

Recovery Review

Quarterly Bulletin of the Alberta Institute for Wildlife Conservation

Wildlife Conservation through Education & Rehabilitation

ORPHAN FAWNS THRIVING IN AIWC CARE

By J. Cooke

Five fawns admitted to AIWC in the spring of 2015 are currently thriving in their outdoor habitat and will be ready for release in the spring.

Each was brought in as a baby, no more than a few weeks old, during the months of June and July. Whether or not these fawns were truly "orphans" is usually unclear in these situations; they are brought in by well-meaning souls who discover what appears to be an abandoned fawn. In practice, a doe will often leave her babies hidden while she is out foraging for food, relying on the fawns protective colouring, lack of scent, and instinct for "freezing" to avoid detection.

We have also seen situations where the doe has been hit by a car, and the fawn is found wandering and calling. In general, however, the best thing to do if you come upon a fawn is to leave it alone, maybe checking back the next day. Nine times out of ten, the doe is nearby, watching from a safe distance.

When a fawn is brought into the centre, they are typically cold, hungry, and dehydrated. We use a specially designed deer formula, which we heat up and feed to the fawns from a bottle. Feeding fawns several times a day is a time-consuming process, which also involves wiping their rear. This action, which is performed by their



Our mule deer fawns in their outdoor enclosure at AIWC.

mothers in nature, stimulates their bowels and prevents digestive problems.

The fawns remain in their outdoor enclosure to minimize their level of human interaction. They've now been weaned to a diet of solids made up mostly of grains, in addition to the natural browse and grasses found in their enclosure, but they also enjoy regular treats of apples and carrots!

Our five fawns will be released in the spring, when they will be old enough and well able to fend for themselves.



White-tail fawn in the outdoor enclosure (December 2015).



Young white-tail fawn (August 2015) still wearing her spots.



Alberta Institute for Wildlife Conservation

Box 68, Madden, AB T0M 1L0
P (403) 946-2361 • E info@aiwc.ca

www.aiwc.ca

REVIEWS

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.

EDITORS: J. Kaiser, A. Wingenbach

DESIGNER: D. Williams

PRINT: Little Rock Printing

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Volume 23 / Issue 1 / Winter 2016

Adoption Option.....	3
2015 In Review.....	4
Wildlife Cruelty Bulletin.....	5
The Pygmy Owl.....	6
Gone Batty.....	7
Myth Busting.....	8

CONTRIBUTORS:

A. Blaxley, J. Cooke, H. Duvall, N. Martel,
R. Jay-Pang, J. Kaiser, J. Kozak, T. Little,
K. Pederson, C. Vavasour-Williams

PHOTOS:

AIWC, H. Duvall, J. Kaiser, T. Little,
www.Kate.net

Submissions/comments may be sent to the above address or emailed to info@aiwc.ca.

Looking Back At 2015

By H. Duvall, Executive Director

2015 was an extremely eventful year for all of us at the Alberta Institute for Wildlife Conservation (AIWC). With your help, we admitted close to 1,700 patients, answered over 5,000 wildlife related calls, and presented wildlife education programs to nearly 4,000 individuals.

In early 2015 we welcomed Katie Dundon to our staff team as a Wildlife Rehabilitation Technician. Katie came to us with a vast array of experience and skills and we're thrilled to have her on our team. Sadly, we said goodbye to Skye Burgan, Wildlife Rehabilitation Technician and volunteer coordinator, as she returned to Eastern Canada to pursue more schooling. We also said goodbye to Office Administrator and Fundraiser, Deb Oldfield. Deb was involved with AIWC for over 10 years, first as a volunteer and then as a staff member. We are sincerely grateful for all of the work both Skye and Deb did for AIWC and wish them the best in their future endeavors.

2015 also saw changes to our Board of Directors; we said goodbye to Greg Pauling and Shelley Qian, and welcomed Jennifer Kaiser, Spencer Chaisson, and Mary Lay.

In order to strengthen our organization and ensure AIWC is open to help wildlife for many more years to come, we used funding from the Calgary Foundation to develop a sustainable fundraising plan. We thank Open Door Communications for all of their work on this project and are excited to put the plan into action this year!

Towards the end of 2015, we were honored to partner with Inter Pipeline Ltd. they commit to funding over the next five years to create an aquatic bird hospital, aquatic bird and aquatic mammal pre-release facilities, and a mobile wildlife care unit.

AIWC has been serving communities across southern Alberta since 1993, and in 2016 we look forward to the opportunities and challenges ahead. As the demand for our services continues to increase, so does the cost of operating our centre. Thank you for your continued support of AIWC and providing wildlife with the second chance they so richly deserve.

AIWC Forever Home Update

By H. Duvall, Executive Director

We are pleased to announce that the Government of Alberta approved our Community Facility Enhancement Program application, and that AIWC is being awarded \$100,000 for debt reduction on our land.

This increases the amount raised towards the land since May 2015 to over \$370,000! With this, we now need only \$380,000 to purchase our property in full. And Dr. Khuong of Deerfoot Meadows Dental has agreed to match funding up to \$250,000.

If you would like to donate to the AIWC Forever Home Campaign, visit our website: <http://www.aiwc.ca/support-us/aiwc-forever-home/>

Thank you to everyone who has contributed, guaranteeing we will have a home to support the needs of animals for decades to come!

IT ALL COMES DOWN TO THIS

"We don't own the earth. We are the earth's caretakers. We take care of it and all the things on it. And when we're done with it, it should be left better than we found it."

Katherine Hannigan, author

ADOPTION OPTION: *Ondatra Zibethicus*

By C. Vavasour-Williams

This juvenile muskrat was admitted in early December after she was found wandering around the parking lot of the No-Frills supermarket in Airdrie. She will remain in care in her indoor pool enclosure at AIWC until the spring when waterways open up and she can be released.

Adopting this muskrat or any of our other current patients helps AIWC with the expenses associated with their care and rehabilitation, including food and any necessary medication.

As part of the adoption, donors receive an adoption certificate with a glossy 8x10 photograph of their patient and a tax receipt for the full amount of the adoption.

For more details visit aiwc.ca/support-us/adopt-an-animal or call 403-946-2361.



ONLY \$40 To Adopt A Small Mammal

On-Site Wildlife Talk & Tours

Sunday, March 20, 2016

Time: 1:00pm - 3:00pm

Presentation: Baby Wildlife

Admission:

- AIWC Member Price: \$10/person
- Non-Member Price: \$15/person

Celebrate the start of spring by coming to AIWC and learning more about Alberta's wildlife babies. We will discuss the natural behaviours of baby wildlife, including: white-tailed prairie hares (jackrabbits), deer fawns, ducklings, nestlings, fledglings, and more!

Following the talk will be a guided tour and time to meet our educational ambassadors, Gulliver (striped skunk) and Griffin (red-tailed hawk).

To register for our on-site talk, visit our website at aiwc.ca, e-mail us at education@aiwc.ca, or call us at 403-946-2361.

Not yet a member? Sign-up online at aiwc.ca and receive discounts for all on-site talks and more!

JOIN AIWC FOR THE 4TH ANNUAL "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 # 27575 and start shopping!

Order deadline is March 8, 2016. You will be contacted for pick-up/delivery arrangements and receive your order no later than March 21. Orders accepted from Calgary and area only.

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

Thank you for your support!

(c) www.kate.net



AIWC's Wildlife Education Programs

Through outreach programming, we're working to create a strong co-existence between Albertans and wildlife animals. In 2015, our wildlife education programs were provided to more than 3,800 members of the public.

By educating children about nature and environmental awareness, we are informing Albertans of how their actions impact the environment and to think on a larger, provincial scale.

If you would like to book a wildlife education program for a classroom or group, please contact us at 403-946-2361 or education@aiwc.ca

2015 In Review: Overall Annual Stats

By J. Kaiser

Last year turned out to be another incredibly busy year for AIWC; patient admissions continue to increase each year, and in 2015 AIWC admitted a record 1,675 individual orphaned, injured, and oiled wildlife patients, of 141 different species.

Mother Nature was kinder to southern Alberta in 2015 than in the past couple of years; thankfully we had no extreme flooding or severe hail storms to contend with. It was still a busy spring and summer season for our staff and volunteers, however, and it began quickly - last May brought us baby waterfowl and nesting songbirds three weeks earlier than usual.

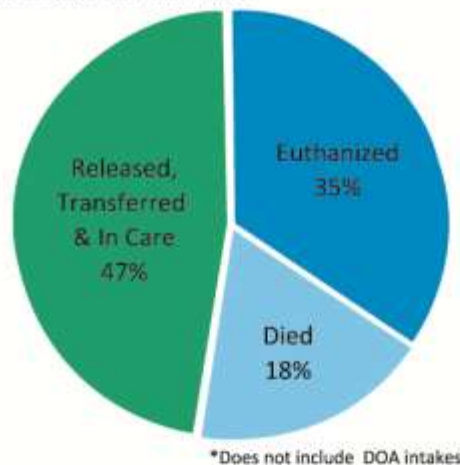
Mallard ducks were the most frequent patient of 2015, with 158 admitted for care, and 101 of them successfully released back to the wild. Magpies and white-tailed prairie hares round out the podium, at 145 and 140 admissions respectively. Honourable mention also goes to the Canada goose, with 103 patients throughout the year and 84 of them rehabilitated and returned to the wild.

While our overall raptor intakes were down by 3% from 2014, we continue to see an increase in the number of great horned owls who



Brought in on December 30 with injuries to his right wing and feet after being caught in netting on a property east of Calgary, this Great Horned Owl #1675 was the last admission for 2015, and is expected to make a full recovery.

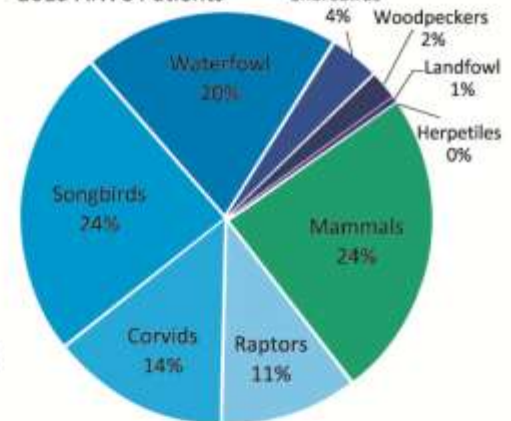
2015 AIWC Success Rate



pass through our doors, admitting 55 in 2015, resulting in a 9% increase.

2015 also saw a significant increase in mammals admitted to the centre. In years past, mammals made up only approximately 15% of our patients, but last year we admitted a record 405 mammals, representing 24% of our intakes for the year. A large increase in skunks certainly contributed to this - we provided care for 71 striped skunks and in July alone, we had over 30 skunk kits in care at once! This figure is more

2015 AIWC Patients



than double what we saw in 2014, and we were able to return 55 of them back to the wild.

Herpetiles (amphibians and reptiles) continue to be the least common patient at AIWC, and in 2015 we admitted only five, two of them domestic species we transferred elsewhere for care, and three tiger salamanders - and all three were successfully released back to the wild!

In total, we were happily able to release 569 animals back to the wild, with another 17 still in care or over-wintering at the centre while they wait for release in the spring. We also transferred 135 admitted patients to other, more appropriate organizations for care, such as when domestic animals were brought to us by mistake (e.g., domestic ducks, mice, or pigeons), or when we transferred a patient to another wildlife rehabilitation centre for release, as was the case with the infamous stowaway opossum from Toronto.

These numbers do mean fewer than half of our 2015 patients recovered well enough to be released, due in large part to the nature and severity of the injuries and ailments our patients are afflicted with by the time they are able to be rescued and admitted for care.

Of course, we wouldn't be able to assist any wildlife without the generosity of our supporters. Thank you to those who donate time, funds, and supplies - we couldn't do it without you!

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

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



AND follow on us



Facebook and
Twitter (@AIWC!)

Wildlife Cruelty Bulletin

By N. Martel

With each New Year, there is renewed hope that awareness of acts of cruelty against wildlife will propel more and more people to report them. It is always an uphill battle, but reporting really is the first critical step in getting these incidents investigated. However, it can be discouraging to report when we consider how few cases actually end up making it to court.

When it comes to harmful acts against wildlife (excluding poaching and hunting-related offences), the last case in Alberta to go to court was in 2010, where Syncrude was found guilty under the Migratory Bird Convention Act for failing to store a hazardous substance in a way that would prevent contact with wildlife, as well as of depositing a harmful substance to migratory birds. 1,600 ducks died from landing in Syncrude's tailings ponds (R. v Syncrude Canada LTD, 2010 ABPC 229).

According to the National Centre for the Prosecution of Animal Cruelty (a brand new resource created by the Canadian Federation of Human Societies, see <http://cfhs/ca/ncpac/>), prior to the Syncrude case, there were few successful prosecutions of crimes against wildlife over the last 30 years:

- R. v. J.S. (2003, Newfoundland and Labrador) - shooting of a crow then giving it to a dog to play with. Acquitted.
- R. v. Beausoleil (1982, 339412, New Brunswick) - emaciated and deceased elk kept as a pet. Found guilty and fined, ordered to pay restitution, and received a 5-year prohibition from owning animals.
- More recent prosecutions in Alberta involved poaching and trafficking in wildlife parts (R v. Thomson, 2015 (ABPC 63); R v. Tschetter, 2012 (ABPC 167), and R. v. Legrande, 2011 (ABPC 286).

Naturally, it is very difficult to have faith in the judicial system when so few cases even make it to court.



AIWC personnel carefully clean waterfowl caught in an oil spill.

A recent case from December has come to the attention of AIWC whereby a neighbour was trapping nuisance wildlife (squirrels), which unfortunately is legal within the City of Calgary when on private land. The complainant in this case has been tenacious and highly determined to be heard.

It is a good reminder that despite feeling disheartened by the difficulties in getting these cases investigated and prosecuted, it remains critically important to keep reporting. Our wildlife depends on our willingness to impact the judicial process in a positive and effective way, and that starts with consistently reporting cruelty.

Here's hoping there are more successful prosecutions in 2016.



What A Crow

By R. Jay-Pang

2015 was my first summer as an AIWC centre volunteer, and I found crows to be one of the more common

patients at the clinic. As a newbie, I was initially wary of these mysterious and noisy birds. I'd seen videos online about the intelligence of crows, but didn't have any first hand interactions with them until now.

In one of the outdoor enclosures, there were three crows and a raven preparing for their eventual release. I prepared and brought them food according to the nutrition manual, and distributed it in a few dishes to make it easier for the

birds to see and share the food.

When I entered the small enclosure filled with these unfamiliar, hungry birds, I didn't know what to expect or how my presence would be received, but one of the crows gave me something to think about that day.

After I placed the food, one of the crows diligently inspected my offerings, and then went to stand beside one large shallow - and empty - dish that was already there when I arrived. Giving me direct eye contact, he touched the rim of the dish with his legs to make it move. He did this over and over until the dish flipped upside down, all the while staring at me. Then it hit me: he was asking for water!

I hadn't yet brought fresh water to the enclosure, and this crow wanted to make sure I didn't forget! I quickly brought the group fresh water and this story ends with the crow immediately quenching his thirst.

I still don't know how the crow figured out how to communicate with me so clearly, but I do know I understood his message and I will never see these interesting, smart animals in the same way again.

THE PYGMY OWL

By T. Little

In December, three girls and their father were travelling down a busy highway when the girls spotted a tiny owl on the road. Sensing he needed help, they took him home where a friend told him what to do and who to call: the AIWC Wildlife Hotline. They found a sweater to keep the owl warm and gently put him into a box.

The family was connected with a volunteer rescue driver - me - and I arranged to pick up the owl. Based on the description, I expected to see a saw whet owl - a far more common sight in Alberta. I was surprised that the little patient turned out to be a rare pygmy owl Native to Alberta, they mostly reside in the mountain forests, but sometimes follow food sources into the foothills during the winter.

After determining he had no visible injuries, I suggested we take him back to where he was found to see if we could release him right away. It was possible he was just in shock and did not have to be admitted to the centre (captivity can be very stressful on wild patients, especially if they don't require it).

We took the little owl (whom the girls had aptly named Hootie) to a safe, treed spot near where they had found him, but his attempts to fly away weren't successful. Unfortunately, he had injuries that I could not see and he would need to be admitted for a full exam and medical care.

At the centre, it was found he had likely been hit by a car and had internal injuries that included a punctured air sac. He was administered fluids and put in an indoor enclosure to rest, awaiting x-rays.

The next morning I returned to AIWC to good news - he had made it through the crucial first night. Unfortunately, a couple of days later I received a phone call; the owl's injuries were far too much for him to be returned back into the wild - he had an irreparable chest fracture and was unable to eat on his own.

I couldn't help it - I cried. Everyone involved in his care and rescue had the same goal: to see this little soul get well and be set free once again. The centre called the family to give them an update, and I did, too. I said to tell the girls that because of their actions, this owl was given the kindness, compassion, care that he so deserved and he wasn't left to suffer on that road.

This little soul touched many hearts. May the next owls those girls see be healthy and flying free where they belong.



FAQ:

Should I provide a heated water bath for my neighbourhood birds in the winter?

By K. Pederson

With the onset of winter, we say goodbye to our summer avian visitors and welcome the birds that overwinter in our area, such as Bohemian Waxwings, Redpolls, White-Winged Crossbills, and Pine Grosbeaks.

No matter the season, birds need drinking water every day. In the winter, they can rely on berries for their hydration. They can also melt ice and snow for drinking water, but that takes energy that could be better used to survive our harsh winters.

Providing a heated birdbath can help them out, and, when set up properly, can alleviate any potential hazards.

There is a concern that providing a heated birdbath in winter will allow the bird's feathers to get wet, freezing after they bathe. Generally, healthy birds do not bathe in freezing weather, and they are well insulated to withstand damp feathers. Reports of finding wet, dead birds can be attributed to several reasons; most likely the cause was a cat attack, or the bird was already unhealthy and did not have the reserves to survive the dampness.

Another concern many have is that birds will get stuck to metal fences after visiting a bird bath (ever take that dare to lick a chain link fence?). But birds do not have soft, breathable skin on their feet; their toes and legs are protected by a scaly covering, much like leather. They are able to walk on ice and perch on cold metal surfaces even when their feet are wet.

FAQ continued on page 7...

GONE BATTY

By A. Blaxley

Bats sometimes get a bad rap, playing the villain in movies and horror novels, but they are a vital part of the planet's (and our province's) ecosystem.

Bats are the only mammal capable of true flight and there are nine known bat species found in Alberta.

Our Albertan bats consume only insects, and in high quantities: a little brown bat can eat over 600 mosquitoes in a single hour.

Currently, AIWC has both silver-haired and little brown bat patients over-wintering, and the four small patients will receive daily care until they can be returned to the wild in the spring.

"One of the bats was admitted here due to a collision with a window, and the others were found on the ground due to unknown reasons -this poses an issue, because bats like to launch into flight from a height, so it's difficult for them to get back into the air from the ground," explains Katie Dundon, Wildlife Rehabilitation Technician. "They've been here since September last year. They weren't badly injured, but insects were becoming scarce as winter came. We're feeding them mealworms until spring, at which point we'll release them."

While our province's bats help control pesky insect populations, around the world bats help support agricultural industry, pollinating plants like bananas, almonds, and dates. They make our summer nights more pleasant by reducing mosquitoes and other bothersome insects, support our food sources, and they are pretty cute, too.

Bats are also long-lived; a banded little brown bat observed in Alberta as an adult in October 1975, was re-sighted in February 2009, making it at least 35 years of age at that time. However, bats are also the slowest reproducing mammals for their size, with most bat moms only having one pup a year, making them an extremely vulnerable species.



Top Right: little brown bat;
Left and bottom right: silver-haired bats

How You Can Help Bats?

Build a bat house, which gives these little creatures safe places to roost, hibernate and raise their young.

Eliminate pesticide use.

Support the protection of important bat habitats like mature forested areas, cottonwood trees in riparian areas, abandoned farmsteads, and wetlands throughout the province.

Donate to AIWC or 'adopt' a bat, and support the care of bats in need.

Encourage others to respect and tolerate bats!

... FAQ continued

To encourage drinking while discouraging bathing, ensure your bird bath is shallow and add a secure framework of sticks or twigs for perching. You may also cover the bottom with stones, or place a large rock in the water to make it inaccessible for bathing.

The safest way to warm the water in the bird bath is by using an immersion heater. The use of glycerin (it acts as an anti-freeze) is not recommended because it is harmful to birds.

Just like keeping your feeders full, it is important to maintain your winter bird bath. Make sure bird feeders and baths are regularly cleaned to prevent any potential spread of disease. Then all that's left to do is enjoy your feathered company year-round!





Alberta Institute for Wildlife Conservation

Box 68, Madden, AB T0M 1L0
P (403) 946-2361 • E info@aiwc.ca

www.aiwc.ca

MYTH BUSTING:

AIWC MEMBERSHIPS

It's Time To Renew Your Membership!

Current memberships expire March 21, 2016. New and renewed memberships will be valid until March 21, 2017. 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 entitles you to:

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

Four Ways To Join:

- 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

GO GREEN FOR 2016!

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

ResQwalk

Helping animals one step at a time.

Resolved to get fit in 2016? Your steps can support AIWC!

Download the ResQwalk app on your Apple or Android device and tracking kilometres from your daily stroll, jog, or dog walk can earn money for AIWC!

Visit resqwalk.com or your app store for more information!

Not Everyone Hibernates

By J. Kozak

It's cold outside, with the temperatures mostly below zero. Clearly any animal that has vanished from the human radar is either on vacation in warmer climates or in hibernation mode, right? Not necessarily. In this edition of Myth Busting, we set the record straight.

During the winter, the availability of food for animals in Alberta becomes scarce.

As a result, many birds migrate to warmer regions where their food sources remain available. Mammals, like caribou, elk and some species of bats, will travel in search of a meal. Some species of fish may swim south and certain insects will travel as far south as Mexico in order to escape the cold, while others simply burrow themselves into the soil.

Hibernation is another solution that some species turn to for winter survival. During hibernation, the animal goes into a state of inactivity, where its temperature, heart rate and metabolic rate all drop to preserve energy. Prior to entering hibernation, the animal essentially needs to hit the all-you-can-eat buffet to store a sufficient amount of food, which they convert to fat, in order to sustain hibernation.

Now the question lies: which animals hibernate and which don't? In Alberta, the beaver, muskrat and porcupine actually do not hibernate. During the cold spells, they will seek shelter for long periods in their dens, but they have to remain actively in search of food. Ideally, they hoard enough food in their dens during the fall in order to support this need.

Skunks have a unique adaptation to the cold. While skunks don't officially hibernate, they will enter a state known as torpor. During this state, their body temperature, breathing rate, and metabolism all drop. What differentiates torpor from hibernation is that the animal can wake much more easily, so skunks may wake up occasionally throughout the winter. If the weather is warm enough, skunks may even head out in search of food, then return to their den and go back to sleep. Several skunks will usually share the same den, also allowing the group to preserve more body heat.

That wraps up this edition of myth busting. Remember, if you happen to see animals like porcupines and skunks out and about in the winter, don't worry, it's normal! Of course, if you see an animal in need, please call AIWC's Wildlife Hotline.



This least weasel is one of two currently in care at AIWC. Least weasels are another mammal that does not hibernate - instead their coat turns white to better protect them from predators and they remain active in winter months.

WILDLIFE HOTLINE: 403-946-2361