North American beaver patient



Red-tailed hawk patient



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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

365 days a year, Alberta Institute for Wildlife Conservation is open to admit and care for injured and orphaned wildlife. 95% of the animals we admit are as a result of human activities such as: window strikes, vehicle collisions, hitting power lines, barbed wire, fishing line entanglement or ingestion, domestic cat and dog attacks, and exposure to toxins.

In 2017, 1,412 injured and orphaned animals were admitted into our care. It ranges from \$100.00 to well over \$1,000.00 to rehabilitate an individual animal, depending on their age, species, and injury.

Last year we achieved a 52% success rate for the patients in our care! The best defense mechanism of wild animals is not showing signs of distress when they are injured, and sadly when they do come into care they are often in critical condition. We constantly strive to provide the best level of care to our patients, and it is shown through our amazing success rate in 2017. (The North American average success rate in wildlife rehabilitation is 33%.)

In addition to our Wildlife Rehabilitation Program, we also offer services to the public through our wildlife hotline (403-946-2361). This phone line is open every day of the year to receive calls from members of the public with questions or concerns regarding wildlife. Each year we take over 5,000 wildlife related calls. In our peak seasons from May to August, this breaks down to over 100 calls a day!

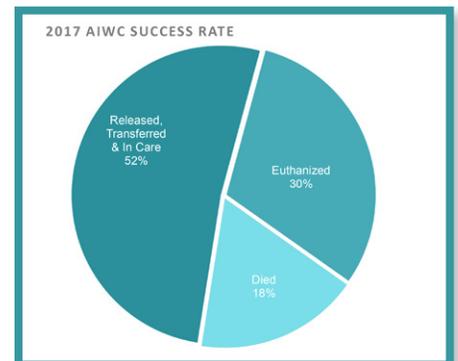
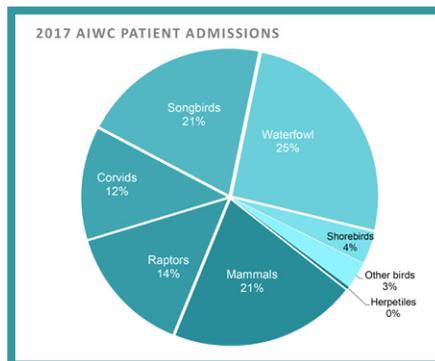
Through outreach programming, we're working to create strong co-existence between Albertans and wildlife. In 2017, our Wildlife Education Program provided wildlife education to over 4,100 individuals!

As we look ahead to 2018, we are excited that this year we celebrate our 25th anniversary. We hope you will join us as we celebrate 25 Years of Saving Wild Lives on Saturday, April 21st, 2018. More info on this event can be found on the insert of this newsletter.

Thank you for your generous support in 2017, which helps ensure Alberta wildlife continues to receive the critical care they need. Your support has saved lives in need and we hope we can rely on your support going forward into 2018.

Sincerely,

Holly Duvall, Executive Director



Sponsor An AIWC Patient: Pine Grosbeak

By C. Vavasour-Williams

One of the largest finch species and the largest of the northern finches, pine grosbeaks inhabit sub-arctic and boreal forests across western Canada and the western United States. In Alberta, grosbeaks are commonly spotted in the forested regions of the province; they prefer pine forests over all other wooded areas. Grosbeaks can be found living in large flocks with some flocks numbering more than 100 birds.

Generally, pine grosbeaks do not migrate, but they may fly to the southern edges of their range in search of food and to escape the harsh winter conditions. During the winter months, grosbeaks are frequent visitors to urban bird feeders; these feeders often provide an important reliable food source when other food sources are scarce.

This pine grosbeak was admitted to AIWC on December 27, 2017 after she accidentally flew into a window

of a home near Madden, Alberta. Concerned that the grosbeak may have injured herself in the collision, the homeowner contacted AIWC and the bird was transferred to AIWC's facility. Her examination revealed blood in her mouth and she was making a gurgling sound when she breathed, suggesting that she had more blood in her respiratory tract. She was also quite docile, uncommon for a wild bird but likely a symptom of head trauma sustained from the collision. She was placed in an indoor enclosure where she could rest comfortably while she recovered. Before she is released she will be moved to an outdoor enclosure where she can acclimate to the weather and strengthen her flight muscles. Then, one warm winter morning, she will be released.

Sponsoring this bird, or any other current AIWC patient, helps with the



Female pine grosbeak patient

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!

Griffin, 2013-2017

By H. Duvall, Executive Director

Griffin, a beautiful dark-phase red-tailed hawk was born in 2013 and unfortunately, as is common with many fledgling raptors, was hit by a car. Thankfully he was able to be rescued and brought to AIWC for care.

As a result of the accident, Griffin suffered from head trauma which later evolved into him permanently losing sight in his right eye. With this level of trauma to his eye, Griffin would never have been able to effectively hunt in the wild and it was found he was also quite passive and unafraid of humans. Staff began to screen him as a potential educational ambassador animal and Griffin attended his first education program in January 2014.

Griffin was a much-loved member of the family at AIWC and it is with great sadness that we announce of his passing on July 29th, 2017.

He was a wonderful animal and was incredibly gentle and patient. He loved to keep an eye on all of the goings on at AIWC from his perch in the hallway, and was particularly vocal with everyone in the spring (breeding season). He will be sorely missed. We love you, Griffin.



Education Update: Community Engagement with MEC

By K. Jansen, Education and Community Engagement Coordinator

Community outreach and education is a vital part of AIWC's mission; after all, 95% of our patients are brought in because of human-related situations, many of which are preventable when people have the right knowledge. AIWC has many different methods of getting information out to the public, such as social media, press releases, newsletters, and education programs, but we also have a team of Public Awareness volunteers who help spread the word, and engage with people from many different communities all over southern Alberta. The Public Awareness team is dispatched to man booths and tables at a wide variety of events and locations throughout the year, but our most frequent partnership in 2017 was with the Calgary Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC).

MEC has proven to be a wonderful place for our Public Awareness team to visit. Being an outdoor-activity store, MEC's clientele are generally already environmental enthusiasts, and are excited to engage with the team on a variety of topics, from learning more about AIWC,

to wildlife-friendly behaviours, and even to discuss the neat birds they've been seeing in their backyards! In fact, during our 6 visits to MEC in 2017, the AIWC Public Awareness team spoke to over 400 people, as well as received over \$800 in funds from members of the public. MEC's staff are also keen to learn more about AIWC and the work we do, and invited us to speak about the organization at one of their morning team meetings so that their staff could learn and ask questions about our patients.

In partnering with MEC for this Public Awareness project, we are not just fulfilling AIWC's mission, but MEC's as well. In addition to partnering with other conservation organizations, such as CPAWS, Freshwater Alliance, and Parks Canada, MEC also donates 1% of their total sales to promoting environmental stewardship and protecting outdoor spaces. They have been wonderful partners in promoting AIWC's mission and vision, and we look forward to continuing to work with them in 2018!



Image taken with permission from www.mec.ca/en/stores/calgary

Honey, I'm Home: 2018 welcomes completed new enclosures at AIWC

By C. Bogstie

Like a gym is essential to an injured athlete's rehabilitation, proper and thoughtfully designed enclosures are essential to the successful rehabilitation of wildlife. And 2017 saw the completion of four new and intricate enclosures at AIWC.

Thanks to the sponsorship of Inter Pipeline Ltd., a much needed outdoor aquatic mammal enclosure as well as an outdoor waterfowl enclosure will be ready for use starting in spring 2018. Additionally, one aerial insectivore enclosure sponsored by Imperial Oil Foundation and one aerial insectivore enclosure sponsored by the Airdrie Rotary Club are already in use for the rehabilitation of our patients.

Having well-constructed and sufficiently-sized outdoor enclosures is essential to the final stages of wildlife rehabilitation. Allowing recovering wildlife enough space for proper exercise and enrichment is crucial to their proper recovery. The new enclosure built for aquatic mammals, for example, includes a large pool area in each separate enclosure and convenient sliding doors between each separate enclosure to allow for easy and calm transferring of patients between enclosures for cleaning.

Each enclosure also is equipped with enough space and enrichment items to provide the means for patients to retreat from human interactions when we're required to enter their space for feeding and cleaning, both easing their stress and helping avoid habituation to humans. Additionally, each of the four new enclosures were constructed using materials safe for animals and are well ventilated and contain several windows to allow adequate light and airflow.

The goal of these enclosures, and any future enclosures, is to improve the recovery environment for our patients and ensure their transition back to the wild. We couldn't provide leading-edge care to our patients without the wonderful support of our community and sponsors!



Enclosures under construction in 2017



Aerial insectivore enclosures



Bluebird patient in new enclosure



Want more AIWC articles?

Read our weekly blog!

Visit <http://www.aiwc.ca/news-and-events/blog/> to read more about AIWC patients and events!



Talk and Tour Schedule 2018

April 7th, 1:00 p.m.: “A Hare-y Situation”.

Delve into the mysterious biology and lifestyles of hares! Learn why baby hares are so often found alone, what special adaptations hares use to survive, and learn all about the methods of rehabilitating them here at AIWC!

May 27th, 1:00 p.m.: “Baby Shower”.

Come celebrate spring with us at AIWC for a special talk and tour, all about baby animals! Discover the wide variety of babies that we look after, the special care that many species require, and what you can do to help baby animals in your own backyards.

June 23rd, 1:00 p.m.: “Scintillating Skunks”.

Think all skunks are the same? Come out to AIWC for this skunk-themed talk and tour, and learn about the different lives urban and rural skunks lead! We will also delve into why skunks spray, how best to get along with the skunks in your area, and how AIWC can rehabilitate over 50 baby skunks every year.

July 22nd, 1:00 p.m.: “Crazy for Corvids”.

Ravens, crows, jays and magpies are often regarded as pest species, yet are some of the most intelligent bird species around. This on-site talk focuses on their complex social structures, problem solving abilities, and the challenges that such clever animals present for local wildlife rehabilitators!

August 11th, 1:00 p.m.: “Beating the Heat”.

We humans are able to escape the summer heat merely by removing layers, hanging out near the air-conditioner, or sipping a nice cold drink – but what do our local wild animals do to beat the heat? Join us for a special presentation all about the special behaviours and adaptations wildlife uses to deal with high temperatures.

September 16th, 1:00 p.m.: “Highway Hawks”.

Many of AIWC’s patients during the fall are juvenile hawks who have been hit by cars. This month’s on-site talk will focus on the hawks of Alberta, why they so often are seen near roads, and the main threats facing them in the wild.

November 3rd, 1:00 p.m.: “Winter Hunters”.

While some animals choose to sleep through the winter, others spend the winter months wide awake – and hungry. Discover how local predatory species overcome the wintry conditions in order to track down their next meal, what’s on the winter menu, and the challenges they face in the wild.

Each talk will be followed by a guided tour of sections of the AIWC facility.

Admission:

\$15.00 per person for AIWC members.

\$20.00 per person for non AIWC members.

To register, visit our website: <http://www.aiwc.ca/news-and-events/upcoming-events/>



Osprey Flies Home

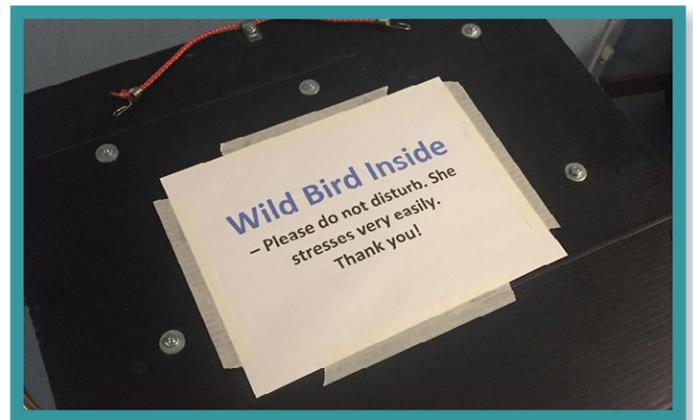
By H. Duvall and J. Kaiser

In September 2017, AIWC admitted an osprey after she was found unable to fly and suffering from a coracoid (shoulder) fracture. Once she had recovered from her injuries, it was too late in the year to release her here in Alberta, since she had already missed her migration south.

Thankfully, in late December, O.W.L. Orphaned Wildlife Rehabilitation Society in British Columbia was in a position to accept her and continue her rehabilitation with them so she could prepare for release back to the wild in a warmer climate.

Thank you so much to our friends and colleagues at O.W.L. Orphaned Wildlife Rehabilitation Society for taking the osprey. Osprey are notoriously difficult to care for in wildlife rehabilitation and we're thrilled with how well she has done and that she's been given the chance to return to the wild. We also owe thanks to WestJet for assisting us in the transfer of the osprey.

It's always so wonderful when amazing organizations come together to help wildlife in need!



Join AIWC for the 6th "Bunnies for Bunnies" Easter Fundraiser!



Easter is just around the corner, and so is AIWC's busiest season of the year! You can help support the care of injured and orphaned wildlife by ordering delicious Purdy's chocolates. 25% of all sales are donated to AIWC!

Purdy's has made ordering your Easter chocolate bunnies and other chocolate goodies easy. Just go to www.purdysgpp.com to register, search for Group number 27575 and start shopping!

Order deadline date is March 15, 2018. You will be contacted for pick-up/delivery arrangements and receive your order no later than March 28. Orders accepted from Calgary and area only.

If you have any questions please contact us at info@aiwc.ca.

Thank you for your support!



Follow AIWC online!

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





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AIWC MEMBERSHIPS

It's Time To Renew Your Membership!

Current AIWC memberships expire on March 21, 2018. 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;
- E-mail info@aiwc.ca; or
- Call 403-946-2361

WINTER HOURS

AIWC is open every day from **9:00 a.m. to 5:00 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/

WILDLIFE HOTLINE: 403-946-2361

Myth Busting: Urban Wildlife

By J. Kozak

Wildlife such as skunks, coyotes, and magpies are common neighbours in our cities and suburbs. So much so that they often earn the reputation as an urban pest. But is that all they are? Do these wild creatures belong in our urban areas? We will touch on this topic in this edition of myth busting.

As our population and city footprints expand, our homes and communities encroach on wildlife habitats, including breeding grounds and migration routes. In addition, the new presence of humans provides a food source for many animals in the form of garbage, pet food, and gardens, and our properties often provide ideal protection from predator species.

The striped skunk, or *Mephitis mephitis*, for example, prefers to adopt an abandoned den, rather than excavate their own. This can mean the open space below a deck or shed is a prime location for them. Being omnivorous, the skunk diet also means they are well suited to urban environments. Similarly, the coyote has also adapted to flourish alongside human communities. Being opportunists, they frequently pursue hares and mice, prey which find both food and safety within urban settings.



Urban coyote



Juvenile skunk

Black-billed magpies have an interesting story of adaptation. They originally thrived in the company of large bison herds where they would feed off of bison carrion and ticks off of the live animals. Following the bison population decline, the black-billed magpies had to adapt to the expanding urban setting in order to maintain their population. Being opportunistic feeders, they have a flexible diet, which makes them well-suited to an urban environment.

All of these species exist in the urban setting due to their adaptability traits and their tolerance of human populations. While some of their actions can appear to inconvenience humans, they are simply doing their best to survive in this very unique ecosystem.

GO GREEN IN 2018!

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