

## A Fa-Moose Friendship

By J. Kaiser

If you recall from our summer newsletter, AIWC admitted a moose patient for care in early June of this year.

Then in August, AIWC undertook one of the biggest rescues in our history. One thousand, two hundred and eleven kilometers of driving is what it took to get a second moose calf patient from north of Grand Prairie to AIWC's wildlife hospital for care.

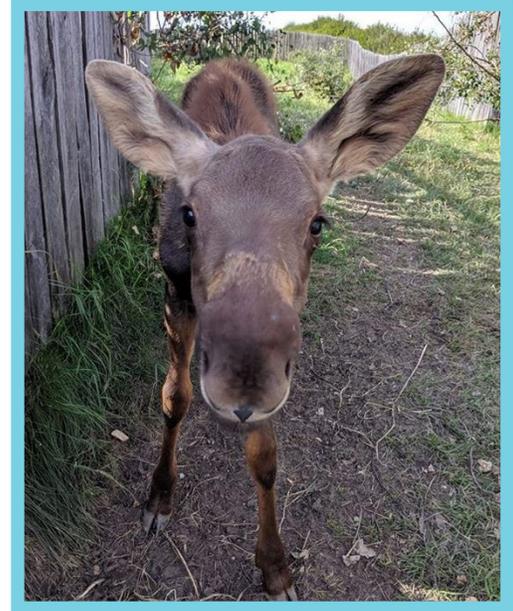
Sadly, this calf was found after her mother was hit by a car. After several other plans had fallen through, AIWC staff knew we were the last hope for this calf to be rehabilitated and have a chance at life back in the wild, and so the roadtrip was undertaken.

Upon her admission, and after a period of quarantine to ensure she didn't have any illnesses, the new calf was introduced to AIWC's other moose patient.

At first, the smaller calf, the first one admitted, was trying to assert her way with her new roommate, but from experience learned at other wildlife rehabilitation centres, that is normal moose behaviour. In no time, the pair was getting along as if they'd always been together.

Of course, that also means growing up together. A large factor in their rehabilitative success is due to the fresh browse (vegetation such as twigs and young shoots) they are provided with daily. Much needed and appreciated donations from the local community help keep these two fed, with favourites including aspen, willow, poplar, birch, maple, and alder. They're growing up incredibly fast, and adult moose will eat approximately 50kg of branches and water plants each day!

That the two moose have each other for companionship will greatly increase their rehabilitative success. They will both be with us until they are released together next spring.



*Moose calf*



*Moose calf enjoying fresh browse*



*Moose calf companions*

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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.

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Patient Update: Black Bear Cub:	3
Sponsor A Swainson's Hawk:	4
Bottoms Up - Common Merganser:	5
A Second Chance for a Chickadee:	6
Great Blue Heron:	6
Volunteer Update:	7
Sora-ing to Freedom:	8

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## Update from the Executive Director

*By H. Lillie, Executive Director*

Wow, what a year 2019 has been! We saw a dramatic increase in patients admitted to us compared to last year: twenty five percent more patients than 2018! We admitted and successfully raised and released four infant Northern flying squirrels, a first for us at AIWC! Our application to care for black bear cubs was approved, and we will be overwintering two moose calves this year, another first for us.

It wasn't just our Wildlife Rehabilitation Program that saw an increase in demand, so did our Wildlife Hotline. This free service provides information to members of the public, addressing their wildlife questions or concerns. We've received over 6,000 calls to our hotline this year, which is 1,000 more than in 2018!

I am so proud of the work AIWC has accomplished this year. And you, our wonderful community, is what makes all of this (and more) possible! As a non-profit organization, we rely on our own fundraising to remain operating and do not receive government support.

On December 1st, we will be launching our 3rd Annual Give the Gift of Saving Wildlife campaign. This is our biggest fundraiser of the year, and as the demand for our services increased this year, so does the need for funding to ensure we can operate. To learn more about our Give the Gift of Saving Wildlife campaign, please visit our website at [aiwc.ca](http://aiwc.ca).

This Christmas season, please consider including AIWC in part of your Christmas giving. This will help ensure that injured and orphaned wildlife have a place to go to today when in need, and also in the future. Thank you for your support of Alberta's wildlife; as human and wildlife encounters rise, they need us now more than ever.

Thank you for caring for Alberta's wildlife!

Season's Greetings from all of us at AIWC.

Sincerely,

Holly Lillie

Executive Director



## Patient Update: Black Bear Cub

By J. Kozak

The snow has already fallen in Alberta, and at AIWC headquarters that means an important period of transformation for one of our patients.

This female black bear cub patient has begun to show behaviour that is consistent with the natural annual bear cycle known as hyperphagia. During this period, the bears will strengthen their appetite in order to fatten up for winter.

Our bear patient's increased diet consists of some small rodents and fish, as well as a variety of fruit, including blue berries, crab apples, mountain ash, raspberries and Saskatoon berries.

She is also being encouraged to develop the natural behaviour of foraging for food. To support this, AIWC staff will bury some of her food, requiring her to learn to dig for it, while berries and ant-filled logs are hidden around the landscape of her large outdoor enclosure.

Staff also ensure she engages her agility skills to climb and explore the large tree structures in her enclosure, something she has shown she is very apt to do, with her keen innate abilities.

At this point, all signs point to a successful release later this fall in accordance with the provincial protocols in place for the rehabilitation of black bear cubs.



*Black bear cub*



*Bear cub practising her climbing*



*Bear cub enjoying the fruits of her foraging*



## Sponsor an AIWC Patient: Swainson's hawk

By C. Slade

The Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*) is named after William Swainson, a British naturalist. During the spring and summer months, these hawks inhabit the prairie regions of western North America, including the prairie habitats of Alberta.

On September 2, 2019 this juvenile Swainson's hawk was accidentally hit by a swather on a farming property in Wheatland County, Alberta. A swather is a large piece of farm equipment used for cutting hay and small grain crops, and these machines often disrupt mice and other small rodent species while the crops are being cut, making for excellent hunting opportunities that attract predatory birds.

The concerned farmer called AIWC and personally transported the hawk to AIWC. Luckily, staff examination of the patient revealed no significant injuries. Unfortunately, however, the swather cut many of the hawk's primary and secondary feathers, making it impossible for him to fly. He will overwinter at AIWC since his feathers have not re-grown in time for this autumn's migration south. When the Swainson's hawks return to Alberta in spring, he will be released to rejoin them after completing a feather moult.

Sponsoring this hawk patient, or any other current AIWC patient you see here or on social media, helps with the costs directly associated with their care and rehabilitation. As part of your sponsorship, you will receive a certificate, a glossy 8x10 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!



*Swainson's hawk in outdoor enclosure*

### SHOP AIWC AT THE SPRUCE MEADOWS CHRISTMAS MARKET

Take care of your holiday shopping and visit AIWC at the International Christmas Market at Spruce Meadows!

You will find us in the Gallery on the Green Congress Hall, Booth CH35 on the following days:

- Friday, November 29, 10:00am – 8:00pm
- Saturday, November 30, 10:00am – 7:00pm
- Sunday, December 1, 10:00am – 5:00pm

We will be selling AIWC 2020 calendars, Christmas Card sets, mugs, window decals, reusable tote bags, and more! Hope to see you there!

Admission to the market is required.

More information can be found at [www.sprucemeadows.com](http://www.sprucemeadows.com)



## Bottoms Up!

By C. Bogstie

Found often in large flocks (particularly in the winter season) on large lakes and rivers, the common merganser lives off a high protein diet consisting mostly of fish. Cruising northern North American rivers, the snazzy mature males can be spotted based on the sharp dark-and-white contrast; and the females by their gray bodies and cinnamon-coloured heads.

Mergansers often nest in holes created by woodpeckers, other tree crevices or natural holes in forested areas. The hatchlings leap from their nest within a day of hatching and begin to follow their mother in catching their own food. Within 12 days, they advance from catching aquatic invertebrates to catching fish.

Earlier this summer, AIWC took in an orphaned merganser found wandering in a roadway not near a body of water - far from where he should have been! Due to the high caloric demands of a high protein diet (in contrast with that of a dabbling duck such as the mallard), the hatchling was quickly housed with a pool containing minnows. He was consuming approximately 100 minnows daily, in addition to being given specifically chosen supplements and vitamins that ensured he was getting all of his metabolic and nutritional needs met.

Once he was old enough, he was moved to be housed full-time in one of AIWC's pool enclosures with a fellow diving duck buddy – a common goldeneye! By the middle of September his adult feathers came in and he was ready for his late September release!

Next summer, if you are out canoeing or floating down the river, you won't have to look for too long before you'll be able to spot some mergansers on the search for dinner – just remember they might, therefore, be bottoms up!



*Common merganser duckling in pool enclosure*



*Merganser patient conditioning for release in pool enclosure*

### Follow AIWC online!

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



### 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/](http://www.aiwc.ca/wildlife-hospital/after-hours-assistance/)



## A Second Chance for a Chickadee

By J. Kaiser

Often patients are admitted to AIWC without much backstory, and since they can't tell us what happened to them, our expert staff are required to perform a full exam on new patients to identify any injuries or areas of concern.

Such was the case with this black-capped chickadee, admitted from Calgary in mid-August. Upon intake, AIWC staff identified signs consistent with head trauma and a severe wing droop. He was determined to have right radius and ulna fractures (in humans, that's our two forearm bones).

Care for this tiny patient included a wing wrap to stabilize the injury as well as daily medication for his other ailments. Right away he was a strong eater, which is always a welcome sign.

After a few weeks of care, it was time to remove the wing wrap and start flight conditioning the little songbird in preparation for release. After several more days, he was ready to go back to the wild, with his total stay in AIWC's care coming to just over a month.

Black-capped chickadees are non-migratory, and can be found in our province throughout the year. These bold passerines are a favourite at



*Black-capped chickadee*

backyard feeders with their familiar calls, and they will notify each other when they find a good source of food. The next time you're watching chickadees take food and hide it away in a cache for later, one of them might just be this little guy!

### GO GREEN IN 2019!

Receive the Recovery Review straight to your inbox, saving paper and postage!

To add yourself to the email distribution list, please send an email to [info@aiwc.ca](mailto:info@aiwc.ca)

## A Pretty Great Blue Heron

By J. Kaiser

This great blue heron was admitted in early August from a south Calgary suburb. Although he appeared to be a healthy fledgling, his intake examination revealed a body temperature more than two degrees lower than it should have been and a lack of appetite.

After a couple of weeks of supportive care from AIWC staff, and a steady increase in appetite (and an increase in AIWC's smelt budget – he was eating nearly 1 kilogram of smelt per day!), he was moved to an outdoor aquatic enclosure to prepare for release.

Once outside, he was quickly flying and perching around his enclosure.

After almost three weeks in care, he was returned to the wild at a remote wetland south of Calgary where he can prepare for migration to Mexico and central America with other blue herons – which we think is pretty great!



*Great blue heron patient in indoor pool enclosure*

## Volunteer Update: Celebrating Volunteer Achievements at the Cochrane and Area Humane Society

By K. Jansen, Education and Community Engagement Coordinator

This year's volunteer appreciation night was a big hit – but then again, how could it not be, considering there were kittens involved? Our volunteers were thrilled to be invited to the Cochrane and Area Humane Society this year in order to celebrate the tremendous achievements of our volunteer team, enjoy games and conversation, win prizes and partake in a fantastic potluck dinner! Our volunteer team also gathered together to celebrate several team members who are celebrating milestone years with us here at AIWC, including the following individuals:

### 5 Years with AIWC

Thamar Derksen  
Heike Lippman  
Nathalie Martel  
Wendy Rice  
Sarah Roberts  
Anna Wingenbach

### 10 Years with AIWC

Suze Detombe  
Caitlin Slade

AIWC now has over 120 active volunteers assisting in many vital roles. Our Wildlife Rehab Assistant volunteers support staff through tasks such as cleaning and preparing food for the patients, as well as helping with animal handling and specialty care, such as tweezer-feeding baby birds! Volunteers are also trained to rescue and transport injured animals, answer questions through the wildlife hotline, assist with spreading the word about AIWC at public awareness and fundraising events, and even write for this very newsletter! AIWC would not exist today if it wasn't for the support of this incredibly dedicated group of people, and we are so grateful to our volunteers for all that they do.

Are you interested in joining our volunteer team? We are recruiting new team members for all roles, and will begin the next round of training in January 2020. Head to [www.aiwc.ca](http://www.aiwc.ca) today to submit your volunteer application, or contact us at [volunteer@aiwc.ca](mailto:volunteer@aiwc.ca) for more details!



*Volunteers enjoying cute kittens, good food and great company, at the AIWC volunteer appreciation night*



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**AIWC MEMBERSHIPS**

**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

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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 Lillie, 403-946-2361.

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**Sora-ing to Freedom**

*By J. Kaiser*

This fall AIWC cared for and released two sora patients back to the wild.

Soras are small water birds common in the marshes of Alberta where they come for breeding season, returning to the southern United States and Mexico for the winter. Soras can sometimes still be found in the prairie provinces as late as October! You can find them walking or swimming in dense foliage foraging for food such as insects and seeds.



*Sora patient in AIWC's care*

The first sora patient was a young chick admitted in late August after having been caught by a cat. No punctures or lacerations were noted, however, whenever an animal is brought in after a cat attack, a long round of medication is often required. Even if there are no clear injuries, the bacteria left behind from their feline predator can still be deadly to a young patient and antibiotics are required.

As the juvenile sora grew up in AIWC's care and recovered from his ordeal, he was moved to progressively larger pool enclosures so he'd be ready for release.

The second sora was admitted just a couple of weeks after the first, suffering from head trauma. With supportive care and the company of her roommate, she quickly made a full recovery.

The pair of soras were released together in mid-September at a secluded wetland so they could meet up with more of their species and prepare to migrate south.

**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!**

