

American Robins and What they Say About our Feline Friends

By J. Kaiser

A true sign of spring, April of each year is when AIWC usually starts to see its first American robin patients – the first few usually being adults just arriving from their migration from Mexico and the southern United States. In 2018, AIWC's first American robin patient was admitted after being attacked by a domestic cat, and though he made a full recovery and was returned to the wild, he wouldn't be the last through our doors.

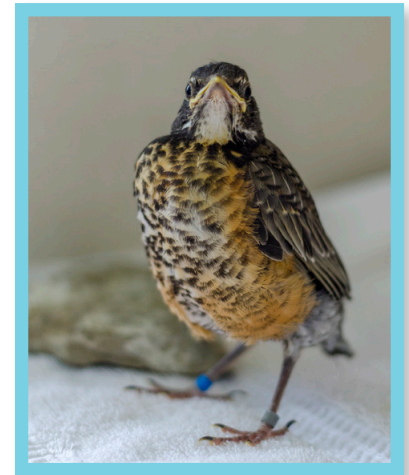
From April through early September, AIWC admitted 70 American robin patients; they are approximately 10% of all birds admitted to AIWC throughout the summer. Of those 70, 22 of them were brought in after being caught by a domestic cat – that's 31%! Other popular reasons for admission to AIWC's care for American robins include: a kidnapped fledgling (10), caught by a dog (6), and hitting a window (4).

What's interesting is that while 31% of our robin patients were admitted after being caught by a cat, robins actually make up nearly 50% of the animals brought to us after domestic cat attacks. Over the summer, AIWC saw 46 patients fall victim to cats, but robins were the vast majority. Other victims of our feline friends include magpies, ducklings, chickadees, several species of sparrows, a sora, and a ruffed grouse. Only five mammals of two types were brought in following cat attacks: bats and white-tailed prairie hares. This is in comparison to our canine companions who were responsible for 13 patients over the summer, including a hare, a raven, a grebe, and a belted kingfisher along with the previously mentioned robins.

Our pets are a serious danger to our wild neighbours. 61% of dog attack victims survived for a second chance in the wild, while only 44% of cat attack victims survived. For robins in particular, only 36% of them survive after being attacked by a cat.

Upon admission to AIWC, cat attack victims require antibiotics for at least seven, but often up to fourteen, days to combat the bacteria found in a cat's saliva, which is deadly to the victim even if they don't have any other visible injuries. For those who do have injuries, they are often serious: fractures and several missing feathers that can require specialized care and delay their ability to be released. If they are a young fledgling, they must remain in care until they are old enough to fend for themselves in the wild.

AIWC estimates the care for a songbird or a duckling admitted after a cat attack to be a minimum of \$5 per day, inclusive of food and medical care. That's over \$100 per patient if they are with us for an average three week stay. For AIWC's 46 cat attack victims over the summer, that's a total cost of almost \$3,500!

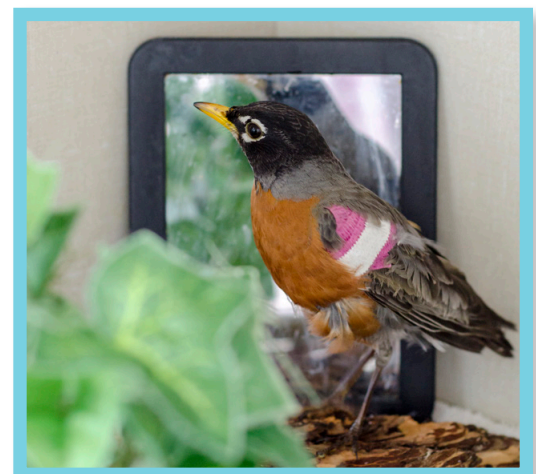


Fledgling American robin



Juvenile robin in outdoor enclosure

At AIWC, most of our patients come to us after unfortunate conflicts with humans, our infrastructure, and, yes, our pets. And many of these interactions are preventable. For pet owners, we must ensure our pets are always leashed and/or closely monitored while outside so they cannot disturb or harm wildlife. If there is an instance of your dog or cat injuring or catching a wild animal, please be sure to give us a call right away even if the animal doesn't seem obviously injured. Small preventative measures can mean life or death to our wild neighbours.



Adult robin with wing bandage

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MISSION:

AIWC is committed to the rescue, rehabilitation, and release of injured and orphaned wildlife. We provide expert advice and education that fosters an appreciation of wildlife.

Volume 25 / Issue 4 / Fall 2018

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Update from the Executive Director

By H. Duvall, Executive Director

In the blink of an eye, another year is coming to a close, and with it comes a chance to reflect on the last year and review our successes and learnings and take that knowledge with us as we look towards the New Year.

Every year our goal is to live out our mission in the best way possible, working hard to improve the standards of wildlife rehabilitation and provide education on the wildlife species we share our spaces with.

Highlights from 2018 include releasing the injured beaver kit we admitted in 2016. After nearly two years in our care, she was returned to the wild in May 2018. Read more of her story in the summer edition of Recovery Review! We welcomed new staff and volunteers, we celebrated our 25th anniversary, unveiled a new logo, and, so far this year we've admitted over 1,000 wild animals into our care. 1,000 individual lives cared for, due to your support!

It truly does take a community of passionate individuals working together to help AIWC succeed. I would like to thank our talented staff, who has worked tirelessly to improve standards of care to our wild patients, to create awareness about wildlife, and to fundraise to make all of this possible, our dedicated Board of Directors, and volunteers that generously donate their time to aid AIWC, whether it be volunteering at special events, stuffing newsletters, or mopping floors at our wildlife hospital.

Thanks to your support, we are stronger than ever, and we strive to continue to get stronger so wildlife will always have a place to come to when in need and members of the public will continue to have a resource for their wildlife related questions. Thank you for making our mission possible.

This Christmas season, please consider including AIWC in part of your Christmas giving, to help ensure that wildlife will not only have a place to go today when in need, but for many more years to come.

Thank you for caring for Alberta's wildlife!

Season's Greetings from all of us at AIWC.

Sincerely,

Holly Duvall, Executive Director



Hide but Don't Seek! Our Mule Deer Fawn Patients

By C. Bogstie

Mule deer are distinguished by their large, mule-like ears and the buck's forked antlers. These deer are most active during sunrise and sunset.

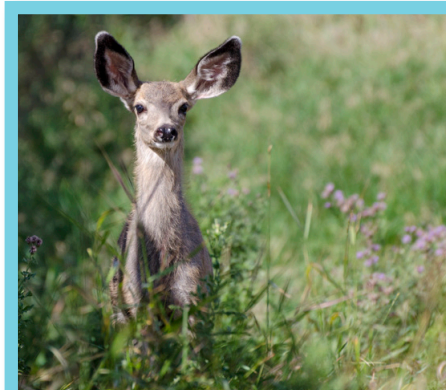
In the Rocky Mountain areas, mule deer fawns are typically born in early to late June. In the first 3-4 days after being born, fawns adopt a "hider" behaviour; they remain lying down, barely moving, to avoid detection from predators while the mother doe keeps a safe distance, except during feedings, so her scent does not attract danger to her young.

It is important to note that sometimes mule deer fawns are accidentally "kidnapped" due to this behaviour, since they are mistakenly believed to be orphans. If a fawn is found and believed to be abandoned, it is important to call our wildlife hotline before intervening so we can help assess the situation. It is always preferable to leave baby wildlife with their best – and natural – caregivers whenever possible.

This summer, AIWC admitted two mule deer fawns into care. The doe was found in Rockyview County and was suspected to be orphaned. Shortly after she was admitted, a young buck was transferred to AIWC from the Calgary Wildlife Rehabilitation Society (CWRS) so the pair could receive care in the company of one another. The buck was brought to CWRS after having been attacked by a coyote and rescued by passing cyclists. Both fawns were very young when first admitted and required a specialized formula that was fed to them by AIWC staff for the first weeks of care. They grew up quickly; they had already lost their spots by early September, and enjoyed regular deliveries of fresh browse to munch on. They were released together in October in a secluded, wooded area, and early reports indicate they're continuing to stick together out in the wild.



Mule deer fawn (doe)



Mule deer fawn (buck)

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Symbolically adopt one or more wild animals! You will receive a 7" plush toy animal (mallard toy is 5") of your choice and an adoption certificate. Price: \$48.00 each, including shipping.



Visit our online store at aiwc.shop or fill out the form included in this newsletter and mail it in to "adopt" your very own wild animal.



Community Engagement Update September 2018: Many Hands Make Light Work!

By K. Jansen, Education and Community Engagement Coordinator

AIWC is very lucky when it comes to our community partners; from regular volunteers who help with on and off-site work, to local businesses sponsoring new equipment and enclosures, we are so grateful to every single person who donates their time to us. Over the last few years, we've also had groups offer their services for intense one-day volunteer sessions, where the group will come out to AIWC (often for the full day), and assist us with a variety of random projects that take more than just one or two people!

One of the most recent groups to come out for one of these intensive volunteer days is the Junior Forest Rangers of Calgary. Not only did they offer their services for the whole day, but they came prepared with their own protective equipment, tools, and a great amount of enthusiasm for whatever jobs we had for them! The high-school aged Rangers were first shown around the facility, and had a wealth of questions about working in the wildlife rehabilitation field. We then got them started with some very necessary tasks, including painting and waterproofing the new aquatic mammal enclosure (using supplies kindly donated by Eco Paint). The Rangers also helped with cutting the grass in the corral where the deer and moose patients are kept, and got to finish off their day by finishing up a couple of new skunk enclosures. They even got to see these new enclosures put to use, with eight of our skunk patients who were moved in that afternoon!

Tasks like mowing, building new enclosures, and tidying up the site may not sound like the most exciting jobs, but they are vitally important for our patients and to ensure that AIWC is functioning as efficiently as possible. However, these tasks cannot be done by our regular volunteers, who have more than enough daily chores to attend to. Having specially dedicated volunteer groups take on these jobs is an amazingly helpful service for AIWC – and, as you can tell from the pictures, can also be a fun and rewarding experience for the volunteers themselves too!

We are always open to having volunteer groups on site to help with larger tasks, whether they be groups looking for a volunteering experience, or work colleagues searching for team building opportunities. If you are part of a crew that is interested in a group volunteering event, please contact Community Engagement Coordinator Katrina Jansen at volunteer@aiwc.ca!



Make a Donation... and Double It!

Your donation will help a wild animal in need; your employer's donation can help another!

Many companies offer donation matching programs and often all that is required is a copy of your donation receipt. Check with your human resources department today!



Sponsor an AIWC Patient - Great Horned Owl

By C. Vavasour-Williams

In 1977, the children of Alberta were asked to vote for an official bird for the province, and they selected the great horned owl, a title the species retains to this day. Great horned owls are one of Alberta's most recognizable birds, easily identified by their feathered "horns". Great horned owls are commonly found across the province, but wooded areas and river valleys are their preferred habitats. They are permanent residents of Alberta; these owls have adapted well to the cold temperatures of the winter months.

This adult female great horned owl was spotted on the side of the road near Crossfield, Alberta on September 12, 2018. At AIWC, her examination revealed that she had blood in both of her eyes, abrasions on both of her feet, and had a suspected left-wing injury. AIWC staff noticed blood on her left primary feathers and discovered that she was missing nearly all of her secondary feathers. She also had bruising to her left wing and the left side of her body. She was also severely dehydrated, likely as a result of having been grounded and unable to fly for a significant period of time prior to being discovered.

AIWC staff took x-rays of her left wing and discovered that she had fractures to two bones in her left wing. Staff used a splint to stabilize the broken bones and wrapped her wing to further stabilize the splint to assist with the healing process.

Her injuries are consistent with having collided with a vehicle; each year AIWC admits several raptors that have injuries consistent with having been hit by a vehicle. She will spend several weeks in AIWC's care while her wing heals. When she is once again able to fly, she will be released in a rural wooded area.

Sponsoring this owl, or any other current AIWC patient, helps with the costs directly associated with their care and rehabilitation. As part of your sponsorship, you will receive a certificate, a glossy 8×10 photograph of your patient, and a tax receipt for the full amount of the sponsorship. Thank you for helping us to keep them forever wild!



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/

Follow AIWC online!

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



Eastern Kingbird – An Uncommon Patient

By K. Pederson

Tyrannus Tyrannus

AIWC has admitted only six eastern kingbirds in the last three years.



Eastern kingbird fledgling

Patient #687 in 2018 was admitted as a fledgling on July 26. It appeared that he had fallen from his nest in a rural Calgary area and was promptly brought to the clinic. He received a

clean bill of health upon examination, but was still too young to be on his own. As these birds are insectivores in their summer habitat, our dedicated staff began by feeding him mealworms every 30 minutes and slowly transitioned him to become self-feeding in an outside enclosure. Three weeks later, he was successfully released on the AIWC grounds, where there was a large population of eastern kingbirds.

Only two species of kingbirds are found in Alberta. Both eastern and western kingbirds are summer visitors, although the western species are a rarer sight. These relatively small birds, smaller than an American robin but larger than a house sparrow, live up to their Latin name; *Tyrannus* means tyrant, ruler or despot when translated. In mating and nesting season, these birds will defend

their territories with forceful displays of chasing, pecking and plucking any invaders. They are not afraid to put the run on crows, ravens, hawks, and even bald eagles. They are even able to recognize and remove the eggs of the notoriously opportunistic cowbirds from their nests.



Eastern kingbird after being released

SPRUCE MEADOWS CHRISTMAS MARKET

Finish your holiday shopping and come visit AIWC at the International Christmas Market at Spruce Meadows!

We will be selling AIWC 2019 calendars, Christmas Card sets, hoodies, window decals, reusable tote bags, and more! Hope to see you there!

Our booth will be in the Gallery on the Green Congress Hall, Booth CH39 on the following dates:

- Friday, November 30th from 10:00am to 8:00pm,
- Saturday, December 1st from 10:00am to 7:00pm, and
- Sunday, December 2nd from 10:00am to 5:00pm.

Admission to the market is required.

For more information, please visit: sprucemeadows.com



Cedar Waxwing

By H. Duvall

This cedar waxwing was admitted after being unable to fly and appearing to have a leg injury. Upon examination at our wildlife hospital, it was found she has a tibiotarsus fracture.

Our veterinarian was able to splint the leg and as you can see on the x-rays, the bone is now aligned and we are hopeful that with a few weeks of cage rest, the bone will fully heal. This little one has an amazing appetite and is still able to eat on his/her own, so we are hopeful that a full recovery can be made.



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ALBERTA INSTITUTE FOR WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

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Buy Your Membership Today!

By purchasing an annual membership, you support local wildlife, conservation, and education at AIWC for a yearly fee of \$35 per person or \$45 for a family.

Your membership fee entitles you to:

- A mailed, paper copy of The Recovery Review, our quarterly newsletter;
- Our emailed ENews;
- Discount prices on select AIWC merchandise;
- Discounts at local businesses; and
- The opportunity to participate at the AIWC Annual General Meeting.

There are three easy ways to purchase or renew your membership:

- Complete and mail in the membership section of the insert attached;
- Complete the secure online form at aiwc.ca; or
- Call 403-946-2361

The Alberta Institute for Wildlife Conservation (AIWC) plans to raise \$500,000 this year through fundraising campaigns and initiatives. It will cost the organization approximately \$25,000 to raise this amount. Funds raised will go to support AIWC's mission. For further information, please contact Holly Duvall, 403-946-2361.

WILDLIFE HOTLINE: 403-946-2361

Myth Busting: Does Winter Wildlife Need Our Help?

By J. Kozak

As the temperature reaches below freezing, we are reminded that winter is just around the corner. For our local wildlife, this triggers the migration of some and the hibernation of others, while some animals remain in Alberta and adapt to the change in temperature. So, what can humans do to support wildlife during the winter season? Do they even need our support? Should we provide food, water, and shelter to ensure that the animals can handle the cold?

The human conscience can create an interesting dilemma as the weather drops. On the one hand, we feel sympathy for our outdoor neighbours and want to help them fend off the winter cold. On the other hand, we also know healthy year-round resident animals already have well-adapted survival mechanisms in order to survive to the seasonal changes in their environment.

Natural areas in cities play an important role in providing a safe place for animals to find shelter and forage for a meal. Providing trees and shrubs in backyards can also offer a winter food source, as well as create an area to collect nesting supplies or a place to seek safe shelter.

Bird feeders can also provide a supplementary food source for birds alongside their natural food sources. Regular cleaning of these bird feeders helps lower the chance of diseases spreading. Also, feeder placement is very important to ensure our feathered friends are out of reach of our domestic dogs and cats. To prevent window strikes, ensure feeders are either very close to windows (less than one metre/three feet away), or very far away (more than three metres/ten feet).

Keeping wildlife wild is the best way to help our urban wildlife and winter visitors. Providing them with a healthy, natural habitat will appeal to their instincts and keep them appropriately wary of their human neighbours.



Pine grosbeak patient in the snow



Northern saw-whet owl in outdoor enclosure

GO GREEN IN 2018!

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