

# Recovery Review

Quarterly Bulletin of the Alberta Institute for Wildlife Conservation

Wildlife Conservation through Education & Rehabilitation

## Fawntastic Days!

~ by K. Pederson

**J**une 2, 2012 – Fawn Season began at AIWC! A tiny newborn white-tailed deer fawn had been found in a grassy ditch outside of Okotoks. In less than a week, AIWC had admitted more fawns, and the summer and fall were spent nurturing these orphans.

Fawns are typically born between mid-May and mid-June. Both mule and white-tailed deer leave their mild-scented newborns alone in long grasses and other natural hiding places, coming back only to feed them. This behaviour helps protect the vulnerable young from predators.

People who come across a hidden fawn often assume it has been abandoned, but the mother is probably watching from a safe place. AIWC discourages people from

picking up fawns unless they show signs of distress or injury, and our organization returns any healthy, newly-found fawns to their original location so they can be reunited with their mothers. After all, a wild mother is the best mother, and if a fawn is returned quickly, the deer mothers will still be in the area and will accept their babies back without hesitation. Even with these preventative policies, AIWC still cares for four to eleven fawns annually.

Although they usually only weigh 3.5 kgs when they arrive, fawns admitted to AIWC have a consistently high survival rate. Many are orphans that, for a variety of reasons, cannot be returned to their found locations. Five of this year's fawns fell into that category. There are always

injured fawns as well. This year, one was admitted with a broken front leg and another with a misaligned jaw. With professional AIWC care, both fawns' injuries healed completely.

AIWC generally admits more white-tailed fawns since they are more urbanized than mule deer. This year was no exception; the seven "white-tails" were found close to urban city parks. The lone mule deer fawn came from the rural Sundre area. This fawn was indeed abandoned, as the finder observed the mother deer depart with her other baby and never return.

After their initial assessments and a few days of cage rest, the fawns spent the rest of their time at AIWC in a very

*See Fawns continued on p3*



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[www.aiwc.ca](http://www.aiwc.ca)

**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.

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DESIGN: Liz Phinney

PRINT: Seitel Solutions Canada Ltd.

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Submissions/Comments may be sent to the above address.

# New AIWC Membership Program Starting in 2013!

## MEMBERSHIP CARDS will be issued that offer...

- ... LOCAL RETAILER DISCOUNTS!!
- ... Two 'member-only' information sessions each year
- ... Other benefits to members will be announced in future issues of the *Recovery Review* and on our website - [aiwc.ca](http://aiwc.ca)



New membership year starts March 21, 2013.

Any new or renewal applications between Nov. 21, 2012 and March 21, 2013 will be valid until March 21, 2014

... Single Membership fees remain at \$35.00/year

*Call 403-946-2361 or go to [aiwc.ca](http://aiwc.ca) to sign up!*



*A white-winged crossbill's interesting 'crossed' bill is perfectly designed to pry the seeds from pinecones, their main food source.*

## Book an AIWC Education Program

Ask about our corporate talks, workshops, and guest speaker topics. Guaranteed to entertain and amaze, AIWC can add flavour to your class, meeting, or special event.



[education@aiwc.ca](mailto:education@aiwc.ca)  
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## Fawns *cont'd from pt*

large outdoor field. By the end of August they were fully weaned, browsing for willow and natural food sources in parallel with supplemental feed.

### November 4, 2012

– First release day! The fawns had long since lost their spots, and grown a lot bigger. Transport pens had been placed in their corral well before the big day arrived so the fawns could get used to them. Two skittish white-tails and the mule deer were guided into the pens and carried into a horse trailer. The land to which they were being taken is a safe, protected, and privately owned area. Fields, forests and a river



followed. Within five minutes, with barely a look back, both were making their way to the river. The second white-tail was much more timid when it came to exploring her new surroundings, but the Rescue Team waited patiently until she, too, made her way into the forest.

awaited their arrival!

The mule deer was the first one out of the transport pens, and he did not hesitate to start grazing and find his way to the forest. The first white-tail quickly

Four wild fawns await the second round of releases. When that day arrives, they will also be released in suitable, safe habitat. Then it will be time to gear up for the 2013 Fawn Season.

# Species Profile:

## Belted Kingfisher

### *Ceryle alcyon*

~ by T. McDougall

The fast, repetitive *crrrr-crrrr-crrrr-crrrr* call heard over a clear, freshwater pond, lake or river means there is a belted kingfisher (*Ceryle alcyon*) about. These distinct birds spend their summer breeding months in Alberta and are a delight to catch sight of on a sunny day.

The belted kingfisher is the only type of kingfisher to nest in Alberta. Their profile can be distinguished by their shaggy bluish crest and strong, straight bill. Belted kingfishers are generally bluish-backed with white under parts, and they get their name from their showy ventral bands of colour. Males sport a single



*The most recent belted kingfisher admitted to AIWC had soft tissue damage that prevented him from flying. He was found at a downtown construction site near Inglewood, a community close to kingfisher habitat along the Bow River.*

bluish band across their chest, while the more colourful females have both the bluish chest band and a rust-coloured belly belt as well.

True to their name, kingfishers are fishing birds. Often seen perching on a bare branch over clear bodies of water, they hunt fish by diving headfirst from their perch to catch small fish, aquatic invertebrates or tadpoles. Kingfishers also have the ability to hover over the water before diving in headfirst. The belted kingfisher can dive down 60 cm to snag its prey or escape from predators such as hawks.

Belted kingfishers also have a unique

nesting habit. In a mated pair, both the male and female work together to create their nesting burrow in an earthen bank. They use their bills and feet to dig out the soil, sometimes as deep as two meters. This process can take two to three weeks depending on the type of soil being excavated. Once constructed, the nest burrow is home to six or seven eggs that are incubated for up to twenty-four days. Come fall, the birds make their way to winter habitats that extend from the continental US through to the Caribbean islands and the northern crest of South America.

# Calendar of Upcoming & Ongoing Fundraisers

## • November 4 through to April 30

### **fuellingchange.com ...**

AIWC is a finalist to win \$100,000 from Shell and only you can help us win it! Register on Shell's website *fuellingchange.com*, then shop at Shell (any purchase counts, even just a pop!) Save your receipts and redeem them on the website for votes. Locate AIWC in the \$100K category ... 'Wild Lands for Wild Lives' ... and cast those votes for us! The top 3 win - AIWC is currently in 2nd, so let's make sure we stay there!! ONLY YOUR VOTES WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN!!

## ONGOING

### • 2013 AIWC Calendars On Sale! Only \$10

This year's calendar features AIWC patients in a convenient 8"x10.5" size. Please email [info@aiwc.ca](mailto:info@aiwc.ca) to place your order.



### • Returnable Beverage Container Pick-up

AIWC will be pleased to pick up your refundable beverage containers. Please email [info@aiwc.ca](mailto:info@aiwc.ca) to make arrangements or drop them off at any of the bottle depots in Calgary (except Sunridge) or Airdrie. Label your bags with our name or, depending on the location, drop them in the bins marked AIWC.

### • Coppers For Critters

**Every Penny Counts!** Championed by Mme. Sciarra's zoology class, St. Isabella School raised \$680. Mme. Post's class alone raised \$171! **Can your class top that?!** All of 'coppers' buddies are welcome too (toonies especially!) Drop off your donation in the Annexe at AIWC, or email [info@aiwc.ca](mailto:info@aiwc.ca) and we will be happy to pick-up.

## Fundraising Update

### Sealed Bid Auction



The auction of the painting 'My Summer in France' raised \$226. A very special thanks to the artist, Patrick Grassick for his generous donation of this gorgeous painting.

### Indiegogo

Thanks to our supporters and friends, the Indiegogo campaign raised \$2838. AIWC would like to thank our Crowd Funding Team who worked hard to put this innovative project together.

## MUSICIANS GONE WILD 2012

BRILLIANT! ENERGIZING! DELICIOUSLY ENTERTAINING  
THE WHOLE NIGHT THROUGH!

An incredible line-up of songcraft geniuses took centre stage at the Irish Cultural Centre while volunteers from AIWC and the Foothills Bluegrass Music Society came together to make the evening run smoothly. Keith Mills and Robbie Bankes of Creosote Sound made it all sound great!

**The 2012 AIWC Benefit Concert event raised spirits and over \$2000!! On behalf of the wildlife in need, THANK YOU to everyone who helped make it a success!!!**



Berna-Dean Holland  
(center) & Band

# Crazy Quirks of Rescue Drivers



~ by B. Wright



**Main: Lots of boxes; Above: An innovative approach to catch a hawk**

Now, I do not speak for all Wildlife Rescue Drivers... just the hard core ones with many years of experience. We are committed! (Or maybe we should be, if you get my drift!)

Many years ago we started with AWC's in-class training. We absorbed the basic knowledge and supplied ourselves with basic tools needed to catch wildlife in distress, but we did not truly foresee what the real world had in store...

When we got our initiation call, we discovered we were capable of doing this 'rescue thing,' or at least the rescue we first managed to get ourselves through. You see, except for picking up critters already brought in to vet clinics or ones that have been placed in a box by a caring finder, every call is different. We never quite anticipated running through a church or a plus-15 downtown with a long-handled net trying to catch magpies; or aiding a skunk that fell in a hole at a construction site or a coyote that was hit by a car but still mobile; or capturing the hawk that, despite an injured wing, could still manage to get on top of a roof; or searching for the variety of animals that managed to get stuck in chimney flues; or relocating many, MANY duck and geese families that nested in the most peculiar places before trying to take their youngsters off the top of a building or across a major roadway to the nearest water. Oh, the stories we could tell! With every adventure, our resourcefulness was tested and our skills were honed.

As the years flew by, we Rescue Drivers became quirky, especially because we actually try to plan for every situation. We

'love' cardboard boxes. Yes, whenever we see a box, we picture which critters could be transported therein; we ask people for boxes then save them...lots of them...and even label them with our names in case another driver considers getting their hands on 'our' lovely box! We choose our liner towels carefully:

blue ones for water birds; green ones for animals who spend time in trees or on green grass; brown or variegated ones for hares or other animals that hang out in dried grass or earthy areas. Of course, they are different sizes to fit our lovely boxes. There are gloves for all occasions, and every type and size of net has a specific use. (I was the envy of all the guys when I went to rescue a hawk in a large in-

dustrial building with my net that had been super-sized with extension handles!)

Then there are the little things... hand warmer packs with special towels to keep baby birds warm; a working flashlight (I combine this with a mirror during chimney flue rescues so I know what I am reaching in to catch); bolt cutters for trimming barbed wire around a struggling raptor; a syringe and bottled water for keeping up to a dozen critters hydrated during pickups in the summer heat; paperwork for gathering patient history; pamphlets and newsletters to leave with the finders...and the list goes on.

It is every driver for themselves when it comes to organizing so many supplies. My car always seems to be in disarray shortly after I set it straight. One driver has even converted his passenger seat into a desktop to ensure he is organized at the rescue site.

Yes, we are a quirky bunch, but we Rescue Drivers are also AWC's dedicated frontline team whose efficient speed and resourcefulness helps save lives.

So when you find wildlife in distress, call AWC - our team is READY TO RESCUE!

## Sponsor a recovering animal...

Each issue of the *Recovery Review* will feature one of the current patients up for 'adoption'. By donating a fixed amount for a featured animal, donors choose how their money is spent. In return, the donor receives an adoption certificate, a glossy 8x10 photograph, and a tax receipt for the full amount of the donation. AWC's *adoption option* is particularly popular as a gift!

### LARGE RAPTOR (\$70): Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*)

This juvenile Swainson's hawk was admitted to AWC on August 29th, 2012. The bird was discovered on the side of the road and a rescue driver was sent to pick it up. AWC staff examined the hawk and discovered bruising and soft tissue injuries to his right wing, but luckily no broken bones. Most likely, the hawk was hit by a car while flying near the road. The hawk's injuries had not healed in time for him to be released and migrate south this fall, so he will overwinter at AWC and be released in the spring when the other Swainson's hawks return.



Adopting any of our wild patients will help AWC pay for the expenses associated with their rehabilitation.

FOR MORE INFO: [www.aipc.ca](http://www.aipc.ca) or 403-946-2361

# VOLUNTEER IN PROFILE:

## SANDY JANUARY



Enthusiasm, giant smiles, a phenomenal attitude, and an endless willingness to help others - these are just a few of the invaluable traits Sandy January brings to our AIWC team.

When Sandy began volunteering years ago, she filled a Rescue Driver role. One of her most memorable adventures involves a Canada goose grounded at a jail. Intimidated by the

possibility of having to capture a goose, Sandy was feeling quite nervous. To make things more interesting, some of the inmates who were concerned about the goose and did not realize Sandy was trying to help were yelling at her as she approached the bird. As Sandy drew nearer, she kept thinking "please fly away, please fly away!" Much to her relief, when she got too close for the goose's comfort, it really did take flight! (Sandy has made considerable progress in overcoming her fear of handling large birds since that escapade.)

She has also broadened her skill set by becoming a Centre Volunteer. Although her volunteer position has changed, Sandy still transports wild animals when asked. This fall she helped Roy Hoskins, AIWC's Wildlife Control Hotline Technician, in his endeavor to catch and relocate the Airdrie beavers (see cover of Summer 2012 *Recovery Review*).

AIWC is one of Sandy's many interests. She loves hiking, camping, bird watching, and spending time with her kids and pets. This year she reached her goal of biking 500 km in one biking season, a truly impressive feat! Sandy visits the Banff Mountain Book and Film Festival every year, where she met her husband Gavin twenty-six years ago. This dynamo is also an avid traveler, photographing nature as she goes.

It is such a joy to work with Sandy. Her playful nature was displayed at an AIWC event one evening close to Hallowe'en when Sandy arrived wearing a skunk costume. Sandy makes every Centre shift, every rescue, every social gathering enjoyable. Our lives have been enriched just by knowing her.

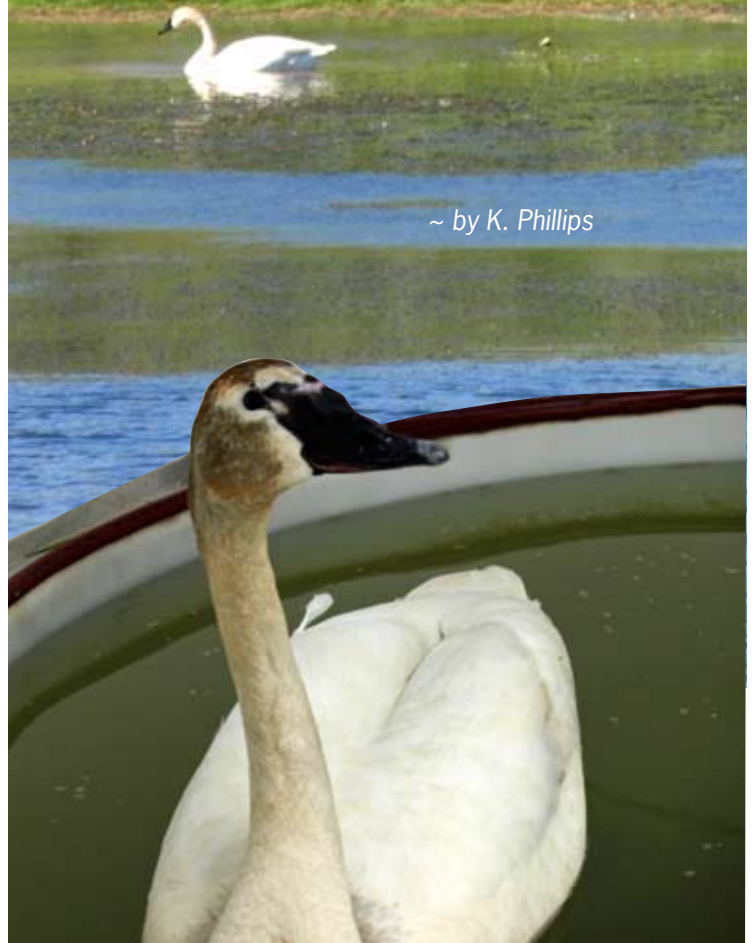
**THANK YOU!**

## Swan Lake

She was aspirating blood, had blood in both eyes, abrasions to both wrists and a laceration on her beak from end to end. This tundra swan did not look good when she was admitted on April 22nd. On the bright side, none of these injuries were fatal and, as her condition improved with professional care, the swan went from a limited-mobility cage to the indoor pool room, and then outside to the waterfowl enclosure. Her day for release came on July 10th and she was set free on a local lake.

The swan stayed over the summer and into the fall. For volunteers Ted Gilson and Katherine Pederson, it was their pleasure to check on her from time to time. They would always see her in the same place: on the far shore; a lone swan amongst the ducks and geese, some of them likely former AIWC roommates. Then one foggy day in October these same volunteers arrived to a magical scene: the water was icing up, and on the far shore amongst a boisterous crowd of friendly geese and ducks there she was, somewhere, floating along with at least fifteen fellow swans! It was a true 'Swan Lake'.

One week later, Ted and Katherine returned to a quiet and empty lake. Migration time had come for all the birds. The swan and her new flock were on route, heading southwest to the Pacific Slope.



~ by K. Phillips

# Our Thanks

to all the outstanding individuals  
who generously contributed  
crucial funds to AIWC which aided  
Alberta wildlife in distress!!!

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# AIWC is Recruiting New Volunteers!

This is your chance to make a difference ...  
and experience the fascinating world of wildlife rehab!!

AIWC is looking for caring, fun-loving volunteers to help with a variety of positions. An orientation session to introduce you to AIWC will be held in early 2013; dates for formal training workshops will be announced after the orientation. To get yourself on the invitation list, or to request further information, please e-mail [info@aiwc.ca](mailto:info@aiwc.ca). Hope to see you there!

## VOLUNTEER TEAMS

### Centre Volunteers

- train to work on-site at the AIWC Wildlife Hospital
- assist staff with patient husbandry such as feeding, cleaning, and overall clinic operations
- opportunity to participate in a variety of organizational projects such as committee work, rescues, releases, and special events



### Rescue Drivers

- train to rescue and/or transport injured wildlife to AIWC Wildlife Hospital
- liaise with finders of injured wildlife; act as ambassador for organization; team up with other rescue drivers when necessary



### Construction Volunteers

- assist with building and maintenance of enclosures and indoor facilities
- help move and rebuild AIWC Wildlife Hospital at its new site

### Fundraising Volunteers

- help the Fundraising Team create engaging initiatives to raise capital for AIWC's life-saving work



### Education Volunteers

- join the Education Team to develop and produce programming for youth and community groups
- enjoy opportunities to become a presenter or Education Ambassador (animal handler); help collect, organize, and display bio-facts and other educational materials



### Office Volunteers

- assist staff with administrative duties such as photocopying, orders, organization, putting together printed materials

### Photo & Writing Volunteers

- use your creative writing and photography skills to share AIWC stories in print and on-line

### Assembly & Mail-out Task Force

- become a Special Agent responsible for assembling and mailing out AIWC newsletters and other time-sensitive materials
- Task Force currently meets four times per year

### Phone Receptionists

- provide courteous and accurate information to callers on a busy line
- help organize rescues, supply information, and work closely with staff to provide efficient wildlife rescues and organizational representation

## SPECIFIC POSITIONS

### Head of Guest Services

- use your hospitality skills to host guided tours and private on-site events

### Head of Public Relations

- seek out, book and organize events that promote AIWC
- willingness to do public speaking is ideal, but not required

### Supplies Coordinator

- weekly acquisition of centre supplies ranging from food to building supplies, including medical & volunteer materials
- requires reliable vehicle and willingness to work closely with accounting personnel

**NOTE: On-site, off-site and at home opportunities exist for most of the teams and positions listed.**