

Recovery Review

Quarterly Bulletin of the Alberta Institute for Wildlife Conservation

Wildlife Conservation through Education & Rehabilitation

**A Special Retrospective Issue Celebrating
20 Years of Saving Wild Lives**

Join us in looking back over stories from AIWC's first two decades. These are a showcase of previous newsletter articles that have touched our hearts and given us pause for reflection about the incredible, valuable services provided by AIWC. The journey begins in this full retrospective issue, and will continue with special "Looking Back" sections in the upcoming year's issues. You were part of this journey, so you too can feel proud of your wildlife rehabilitation organization.

We start with the first article ever published in the Recovery Review. Enjoy!

How it all began...

~ by D. Wittner ~ *The Recovery Review*,
Vol. 1, Issue 1, April 1995

For a little over a decade, the Calgary Zoo received injured and orphaned animals brought in by the public. At first, their numbers were fairly manageable.



But as time progressed those numbers swelled out of proportion, placing a tremendous strain on the Zoo's resources. When the Zoo announced they would end their program, Alberta Fish and Wildlife had to find someone to take over. Hence, the formation of RWR.

DID YOU KNOW?
AIWC was officially incorporated in 1993 as 'Rockyview Wildlife Recovery' and patients started being accepted for care in 1994!

We have been incorporated as a non-profit society and registered charity for two years. At the helm are wildlife biologists Dianne [Wittner] and Rick Rowell, two wildlife biologists with several years of wildlife rehab experience. In fact, their involvement goes back to 1983 when they started one of British Columbia's first rehab programs.



DID YOU KNOW?
In 2004, the organization changed its name from 'Rockyview Wildlife Recovery' to 'Alberta Institute for Wildlife Conservation,' since the new name better represented the scope of AIWC's work.

A group of Calgary-area vets called "Veterinarians for Wildlife Rehabilitation and Release" receive injured animals and report them to us. Because of our location, northwest of Calgary, the Airdrie Animal Clinic does the bulk of our medical work.

See **Move** continued on p5

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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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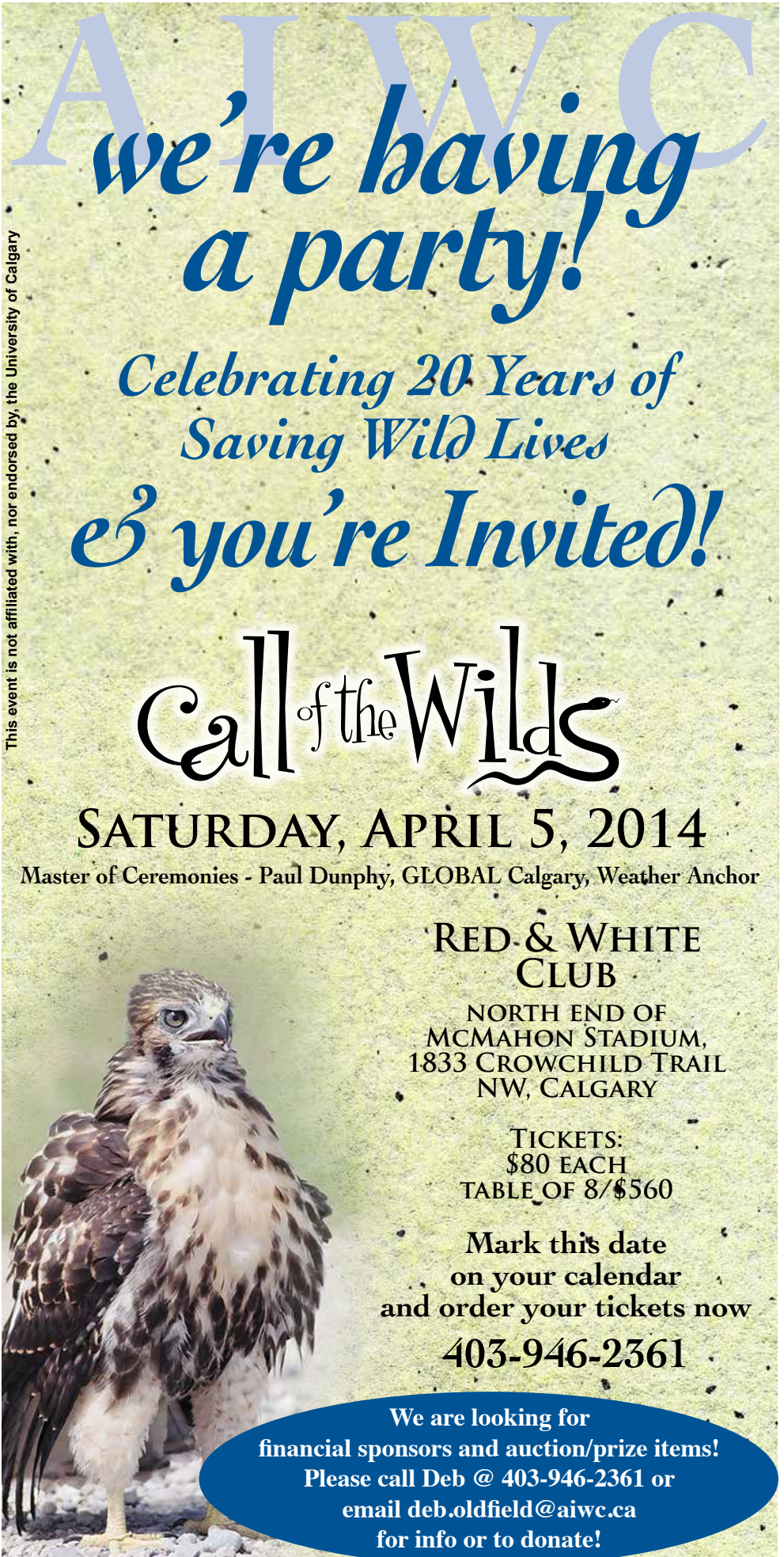
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AIWC
we're having a party!

Celebrating 20 Years of Saving Wild Lives

and you're Invited!

Call of the Wilds

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Master of Ceremonies - Paul Dunphy, GLOBAL Calgary, Weather Anchor

RED & WHITE CLUB

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 NW, CALGARY

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Mark this date on your calendar and order your tickets now

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We are looking for financial sponsors and auction/prize items! Please call Deb @ 403-946-2361 or email deb.oldfield@aiwc.ca for info or to donate!

Those Amazing Waterfowl!

~ by G. Millenaar ~ *The Recovery Review*,
Vol. 3, Issue 2, Summer 1997

Editor's Note: *AIWC has always been an exemplary facility offering professional rehabilitation services to the citizens of southern Alberta and the Northwest Territories, and the facility surpasses international standards of wildlife care. That does not mean that the learning has ever stopped! Our team continually learns and grows with the challenges presented by our incoming patients. Here is a story of lessons learned during the early days.*

This spring our adventure with waterfowl began with a lone gosling which was brought to us the day it hatched. A teenager picked up an egg on the streets of downtown Calgary then took it to a local drop-in centre, never suspecting it was about to hatch. No surrogate mother or companions were around to keep this little fellow company.



Upon his arrival at [AIWC], we quickly realized we had a dilemma. Do we leave the gosling completely isolated except to feed it and clean up after it, or do we allow him to imprint on people? Neither one is supported by standard rehabilitation practices.

At first, we let this little guy be on his own in a cage, well fed and cared for. He cried a great deal, indicating his loneliness. Research indicates that any living creature that is dependent at birth needs love and physical closeness in order to survive and live a well-adjusted life. Yes, this also applies to waterfowl! However, allowing him to imprint on people is not recommended. He would then learn his behaviour from people and might not ever be released as a result.

Fortunately for everyone, [AIWC] soon received two more goslings that were about

ten days younger and considerably smaller than our solo orphan. These two goslings were put in an adjacent cage. Although he was not sure what to make of the pair, they were all soon chatting with each other. Then, after some introductions and some nipping, they became fast friends. In fact, the first gosling, being much bigger, became a surrogate "mother" for the other two, who snuggled up to him for warmth. Today, at two months of age, fully feathered and almost fully grown, the three are inseparable.

Meanwhile, we got in a female mallard that had a broken pelvis and a rotting egg still inside of her. After the egg was removed and she was appropriately supported, she began her recovery.

Soon after, we received our first orphaned ducklings. Initially, they were placed in a cage with a heat lamp to keep them warm, but the plan was to foster them to the injured female. Would the female adult make a suitable mother for these little ones? Rehabilitation literature

says that mallards do not make good surrogate mothers and may even violently reject ducklings. Our experience, however, shows that mallard maternal instincts are particularly strong during the nesting season. In



the past three years, we have developed a surrogacy technique that has worked very well. We were determined to use the same technique to introduce the hen to these orphan ducklings.

After some tentative pecks, the female mallard slowly allowed the ducklings to find warmth and comfort underneath her wings. Even in her condition and with limited mobility, she became a fierce protector.

Mother Nature never ceases to amaze us!

Thank You
To all of AIWC's supporters!

Your on-going contributions of time, money and tireless effort are the driving positive forces that have saved thousands of wild lives over the past 20 years.

A Reason to Celebrate

~ by J. So ~ *The Recovery Review*,
Vol. 11, Issue 2, Summer 2005

Ah, Valentine's Day... It was a time of year when we all stopped to truly appreciate the ones we love. Everyone was also out looking for the perfect gift. But what do you get the wildlife center that has "entertained" over 150 species? Why, a wild turkey, of course! And who could have asked for a more eye-catching sweetheart?

Make no mistake – this darling wasn't so beautiful when she was first discovered. In fact, her Valentine's



Day morning had been downright miserable. Having been attacked by a dog overnight, she had only narrowly escaped with her life. Fortunately, her luck turned around when a concerned Albertan found this plump bird, exhausted, in the corner of a storage shed. Her feather damage was extensive: the lower part of her back, her rump, her lower chest and her legs had been plucked clean. This lack of insulation alone would have certainly led to hypothermia and death in winter conditions. However, of far greater concern were her wounds.

Lurching across her back and chest, the puncture wounds and lacerations that this semi-conscious girl had sustained were considerable. On her chest, one of the bite wounds was found to be about 2.5 cm in

diameter and at least 10 cm deep.

As a helpful way to understand the severity of this issue, stretch out your index and middle fingers. That's a good approximation of the size of just one of her puncture wounds. Now, measure the wound out on yourself. Does this look painful? Now imagine that you only weigh 5 kg. Ouch! Unfortunately for the turkey, this exercise was not imaginary. Incredibly, none of her organs were pierced, but the bruising remained a sight to behold. Her aching body was treated for injuries and pain, but only time would tell if she could pull through.

Within mere days, the turkey's ailments had begun to heal. In a few weeks, the punctures had nearly disappeared! Throughout her convalescence, the volunteers at AIWC were also endowed with knowledge about wild turkeys.

Yes, there had been a continuum of discoveries when it came to the turkey, but this beauty was about to surprise the Centre with a gift of her own. Indeed, ten days before Easter, our guest began to lay unfertilized eggs – one a day. Most were cream with tan speckles, and some were pastel pink with lavender speckles. When she started to spend time outdoors, AIWC volunteers had the extraordinary experience of

an honest-to-goodness Easter egg hunt!

Before long, the turkey's feathers started to re-grow. She moved outdoors and spent all but the worst weather days with her two pals – a comparatively small mallard (who had suffered frostbitten feet – released later) and a death-defying Canada goose. This bizarre trio truly had to be seen to be believed.

Mark your calendars: The day that the wild turkey was released, AIWC celebrated a monumental occasion. Indeed, it will be our new, non-traditional Thanksgiving. Not because we took the life of a bird, but because we were able to give a life back. And, in the wake of a wild turkey's whirlwind visit, AIWC will have been left with a wealth of treasured holiday memories: 22 perfect speckled eggs.

Life, above all

~ by D. Wittner ~ *The Recovery Review*,
Vol. 6, Issue 2, Spring 2000

Jack Currie is a man whose concern for wildlife is greater than his own material interests. In April, Jack cut a hole in this living room floor in order to rescue four fox kits whose mother had been killed by a car.

Once the hole was cut, he lured them to it with food until he had captured the four, a patience-testing process that took nearly twenty-four hours. We have seen members of the public go to great lengths to help distressed wildlife, but his has got to be one of the best. The mother fox had gained access through a small hole in the concrete foundation, a space too small for a human to fit and well beyond the reach of the babies.

The fox pups were about six weeks old at the time; still nursing but old enough to eat meat. Within several days of the rescue they were pouncing on live mice and learning the proper way to 'nab' their prey without getting bitten. They will remain at AIWC for the Summer to be released in early Fall.



Move *continued from pt*

Doctors Barkowski, Embleton, and Wooten and all the staff at AAC deserve our deepest gratitude for the hours they put in on our behalf, sometimes giving up days off, and answering our emergency phone calls at all hours of the day.



DID YOU KNOW?

In 2007, when the Mary Driscoll Surgical Suite in the AIWC Trauma Centre was built and strict organizational criteria were in place, AIWC became a wildlife hospital certified by the Alberta Veterinary Medical Association!

Our wonderful volunteers do everything from cleaning cages to searching for reported victims, picking up patients, and transferring them to and from the vets. We have so many volunteers, many of them are waiting in the wings for the completion of our clinic so we can put them to work.

DID YOU KNOW?

About 120 volunteers currently help AIWC in a variety of ways: animal care, wildlife rescue driving, fundraising, writing and photography, education programming, website design, construction, and administration!



For a year now, AIWC has been operating without the benefit of a properly equipped rehab center. In the beginning, we suffered two major setbacks with pledges made but not delivered, forcing us to become very innovative indeed. Ready or not, late last April, we received our first patient. Number 1 in the record books was a red-tailed hawk, discovered in a cow pasture by Wally Maffit of Dogpound. For a while, that hawk was our lone admission, but that quickly changed. Some days were pretty quiet, others were really hectic. The most animals admitted in a single day last year was 32. Things moved at a feverish pace around here that day! It seemed the majority of our calls came in on evenings and weekends. I can't tell you how many dinners were interrupted by phone calls, and not a single weekend went by between June and September that a new patient wasn't reported. When we tallied up the mileage at the end of October, we'd put over 10,000 kilometers on our vehicle.

By the time winter rolled around, our pace slowed quite a bit. During the cold months, Alberta's wildlife populations are a fraction of what they become in summer. Migration, hibernation, cold temperatures, and fewer hours of sunlight make wildlife less numerous and less conspicuous. However, where the slack was created by fewer admissions, the stacks of paperwork and preparations for next season took over. We still continued to admit patients – mostly year-round residents such as great horned owls, muskrats, and ducks – but in much smaller numbers.

DID YOU KNOW?

AIWC has cared for over 23,000 animals representing ~150 species!

So, what is a typical day like at AIWC? First thing in the morning we feed patients and clean cages. Then we begin physiotherapy and conditioning on recovering animals. This includes a full array of techniques individual to each case. For example, one of our hawks is currently undergoing massage therapy and stretching exercises while a couple of our owls are undergoing cardiovascular training after a winter of inactivity.

Following treatments, we take care of some of the incredible load of paperwork: report writing, bookkeeping, government forms, organizing fundraisers, filing, and typing.

After the paper pushing we may have one or two classes to prepare for our public education component. Currently, we go out to schools and assorted organizations where we give slide shows, hands-on demonstrations, environmental ed., often with one of our non-releasable animals in tow. Once our clinic is complete, groups will be able to visit us, which will save lots of time and money and increase the effectiveness of our programs.

DID YOU KNOW?

In the new millennium alone, skilled presenters from AIWC's Education Team have shared their knowledge with nearly 10,000 audience members!

Through all of this, the phone is probably ringing with reports on injured or orphaned animals that need to be picked up, assessed, and taken to the vet.

Other common jobs that occupy us each day include trips to town to pick up food and medical supplies, attending meetings, building new cages or modifying old ones, and scouting out potential release sites. Easily the most enjoyable task of all is releasing an animal back into the wild. This is usually done early in the morning, depending on the natural habits of the animal.

Though every day is different around here, some of the jobs can be very tedious. However, the rewards far outweigh the more wearisome aspects.



Passerine Bird Patients...

House Finch



Black-Capped Chickadee



Blue Jay



Cedar Waxwing



Yellow-Rumped Warbler



Evening Grosbeak



Mountain Bluebird



Raven



Common Redpoll



Red-Breasted Nuthatch



American Robin



ake up 1/3 of AIWC's patients. Here is a sample of the different species that have come through AIWC's doors



White-Winged Crossbill



Rose-Breasted Grosbeak



Western Kingbird



Dark-Eyed Junco



American Goldfinch



Common Grackle



Brown-headed Cowbird



Tree Swallow



American Crow



Golden-Crowned Kinglet



Cliff Swallow



Magpie

'Inuvik' Goes Home

~ by D. Wittner ~ *The Recovery Review*,
Vol. 9, Issue 2, Summer 2003

Spongy moss, fragrant willow, and low-growing evergreens dominate the vast expanse of boreal forest that spreads infinitely in all directions. In the distance, a gray phalanx of mountains stab the horizon and overhead a white-dotted sky stretches in brilliant blue...

This was the scene on September 3rd when 'Inuvik' bear finally set foot on his home turf. Not since last December had he smelled the pungent canopy so characteristic of his birthplace. Months of frustration, perseverance, and patience had finally brought this bear and I to this pristine place.

Originally scheduled to return home in May, Inuvik bear and AIWC became embroiled in one logistical road block after another. Eventually, however, the 2600-kilometer trek was on and things began to fall into place, due mostly to the stubbornness of several key people at AIWC who simply refused to give up.

At 3 o'clock a.m. on September 2nd, a dozen AIWC volunteers gathered in total darkness to load Inuvik into his specially built crate. From there, a cargo van and three flights took us to Edmonton, Yellowknife, Norman Wells, and finally Inuvik. Meeting us in Edmonton was Sarah Boyle, Environmental Biologist for Devon Canada, Inuvik's biggest sponsor. Sarah accompanied us throughout the trip, providing much needed logistical support

and valued companionship.

At the Inuvik airport, we were met by wildlife officer Ian Ellsworth who escorted the three of us to the meeting point of the last leg of our journey: the one-hour flight that would take us to Inuvik's release site. At the last minute, our float plane pilot chickened out. Upon meeting Inuvik, the pilot decided he was "too young to die," forcing us to delay yet again and find another pilot. I found my-



the north, a man not easily intimidated by unpredictable weather, determined women, or 230-pound bears. Using a heavy net, Inuvik's crate was slung beneath a helicopter. Dangling a hundred feet beneath the spinning blades, the bear endured his last hour of captivity with a mixture of fear and curiosity. At our ultimate destination – the lush green shores of a remote lake – I stood atop Inuvik's crate and lifted the gate. He hesitated for a brief second but then he was gone, vanished into the dense bush as though he'd never been.

self comparing the terror in the pilot's eyes to the resignation in the bear's. After everything that bear had been through – the roar of jet engines; the smell of fuel, rubber, and asphalt; the hubbub of activity – I couldn't help but wonder which of the two was more worthy of my admiration.

Ever vigilant, Ian found us another pilot, this one an experienced veteran of

Many individuals made Inuvik's rescue and release possible. His was definitely the most complex logistical effort put into an animal in eleven years at AIWC. Because of a huge outpouring of support, the tremendous expense of feeding him for eight months then taking him 2600 kilometers north, was kept within manageable limits for our organization. ...A hearty, affectionate THANK YOU from all of us at AIWC.

AIWC personnel have successfully raised five black bear orphans, including Inuvik Bear. All of the bears remained at the Centre through the winter, so they could experience their first hibernation safely. Once older and big enough to survive on their own, the bears' releases were approved and coordinated in cooperation with Fish and Wildlife officers to ensure optimal survival.



Just Call Me Mom...

Editor's note: *At the time this article was written, AIWC staff would occasionally allow trained personnel to bring baby songbirds home to ensure these high-need patients had the round-the-clock care they required to survive. This is common practice throughout the wildlife rehabilitation community. Now AIWC is fortunate to have more capacity at the Centre and an increased number of volunteers. Nevertheless, this story is wonderful in demonstrating the exemplary dedication of our AIWC team members.*

~ by T. White ~ *The Recovery Review*,
Vol. 8, Issue 3, Fall 2002

My biological clock is broken" ...that's what I tell my friends (and my mother-in-law) who pester me about having children. However, this summer I had the opportunity to be a mother – a foster mother to five baby tree swallows. I experienced the full spectrum of "moms' emotional roller coaster": the cost of raising a family, the first "steps," worrying, child care issues, a runaway, and of course, Empty Nest Syndrome! The best thing about my mothering experience, though, was that in two weeks my 'kids' grew up and were on their own!

During the spring and summer months at [AIWC], we are really, really busy with babies – especially baby birds. They are particularly demanding as they need to be fed every fifteen to twenty minutes from dawn to dusk. In a time when we have the highest patient intake, it is very difficult to keep up. That's how my foster parent experience came about. When I saw the five tiny tree swallows nestled together in a margarine tub 'nest' inside the incubator, I immediately offered to take them home. I did not know what I was getting into!

What happened to their real mom? Well, now I understand why house sparrows are so detrimental to our native bird species. The individual who brought the tree swallows to [AIWC] watched as a mating pair of house sparrows attacked and killed the tree swallow mother. The house sparrows then proceeded into the nest to bash in the heads of the babies (literally). Thankfully, our Good Samaritan intervened.

Although we do not have a daycare at my

place of employment, my supervisor very graciously allowed me to bring my 'kids' to work. I am sure it was quite a sight to see me sprinting down the hallway every twenty minutes to tweezer feed them their specialized diet. When I was even a minute late, my little birds would chirp louder and louder with increasing frequency until their lil' beaks were stuffed full of food.

When I knew that one of my five babies was succumbing to his injuries, I had two concerns: (1) Was I going to be a blubbing mess, and (2) How were my co-workers going to take it? It was very sad, but we were brave when my swallow with the worst head injuries took his last little breath and passed away quietly in my hand.

The "Name the Swallow" game started at work. At [AIWC], we never name our

... baby birds are particularly demanding as they need to be fed every fifteen to twenty minutes from dawn to dusk.

patients, but my co-workers could not help themselves. The largest and most physically developed was pegged to be the first to fly and was named 'Kent' after a hockey player. 'Schwarzie' was named after Arnold Schwarzenegger because, despite a significant head injury, he kept on fighting for his life. The other two were 'Tim,' named after



Tiny Tim because of his injured leg, and 'Miya.'

Sure enough, Kent was the first to fly. Although very exciting, it was not exactly the best-case scenario. It was my first Sunday with the kids. We sat in the backyard enjoying the summer sun. Tim needed to practice perching to improve the grip strength in his injured leg, so I put all four babies on a low tree branch. As the afternoon became dusk, I put my flock back in their box but had not yet closed the lid. In a flash, Kent leapt out of the box and was soaring over the rooftops! Was it exciting? Absolutely! He was amazing! His very first flight ever and he was maneuvering through the sky like a pro, making perfect ten-point landings on our neighbours' roof. My husband Brett is a pilot and was genuinely awed by Kent's navigational abilities. The problem was that Kent was not ready to be on his own.

As it was already dusk at the time of Kent's "Great Escape," within an hour of chasing him through the neighbourhood, it was dark and we could not see enough to find him. I was so upset! I had failed as a mother! I was sure I would find Kent's little body cold and stiff in the back alley. But [AIWC] is known for its miracles and this was no exception.

As fate would have it, when my husband came home for lunch the following day, he said, "I swear I hear Kent outside." Sure enough, when we stepped outside, there was Kent sitting on the neighbours' fence. Under loud protest, Kent was reunited with his siblings and eagerly chowed down twenty-

See Mom continued on p11

Holding a Bald Eagle *(For the First Time!!!)*

~ by D. Hanna ~ *The Recovery Review*,
Vol. 11, Issue 2, Summer 2005

My shift on this particular day started by overhearing that there was going to be some treatment done on a bald eagle that had recently come into the Centre. Unfortunately this majestic bird was brought to AIWC as a result of suspected poisoning. The type of poisoning was to be determined later by some vigorous testing of the coyote carcass upon which the eagle may have been feeding.

This raptor had been featured in both print and TV



media several times by then and I nervously approached Dianne to ask if I might be allowed to observe their treatment of the eagle. Her reply to me was "Oh Dennis! You're not going to be watching this, you're going to be holding him!"

My first response was, of course, great excitement (since I was allowed the honour of holding this great bird), followed by my second response of nervousness. If one has ever seen a bald eagle up close, they are one of the strongest of the raptors, with razor sharp talons that can be over three inches long. My initial nervousness was tempered by the fact that I would be closely

supervised by Dianne herself as well as staff member Shannon: two very competent people indeed.

To get things started Dianne opted to catch the eagle in his cage herself. She then instructed me how to get a hold of the eagle one leg at a time, cautioning me about his weakened right talon. The transfer of the eagle proceeded without incident and I now had a firm hold on this large bird for the first time!!! We proceeded to the exam room where Shannon had readied a bowl of lukewarm water with which to clean his tail feathers. The next task was to examine the eagle to get a general assessment of his condition. This required me to remain holding him while both Di and Shannon tended to his needs. This also meant that both of their hands and arms were often within centimeters of those very dangerous talons. It suddenly hit me that my responsibility was now threefold...I had to be strong yet tender in my grip on his legs so as not to further injure him; I had to be mindful of what Shannon and Dianne were doing at all times so that they would not be injured; and, I had to be careful so that I would not get

injured. When this realization hit me, my heart started beating quite rapidly. So much so that I thought it might break a couple of ribs!! Thankfully all went well and the exam was completed without incident.

The next stage of handling was replacing the eagle back into his cage. This can also be a dangerous phase as the eagle can turn around quite quickly, talons flailing, once released. His cage had already been cleaned and prepared and I managed to let him go with a very huge sigh of relief on my part.

For myself, I know that this memory is one that I will cherish forever. To hold one of these majestic birds and to realize the raw strength and power in those talons is awe-inspiring. To have those eagle eyes looking up at you and to have that great yellow beak so close is a truly marvelous experience.

A very happy ending came when this grand creature was released back into the wild, fully recovered, some weeks later - a moment which I also got to witness.

However, I also came to the cold realization that these experiences would not have been possible for me had he not been laid low by poisoning. Over and over wildlife is injured when it comes into negative contact with humans. (This is the reason why AIWC exists in the first place.) Though this will be an important memory for me, I do hope that humankind learns that the earth is to be shared with all living creatures and that we do not have dominion over it!!



DO THEY REMEMBER?

~ by D. Wittner ~ *The Recovery Review*,
Vol. 14, Issue 2, Summer 2007

In spite of the saying 'Wise Old Owl,' great horned owls are successful not for their intelligence but for their adaptability and strength. Not credited with possessing particularly sharp memories, we were forced to question that theory when an old friend showed up in what was to turn out to be a tragic homecoming.

He showed up on top of the flight cage one morning, unusually bold when we performed our outside chores. On a whim, we tossed him a mouse, which he promptly swooped down to eat. That was strange indeed. It was then we noticed something not quite right with one of his wings but when approached, he flew off quickly.

For three days he showed up for a free meal but he seemed to be weakening and on that third day we caught him without great difficulty. His wing was burned, another senseless victim of a power line. The tissue was slowly dying and, along with it, his ability to hunt. A double whammy: electrical burns and starvation. There was no saving him. A necrotic (dead) wing cannot

be replaced or fixed. His fate was sealed.

What made his story unforgettable was the band on his leg. An aluminum CWS (Canadian Wildlife Service) band identified him as one we had saved and released five years earlier! Now, in desperate, life-threatening condition, he had returned.



Why? For food? For help? For mercy?

We can speculate all day but we'll never know the answer. And where had he been in those intervening years? Somehow, he associated AIWC with hope and turned to us in his most desperate hours. As the realization of this hit us, there was not a dry eye in the examination room.

This owl proved how intricately interwoven humans and Nature truly are, yet so many people continue to live with fear of wild animals when we have but to open our hearts to discover their wonder.

Once, we gave him the gift of rescue, survival, and freedom. Like all the other animals we care for, his release would have been characterized by a decided lack of appreciation. In fact, we often find ourselves laughing at their haste to leave, never showing any indication of gratitude or desire to maintain human attachment.

But, perhaps they do remember after all. Perhaps they are grateful.

No matter. We'll continue to do what we can for them, regardless.

Mom continued from p9

four-hours worth of food!

Now, before I continue, I want to inform you how much these babies cost in a mere two-week period. A rough calculation determined that my flock consumed about \$12-13 of specialty food per day, for a total of \$178 during that two-week span. Add \$4 worth of iodine to treat their wounds and the grand total was \$182!!! WOW! This experience gave me a new appreciation for the operating costs at [AIWC].

On a sunny Saturday morning, Brett and I took our four babies back to [AIWC] for release since there is plenty of good tree swallow habitat in the area. Sitting quietly on Dianne's porch, with a little bird in each palm, we waited. Slowly, one by one, each flew away to join the community of tree,

barn and cliff swallows doing acrobatics in the sky. Kent was first, then Schwarzie, flown by Tim and then Miya. I was such a proud mama, beaming on the porch watching my foster family float on the warm breeze in the big, blue sky. Later that afternoon, Dianne called me to report that all four of my babies had been adopted by a tree swallow family. Two were taking up residence in the nest box at the front of the Centre, with the other two sitting on top. Di reported that she had been repeatedly dive-bombed by the parents when she tried to feed my crew.

Wait! That's not the end of my story. The next morning, I had my regular shift at [AIWC]. Upon leaving, I noticed Tim sitting on the tire of my truck. I ran back into the building to get the largest mealworms I could find, and returned to Tim who ate the



mealworms voraciously and then allowed me to pick him up. While Tim had a twenty-minute nap in the palm of my hand, I sat in the grass watching his new family and friends. When he flew off again, that's when I teared up. I guess he had just stopped by to say "thanks." It was simply an incredible experience!

