

RecoveryReview

Quarterly Bulletin of the Alberta Institute for Wildlife Conservation

Wildlife Conservation through Education & Rehabilitation

A Beaver Conundrum

The City of Airdrie contacted AIWC early this fall for help in resolving an issue with some beavers that had taken up residence in Nose Creek (a waterway which runs through the centre of the city.) The beavers were cutting down trees in the naturalized park and building dams which were creating mild flooding problems.

Unfortunately, many people consider beavers to be pests and these animals are typically kill-trapped to remove them. Most naturalists, however, know beavers create

much needed wetlands which allow other species of wildlife to thrive. The conundrum in establishing a "wild" area within the confines of any city is that wildlife finds its way there! This is exactly what happened in Airdrie.

Roy Hoskins, AIWC's Wildlife Control Hotline Technician was dispatched to assess the situation. He found that two different families had taken up residence in Nose Creek, one at the north end and one at the south. Since the family located at the south end was closest to a residential area, Roy

decided to concentrate there first. He sent out an appeal to all AIWC volunteers to help with the captures and several people responded, myself included.

The first couple of nights were spent surveying the area to find possible points of capture. Our team met with some early success...two beavers were caught along the shoreline using simple hand nets. Dad beaver (weighing 60 lbs. (27kg)), and one juvenile were first to be transported to the Centre for temporary housing until their relocation date.

~ by D. Hanna

See **Beavers** continued on p6



AIWC Wildlife Hotline: 946-2361



Box 68, Madden, AB ToM 1Lo
 p (403) 946-2361 • f (403) 946-5689
 charitable #14041 6140 RR0001

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.

EDITOR: Janna So

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CONTRIBUTORS: D. Hanna, A. Tong, K. Pederson, L. Cervený, J. So, T. McDougall, H. MacEwan-Foran, T. Sinclair, C. Vavasour-Williams, B. Kowalzik,

PHOTOS: AIWC, D. Hanna, L. Cervený, K. Pederson, B. Kowalzik, T. Sinclair, D. Kierecka, D. Sefton, D. Wittner

Submissions/Comments may be sent to the above address.

AIWC Founder Wins Western Legacy Award

Since 2005, the Western Legacy Awards have honoured individuals and organizations for outstanding contributions in promoting western values and preserving western heritage within the community. In celebration of the Calgary Stampede's Centennial, the 2012 Awards honoured 100 special Albertans. AIWC's Founder Dianne Wittner is among this elite group for her work as a wildlife biologist and conservationist.

Dianne is in the company of such towering past figures as Grant MacEwan, Peter Lougheed and W. O. Mitchell, and contemporary luminaries like Norman Kwong, Preston Manning and Hugh Dempsey. She was recognized on October 18 at a special ceremony at the BMO Centre, featuring a group photograph and individual award.

We are so proud of our indomitable founder and know you will join us in congratulating her for a high honour well earned and well deserved.

You can watch the broadcast of the Western Legacy Awards show on Shaw TV on Nov. 5 - 8am; Nov. 8 - 5pm; Nov. 11 - 1pm; Nov. 18 - 5pm; Nov. 22 - 7:30am; and Nov. 24 - 5pm.

AIWC 2013 Calendar

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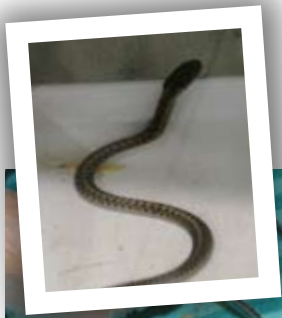
- by D. Hanna

Pregnant and run over by a bicycle, an adult Wandering garter snake was in critical condition before she arrived at AIWC. Unfortunately staff had no chance to help her as she expired enroute. Hoping to save the deceased mothers' babies, AIWC staff members carefully opened the body. Twelve baby garter snakes, still in their embryonic sacks, were discovered; only three were clinging to life, and two of these perished within a few seconds. This left one very weak and tiny garter snake. With a lot of TLC, this survivor is now thriving, and feasting daily on small, live fish. He will receive care at AIWC through the winter and will be released next spring once the weather warms up.

Note: At the time of writing another baby garter snake has come in, so fingers are crossed for him as well!



Already grubbing in the lush vegetation, a troop of skunks were released to explore their new home in the Water Valley area.



These Cliff swallow fledglings were cared for at AIWC until they were ready to fly.

VOLUNTEER IN PROFILE: JOANNA MACDONALD



Have you ever shared a Centre shift with Joanna? You may have and not even realized it, as Jo is always a whirling dervish of activity when she is at AIWC. From cleaning to feeding, helping with patient treatments to answering phones, she rarely stops. Born in England, Joanna was raised

in Canada and works as a safety inspector for the Government.... so make sure you have your Personal Protective Equipment on

if you share a shift with her! As an adventurous soul, Joanna loves to travel, taking in the sights of San Francisco earlier this year and recently venturing back to England to visit family and friends.

Joanna has been a strong force with AIWC for five years and we would be hard pressed to name a more dedicated volunteer. Not only does Joanna always take the incentive to tackle a variety of "nasty" tasks at the Centre, she does so without complaint and brings a sharp sense of humour. In return, we try to keep a constant supply of Diet Coke in the Annexe for her to wet her whistle after a hard shift of scrubbing and scouring.

Joanna, we cannot tell you how much your ongoing commitment to AIWC means to the staff, volunteers and patients at AIWC. It is people such as yourself who allow this organization to continue to care for the volume and diversity of patients that we do. Your level of experience, enthusiasm for learning and conscientiousness are invaluable assets to AIWC and the wildlife with which we are entrusted. *You are an inspiration to us all!*

Fundraising Update

Wine Pairing Event



AIWC would like to thank the Home Vintners of Airdrie for hosting a fun and informative Charity Fundraiser on September 28. It was an evening of wine, cheese and chocolate, and 100% of the proceeds were donated to AIWC! It was great to meet new people and mingle with friends. This event raised nearly \$800 for AIWC patients. Thank you all for coming out and a big thank you to the volunteers who worked so hard to make it happen!

Bottle Drives

October 13 was the last bottle drive of 2012, and \$900 was raised! This makes the grand total from all four drives \$7,523.93!! Thank you, volunteers, organizers, and donors. We are looking forward to more successful Bottle Drives in 2013!

Donate Your 'Empties'

There are three ways you can still donate your bottles to AIWC:

- (1) All Bottle Depots in Calgary (except Sunridge) and Airdrie are taking bottle donations on our behalf. Label your bags with "Alberta Institute for Wildlife Conservation," and let the cashier know you are donating them to AIWC.
- (2) Country Hills, Southpointe and Chinook have AIWC bins, just drop and go! Look for our poster!
- (3) Can't get to a Bottle Depot? Send an email to aiwcbottledrive@gmail.com and one of our drivers will be happy to pick-up from you.

Springbank Pet Resort Draw Results

Pet bath gift certificate: T. Petrow
1 week daycare: T.&S. Barclay
3-night boarding w/daycare: T.&S. Barclay
8x10 photo with pet: D. Measor

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Calendar of Upcoming Fundraisers

• November 17

Musicians Gone Wild Benefit Concert ... See poster below for full details

• Now through to November 26

www.avivacommunityfund.org/ideas/acf13493 ... AIWC has the opportunity to win \$50,000 from Aviva Insurance Brokers but we need your votes! Simply register on their website and vote for us (#acf13493) ... once a day through two qualifying semi-final rounds. SPREAD THE WORD!!

• Now through to November 28

Indiegogo.com ... We've had a great start to our project on indiegogo.com, an innovative way to raise funds for AIWC. But we still need your help to reach our goal! Check out indiegogo.com/aiwccaveswildlife. This is a great opportunity to let your network know about the great work AIWC does, and why donations are so important to the animals. Even if you can't donate, sharing and liking this site really helps!

Congrats to the lucky winners!

Thank you to the owners and staff at Springbank Pet Resort for donating your services to help AIWC! The generous clients and fellow animal-lovers raised \$236 for AIWC.

Shell Fuelling Change

The final tallies are in and AIWC came in 5th in Cycle 3, which gives us \$10,000 towards education programs!! Thanks to everyone who voted and make sure you vote for AIWC in the next Cycle, starting Nov. 4. With your support we can win \$100,000! See calendar above for more details.

AIWC Memberships

On March 21, 2013 AIWC will launch a new and exciting membership package. Memberships make great stocking stuffers for the animal lovers in your family. If you purchase a new membership now, you will receive up to three months free! Watch for more details about our new membership package.

Coppers For Critters

Every Penny Counts! AIWC is accepting pennies and copper's buddies (toonies are especially welcome!) Now is the time to get rid of that BIG bottle of coins you've been saving for years! Drop off your donation in the Annexe at AIWC, or email info@aiwc.ca and we will be happy to pick-up.



MUSICIANS GONE WILD

2011

FEATURING
CONRAD WALZ
BERNA-DEAN HOLLAND
MILKWOOD DREAMERS
CAROLYN HARLEY & THE DAVIDS
RUTH PURVES SMITH & THE
RALPH BOYD JOHNSON

HOSTED BY
DR. JODY MCMURRAY DVM

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ALBERTA INSTITUTE FOR WILDLIFE CO

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 17

DOORS OPEN AT 6:30 PM ♦ LIVE MUSIC ♦

THE IRISH CULTURAL CENTRE
6452 - 35TH AVENUE N.W., CALGARY

TICKETS \$25
CALL 403-946-2361 OR GO TO musiciansgonewild.eventbrite.com
PRE-BOOK TILL 6PM NOV. 16 ♦ LIMITED TICKETS

ALL PROCEEDS GO TO THE CARE OF INJURED, ILL AND ORPHANED WILDLIFE

SOUND ENGINEERING AND TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS GENEROUSLY PROVIDED BY KEITH MILLS OF CREOSOTE SOUND AND THE FOOTHILLS BLUEGRASS MUSIC SOCIETY.

• **November 4 through to April 30**

Shell's fuellingchange.com ... AWC is a finalist to win \$100,000 from Shell and only you can help us win it! Register on their website, shop at Shell, then cash in your receipts for votes. Any purchase counts, even just a pop!
YOUR VOTES WILL MAKE THIS HAPPEN!!

• **Now through to November 30**

Sealed Bid Auction ... Local artist **Patrick Grassick** has graciously donated a gorgeous piece of art titled 'My Summer in France' an acrylic on panel (22 3/4" wide by 21 1/2" high). Bidding starts at \$150 and the winning bidder will be notified November 30. Please email info@aiwc.ca and get your bid in! 100% of the proceeds will be donated to AWC. For information on the artist visit www.myfolio.com/PatrickGrassick.



View the original artwork at the Airdrie Safeway from 5:30-7:30pm on Nov. 15, 16, 22 & 23

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ONLINE TO
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S AVAILABLE AT THE DOOR

introducing ...
Sponsor a recovering animal...

AWC is expanding its existing adoption program! Beginning this issue, the *Recovery Review* will feature two current patients up for 'adoption'. By donating a fixed amount for each animal featured, donors are able to choose how their money is spent. In return, the donor will receive an adoption certificate, a glossy 8x10 photograph, as well as a tax receipt for the full amount of the donation. AWC's *adoption option* is particularly popular as a gift; with Christmas just around the corner, an adoptable animal could be the perfect gift for the wildlife lover in your life!

**SONGBIRD
(\$40):**
Cedar waxwing
(*Bombycilla
cedrorum*)



This cedar waxwing was admitted to AWC on September 18th, 2012. She was discovered by homeowners in their backyard, unable to fly away when approached. She is being treated for neurological symptoms.

**LARGE MAMMAL
(\$100):**
White-tailed deer
(*Odocoileus virginianus*)



Every year AWC admits several fawns and this young female, brought to AWC on June 2nd, was the first of 2012. She was found by an acreage owner and although her examination did not reveal any injuries, she was mildly dehydrated. This orphan spent the first few days of her rehabilitation in the Trauma Centre being rehydrated and continually assessed. Once strong enough, she was moved to an outdoor enclosure. She will spend the summer growing into a healthy deer and be released late in the fall.

Adopting either of these animals will help AWC pay for the expenses associated with their rehabilitation.

FOR MORE INFO: www.aiwc.ca or 403-946-2361

Beavers *continued from pt*

Our initial successes were then followed by many nights of watching mom and one juvenile swimming down the centre of the lagoon slapping their tails as if to mock us! Roy subsequently found a company willing to loan us a couple live traps which were baited with a specific scent that would attract the beavers. In the meantime, the Ann and Sandy Cross Conservation Area south-west of Calgary offered a possible wetland location as their new home.

With the new traps, we started having more success. A 2.5 year old juvenile was caught at the north end of the waterway, followed soon by another. Since these two captures were from the other family unit, they could not be relocated with the current two (beavers are quite territorial). Another release site would have to be found for the 2 year olds.



More success was found at the south end as well. Momma beaver was finally captured (weighing a whopping 70lbs. (30kg)) utilizing the new trapping method, thus leaving one baby from this family unit to capture. Time being a constraint, mom, dad and baby beaver were relocated to the Cross Conservation Area one Saturday evening. This release was televised on Global (check our Facebook page for the video).

The last baby from the south family unit was caught a couple days later and reunited with his family at the Cross Conservation Area. He was so happy to be back with mom he immediately climbed on to her back for a ride around his new home.

The north end beavers were relocated to a wilderness area with available den sites, perfect for their new home.

Time grew tight on Team AIWC because of the weather. When relocating beavers, we have to ensure they have time to refurbish their homes and stock up on food before winter sets in. It is thought there may still be two to four beavers left at the north end of Nose Creek, so AIWC may return to catch them for relocation next spring.

Team AIWC, led by Roy, has much to be proud of with this particular undertaking. Six beavers have been given a greater chance at life in habitat much better suited to their needs. But a question is raised by this experience: 'will man ever learn to live in harmony with nature?' Though I was elated to have been part of this undertaking and to watch the beavers going about their industrious work in the wild, I found myself saddened when I returned to the south end of Nose Creek...now devoid of beavers and the distinctive sound of their tail slaps.

Species Profile:

Black-crowned Night-heron

Nycticorax nycticorax

~ by A.Tong

During the night Alberta's wetlands are ruled by the black-crowned night-heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*). As its common name suggests, this heron is most active during the hours between dusk and dawn, although it can occasionally be seen feeding during the day. These nocturnal habits allow it to share habitat with other herons that are active during the day. The heron's scientific name 'nycticorax' means night raven, a reference to both its nocturnal nature and its harsh crow-like call.

The black-crowned night-heron is one of the most widely distributed heron species in the world. In most parts of the world, this bird is known simply as the night heron. The subspecies *N. nycticorax hoactli* breeds and lives in North and South America (with the exception of the southern-most tip of South America, which is home to another subspecies). It is this subspecies that makes its home in Alberta.

With shorter necks, bills and legs, these distinct birds look different than other herons. The black feathers on the crowns of their heads give the species its name. Immature herons of this species have dull grey-brown plumage with numerous pale spots.

Young herons often disgorge the contents of their stomachs when disturbed, which makes studying the diet of these birds a relatively simple task. Fish, amphibians, reptiles, snakes, aquatic invertebrates and small birds are all grasped by the heron's serrated bill and consumed.

Although AIWC has never treated a black-crowned night-heron, several of our volunteers have had the pleasure of seeing one during their bird-watching adventures (such as the one featured in this photo).

By taking care of our water resources, we can help ensure the continued survival of this crowned prince of the night.

Notable for its short neck and compact features, as well as its distinguishing plumage, the black-crowned night-heron is a remarkable member of the heron family.



Our Thanks

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

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Stop Animal Cruelty

Growing up watching cartoons, the cartoon animals seemed invincible. Wiley Coyote would fall to the bottom of the canyon only to peel himself off the rocks and continue chasing the Road Runner. Sylvester the cat would smack into a brick wall, slide down and continue after Tweety. Then there was Elmer Fudd, always chasing 'wabbits' with his rifle. These antics may have made for entertaining cartoons, but when it is real life and there are real animals, there is nothing entertaining about these situations.

Staff and volunteers at AIBC have seen homemade leg trap injuries on a variety of wildlife species, from skunks to golden eagles. They have also received reports of a white-tailed prairie hare shot through the face by an arrow. (So far, this hare has eluded capture for treatment. Dan, one of AIBC's Rescue Drivers, saw the uncatchable hare still running around the city, arrow in face, as recently as a month ago.) Those situations are horrific enough, but by far the largest number of animal cruelty cases noted this past

~ by T. McDougall



summer were due to pellet shot wounds. For example, an American crow with multiple fractures along her right radius and ulna was so injured that she had to be euthanized. It was the same fate for a black-billed magpie that had been shot, suffering a fractured humerus and a deep puncture in the right side of the chest. A great-horned owl, Alberta's provincial bird, died two days after he had been admitted with an obvious entry and exit wound on the lateral side of the right wing. A merlin admitted with pellet wounds in the right breast also passed away despite treatment.

Animals shot by pellets may succumb to the initial shot immediately, but if a wounded animal is found and brought to AIBC, it is possible to treat the animal

through to a successful recovery. Even with care though, the injured animal is still vulnerable to dying from internal injuries, and infection is always a serious threat. Shooting pellets, arrows or making homemade leg traps is not guaranteed to kill an animal quickly, nor are these activities legal in many jurisdictions. Rather, these actions can cause extensive pain and suffering, particularly if the wounded animals are never brought to AIBC. Unfortunately, if an animal is considered a "pest," for example a garden munching prairie hare, public opinion is not quite so generous in its sympathies.

On August 23rd, a juvenile Swainson's hawk (pictured in the x-ray) was admitted with a pellet wound. He was also diagnosed with radius/ulna proximal fractures due to crash landing and had signs of tissue tearing. After four and a half weeks of care, he was ready for pre-release physiotherapy. That hawk was one of the lucky ones, but stopping animal cruelty at the human level would prevent animals from suffering in such grotesque and painful ways in the first place.

To learn what to do if you happen to witness an act of animal cruelty, visit our website at www.aiwc.ca, then click on the following: Rehabilitation -> Living with Wildlife -> Report Wildlife Cruelty, for tips.



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LEAST WEASEL: This voracious fellow was brought in courtesy of the Brooks Animal Protection League. Though originally skinny and dehydrated, this juvenile will soon be fit for release.