

Recovery Review

Quarterly Bulletin of the Alberta Institute for Wildlife Conservation

Wildlife Conservation through Education & Rehabilitation

**AIWC 20 Year Special Retrospective Edition:
The Importance of People**

People Power

by K. Pederson

What does it take to care for more than two thousand animal and bird patients each year? The answer is: ongoing support from our loyal members and donors!

These important people are always needed and much appreciated as AIWC enters its third decade of rescuing, rehabilitating, and releasing native wildlife.

And just as important as funding are the staff and volunteers involved in animal rescue and transport, diagnosing and treating injuries, fundraising, communications, and the ongoing day-to-day (never ending) feeding, cleaning, and laundry tasks.

Not to mention managing AIWC's successful Education Committee: our programs currently reach almost three thousand students each year.

During AIWC's first official year of operation, 1993, 111 patients received care. Twenty years later, AIWC has cared for a total of approximately 25,000 patients, comprised of over 250 native species. As the patient load has increased over the years, so does the need for people to feed, clean, and nurture our charges. Our dedicated volunteers and staff have always been up for the task!

AIWC runs a tight fiscal ship, with



only five staff members. We rely heavily on the help and support volunteers provide in order to function and complete our mission. Fortunately, each year AIWC receives approximately twenty new volunteers through the annual recruitment drive. This allows AIWC to maintain a volunteer roster that consistently numbers around one hundred people. The staff is generous with their knowledge, and volunteers have many opportunities to learn about the wildlife we treat.

see **People** cont'd on p.4



From the archives ...

Each and every patient that comes through our doors depends on the strong partnerships [AIWC] forms with the community. [...] Over one hundred volunteers work at the centre, and another hundred more work outside the centre along with hundreds of sponsors and members [that comprise the AIWC team.] [...] Each of those people plays an essential role in the survival of wildlife as well as the organization itself.

Dianne Wittner:

**A Classic Case of Teamwork,
Recovery Review, Vol. 9, Issue 3, Fall 2003**



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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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Submissions/comments may be sent to the above address.

Welcome!

to the incoming AIWC Board of Directors who is already hard at work!

Tammy White – Chairperson (returning)
 Terri Sinclair – Vice-Chairperson (returning)
 Ted Gilson – Director (returning)
 Shelley Qian – Director (new)
 Peter Jurisic – Director (new)

Kayle Paustian – Treasurer (returning)
 Greg Pauling – Secretary (returning)
 Katherine Pederson – Director (returning)
 Moya Rose – Director – (new)

An incredibly huge thank you for the years of service and positive changes brought forward by our outgoing board members.

- Bill McDougall (*after a decade of service on AIWC's BOD - WAY TO GO!*)
- Liz Phinney • Berna-Dean Holland • Janna So • Deborah Thompson

Members only Talk & Tour

When: **Sunday, October 5, 2014**

Time: **12:30 pm arrival - we start at 1:00 pm sharp**

Subject: **Wildlife Rescue**

Presenter: **Cheyenne Nadbrzezna**

Ever wonder what happens at AIWC?

Cheyenne will tell you about hazards to wildlife, capturing an injured bird or mammal, how we assess and treat injuries, releasing animals back into the wild, how to prevent injuries, and what to do if you find an injured wild animal.

The talk is followed by an optional guided tour of our amazing wildlife rehabilitation centre.

Maximum 30 registrants due to limited space.

Booking is on a first-come-first-serve-basis. Refreshments available.

To register call 403-946-2361 with your membership I.D. #

Not yet a member?

Sign up online at AIWC.ca or when you call to book your spot.

There is no charge for this presentation,

however donations are always welcome!

AIWC can always use: frozen blueberries, peas, and corn; rolled oats or barely; mixed bird seed; puppy or kitten kibble; Ensure plus (vanilla only); and cleaning supplies (multi-purpose cleaner, floor cleaner, extra large garbage bags, dish soap, bleach, paper towel, facial tissues, toilet paper).



Keep up with the exciting world of wildlife rehabilitation by following AIWC on Facebook and Twitter (@AIWC)!



From the archives . . .

During my time at [AIWC] I have learned that what we are doing is very important. I have also learned that what we do is only the tip of the iceberg. There is so much to do by way of education, preventative/proactive projects and conservation. However I am comforted with the knowledge that, in my own small way, I play a part in preserving our native wildlife. As I looked up in the autumn sky this year and saw a flock of ducks heading south for the winter; I smiled... perhaps one had been a feathered friend of mine who I had the privilege of rehabilitating and releasing.

**Tammy White: *The Stuff I Learned...*,
Recovery Review, Vol. 7, Issue 1, Winter 2001**

Before volunteering I always thought that crows, ravens and magpies were a nuisance. Although they had never done anything to me personally, I had heard how dirty and annoying they could be. Then we received four orphaned raven nestlings. It amazed me how smart and different in character each bird was. I could write a book about their shenanigans – they are now my favorite birds.

Christel Hendrickson: *From the Heart & Soul: AIWC volunteers tell their stories, Recovery Review, Volume 12, Issue 4, Winter 2005/6*

There is no sorrow when I release wildlife back into the natural world, not even when they are babies we have raised ourselves. There is only gladness, mixed in with a generous dash of hope.

**Dianne Wittner: *Raising American Avocets...*,
Recovery Review, Volume 7, Issue 3, October 2001**

Specialists provide exclusive procedures ~ by D. Wittner

As a wildlife hospital, AIWC could be considered a specialist facility, but there are times when very specific veterinary skills are called for that are beyond the scope of AIWC's equipment. This summer, a young fox and an adult bobcat were the



fortunate recipients of just such services. Both animals were the victims of vehicle collisions, taking serious blows to the head.

In the case of the fox, it was evident her head trauma left her blind, which can sometimes be temporary. Initially comatose, the fox improved daily and it seemed her vision was returning. Dr. Kelly Ramey, an ocular expert at the Western Veterinary Specialists, agreed to see her to assess her vision. Dr. Ramey discovered the fox's eyes were intact and healthy but her vision was impaired due to a brain injury. What exactly the injury was and whether it was permanent were still to be determined. Two weeks later, her acute hearing and amazing sense of smell had the little fox hunting

live mice and running through obstacle courses but there was still doubt as to how perfect her sight might be and whether she could ever be released. Soon after, Dr. Diaz at the Care Center performed an MRI, where he found scar tissue on the part of the brain that controls vision. How that scar tissue would resolve over the next few weeks was still a question. The fox is still with AIWC at the time of this writing so we can't tell you the outcome of her case. What's important at this time is the generous contributions of the specialists who volunteered to provide answers beyond AIWC's capabilities.

About a month later, an adult bobcat was hit by a car near Canmore. Like the fox, she took the



blow to her head. After a few days, she became more active and alert so, once again, we called on Dr. Diaz to perform an MRI. Sadly, bobcats have become

a restricted species on wildlife rehabilitation permits so we had very limited time to determine the extent of her injuries and whether she would recover fully. Her MRI showed several issues including a herniated cerebellum, several areas of swelling

see **Specialists cont'd on p.8**

Red-breasted Nuthatch:

AIWC received a nest of red-breasted nuthatches (*Sitta canadensis*) that was accidentally cut down by an arborist before anyone (including the homeowners!) knew that there were birds in the nest. The nestlings grew quickly, and after several days in an indoor enclosure they were moved to an outdoor enclosure where they could begin learning how to fly. A favourite with AIWC volunteers and staff,



the nuthatches were busy and energetic, entertaining us with their constant nasal vocalizations. Once their flight feathers were fully grown and they were proven insect hunters, they were released north of Cochrane, Alberta in July 2014.

It's a bird... It's a plane... It's a... Squirrel?!

~ by J. Kozak

Late March, AIWC welcomed its first ever flying squirrel (*Glaucomys sabrinus*) patient. While their common name might conjure up visions of regular squirrels with Superman-like abilities, the reality is that flying squirrels don't actually fly: they glide through the air. (So a flying squirrel is more like Batman, which is still pretty awesome!) Typically, squirrels glide for an average distance of ten metres, though the world's record for distance covered

dark.

Flying squirrels are most active between dusk and dawn, which meant our squirrel patient spent most of his days at the centre fast asleep, not becoming active until the end of the day. Being omnivorous, flying squirrels eat berries, seeds, nuts, insects, tree buds and occasionally eggs or nestlings. Although flying squirrels are mainly found in trees, they do forage the forest ground for food, which is a risky activity for them; they are slow and clumsy runners when on the ground and if startled without a tree to escape to, their best defence is to hide.

Flying squirrels are found throughout the boreal forests of Alberta and are not currently considered an endangered or at-risk species, though habitat loss (specifically deforestation) is a serious threat.

Logging (clear-cutting in particular) reduces available habitat and nesting sites, creating large open spaces too



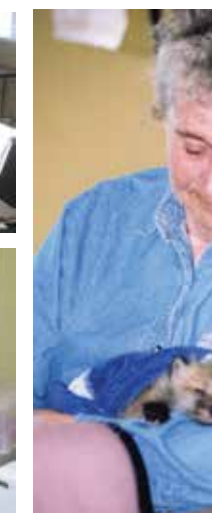
Flying squirrels are found throughout the boreal forests of Alberta. However, having a flying squirrel admitted to AIWC is a curious first!

wide for flying squirrels to glide across.

by a flying squirrel is over 91 metres (300 feet). Many adaptations allow flying squirrels to "fly" as their name suggests. They are able to glide thanks to the furry membranes located between their wrists and ankles. These membranes work like parachutes, allowing the squirrels to travel from tree to tree. Their tails are large and flat, and provide the squirrels with the ability to change direction mid-glide, allowing them to turn by as much as 180 degrees. Another feature this species possesses is large, light-capturing eyes. These serve a great purpose, since flying squirrels are nocturnal (active at night), so they need those big eyes to see in the

The exact reason this young squirrel arrived on the finder's property remains a mystery. One possible explanation is the squirrel hitch-hiked a ride in a holiday trailer from his birthplace, separating him from his mothers. After a few weeks of care at AIWC, and once he was mature enough to support himself, the squirrel was returned back to the wild where he can resume his night-time superhero activities!

If you live in a forested area and want to help the flying squirrel population, you can do so by building squirrel nesting boxes on your property.



People cont'd from p. 1

AIWC is very proud of our volunteer base. The longest serving volunteer has nineteen years under her belt, and there are many men and women who have served more than ten years. Since the year 2000, over 125,000 hours have been logged by volunteers – that is equivalent to SIXTY YEARS of service!

Rescue Drivers are typically the first responders when AIWC receives a call for injured or orphaned wildlife. Many of their spring time hours are spent relocating healthy Canada geese goslings and a myriad of ducklings to more appropriate nesting/growing spots!

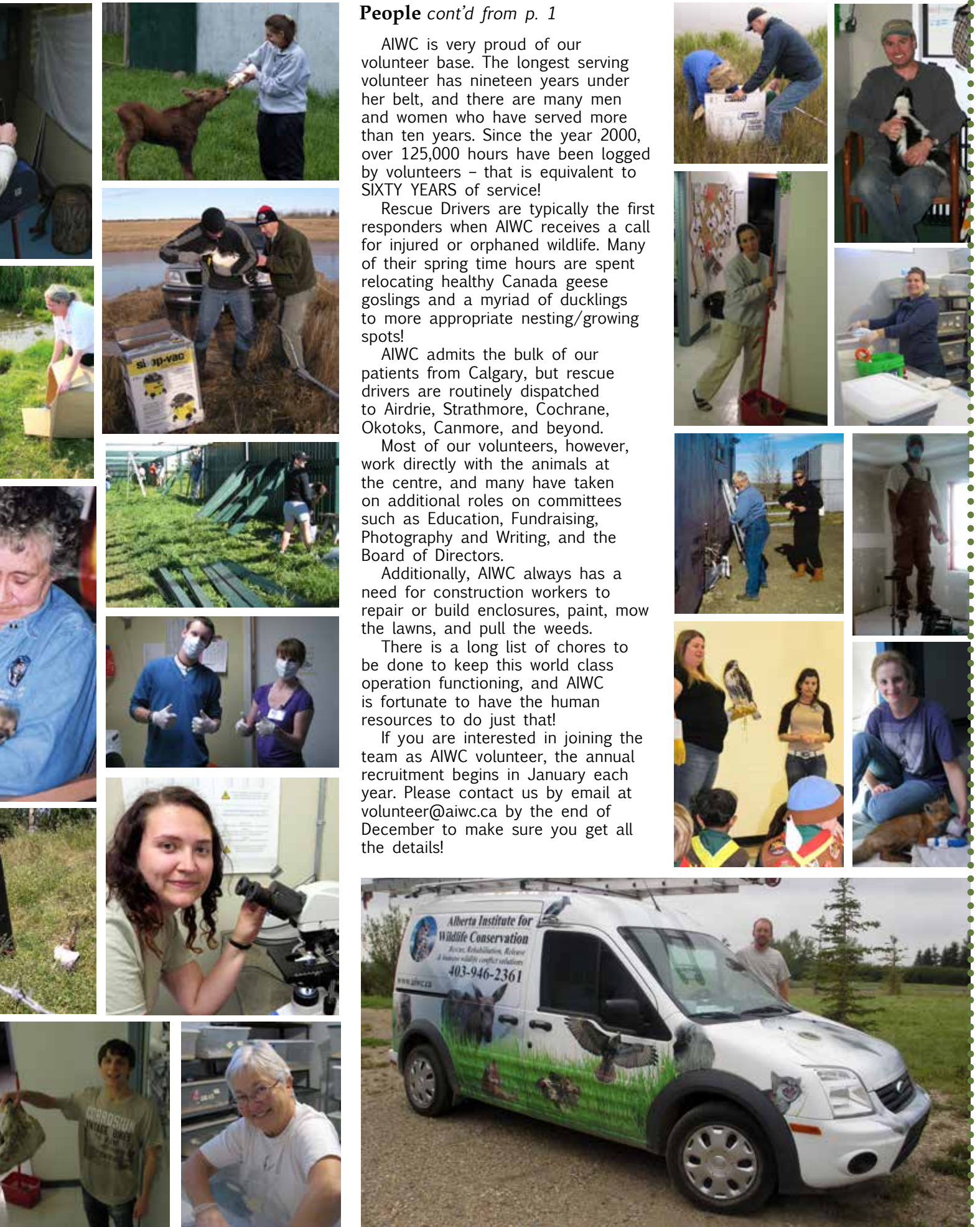
AIWC admits the bulk of our patients from Calgary, but rescue drivers are routinely dispatched to Airdrie, Strathmore, Cochrane, Okotoks, Canmore, and beyond.

Most of our volunteers, however, work directly with the animals at the centre, and many have taken on additional roles on committees such as Education, Fundraising, Photography and Writing, and the Board of Directors.

Additionally, AIWC always has a need for construction workers to repair or build enclosures, paint, mow the lawns, and pull the weeds.

There is a long list of chores to be done to keep this world class operation functioning, and AIWC is fortunate to have the human resources to do just that!

If you are interested in joining the team as AIWC volunteer, the annual recruitment begins in January each year. Please contact us by email at volunteer@aiwc.ca by the end of December to make sure you get all the details!



Pummeled by Nature

~ by D. Wittner



August 6th and 7th, the sky literally fell on AIWC when we were hit by two consecutive hail storms that left us reeling with damage. The sounds of golf-ball-sized spikey hail thwacking us on our hard-hats was deafening and more than a little frightening, as we waded out in the storm to be sure our outdoor patients had taken shelter.

The first night was the worst. Our runway roof, which covered seven great horned owls at the time, was turned into Swiss cheese. It took two weeks to install that 125-foot roof last October and just fifteen minutes in August to demolish it. Nets on several enclosures were shredded, the siding of both buildings was smashed, the roofs of the songbird condos were full of holes, and most of the vehicles parked here that night were later written off due to extensive damage.

Fortunately, none of our wild patients were seriously harmed that

first night. As a result of an urgent S.O.S. sent before midnight, a team of volunteers managed to re-roof the entire runway the next day while the owls waited in another enclosure. We also repaired all the nets and patched holes in the condo roof. That twelve-hour stint was exhausting but necessary; our busy summer is not the time to be without secure, functioning enclosures!

On the second night, hail struck again, this time from two directions simultaneously. Though the hail stones weren't quite as big this time, they struck with greater intensity as a result of the two opposing storms clashing overhead. We were sure the windows would break but though the frames suffered dents, the glass remained intact. Unfortunately, however, the animals weren't quite so

lucky this night. One duck was killed outright, another suffered a fractured leg, and two more were severely bruised and traumatized.

We found pieces of roofing tar and sheet metal screws on the ground, evidence of a very sturdy roof in need of inspection. Leaves and tree branches littered the flattened grass. Large purple bruises showed up on a few of us humans the next day.

The hail storms of 2014 will be one for our history books, not just for the terrible damage we incurred but for the heroic efforts of staff and volunteers during the event itself and through the aftermath. Many callers phoned in their support to help clean up, make repairs, or offer cash donations. As always, wildlife rehabilitation takes a community and AIWC thanks you all!



AIWC interns, Monica Leslie (L) and Samantha Mann (R), learned many aspects of running a wildlife trauma facility this summer. Coached by staff while learning on the job, Monica and Sam performed a multitude of tasks ranging from examinations to assisting with radiographs. One day, both ladies hope to become veterinarians.



From the archives ...



Everyone [who] worked with or met Flash [great horned owl and AIWC permanent resident from 1995-2004] came away with the lesson that every wild spirit is an individual [who] deserves a fighting chance.

Ken Cheek: *Flash, an RWR Legacy, Says 'Goodbye', Recovery Review, Volume 10, Issue 1, April 2004*

This American coot (*Fulica americana*) nestling is one of four baby coots admitted to AIWC in summer 2014.



Coots are migratory; they spend the summer months in and around freshwater ponds and lakes before heading south for the winter. Even as young birds, coots are exceptional hunters and eat almost every moving thing, including a variety of aquatic insects and invertebrates. After spending several weeks in AIWC's care, this coot was released at Nier Lake in August 2014.

Our Thanks

...to all the outstanding individuals who generously contributed crucial funds, aiding wildlife in distress!

The individual donor list is calculated cumulatively from January 1st to December 31st each year.

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From the archives ...

The connection between humanity and wildlife is often sadly one-sided. In an era of development and consumerism, the species that we 'share' our environment with are often overlooked and moved over. The desire to balance these odds even a little is a common motive among those of us at [AIWC] and everyone does their part to help, big or small. When the opportunity to take part in the summer internship of 2003 arose, I couldn't believe my luck. Not only was I able to directly participate in the rehabilitation of numerous animals during the busy summer season, but the experience and knowledge I gained during the internship surpassed

all of my expectations! From rescue to release, I was given an introduction to all aspects of rehabilitation, as well as ample opportunity to delve deeper into the scientific and administrative aspects of the business.

Shannon Bower: Knowledge is Bliss, Recovery Review, Volume 10, Issue 1, April 2004

I understood why I volunteer at AIWC the day I held an eagle in my arms that was at death's door from ingesting a man-made poison. Volunteering at AIWC is my way of ensuring that eagles are still flying for my daughter to see as she grows.

Karen Thompson: From the Heart & Soul: AIWC volunteers tell their stories, Recovery Review, Volume 12, Issue 4, Winter 2005/6

2014 WILDLIFE FOOD PLEDGE Raises \$8,600!

A big thank you to all our sponsors and to everyone who participated in and donated money to the 2014 Wildlife Food Pledge!

Your food dollars help ensure our patients receive the best possible care!

Congratulations to the prize winners:

Sony Action Camera
from **The Camera Store**
Heike Kretschmer

Framed Wildlife Print
from **www.printsforsale.ca**
Tammy White

Family Portrait Session from
Janet Horbacio Photography
Sharleen Lenihan

AIWC Hoodies and Mugs:
Moya Rose

Printing:
Seitel Solutions Canada

Pileated Woodpecker:

The pileated woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*) is a large woodpecker that inhabits mature forests across Canada. This fledgling was admitted to AIWC in June 2014. Although offered an assortment of food items, including insects, fruits, nuts and berries, his favourite was orange slices. He was released in Kananaskis, Alberta in July 2014 and immediately began exploring under the bark of nearby trees for insects and larvae.



From the archives ...

Every year volunteers from [AIWC] provide education seminars to groups as diverse as seniors' clubs, Brownies, Cubs, and hundreds of school children. [...] There is no doubt it is an experience of a lifetime – but is it enough? [...]

One day as I was wandering through the [centre] pondering this question I arrived at my mailbox and, to my surprise, there sat a small envelope. [...] In a few short lines this [grade four] boy answered all of my questions, and the one most important – Is it enough? You bet it is!

Conceptually we are told that education is power, but it is moments like these that make us believe it. At [AIWC] we know that education is the most powerful tool we have in conserving Alberta's wild spaces and animals, and we know it is working!

Robin Isaacs: *The Power of Education, Recovery Review, Volume 10, Issue 1, April 2004*

This very joyful outcome for a once frightened and beleaguered wild creature is the goal for which we at AIWC always strive. In all honesty, as I was responding to this situation I sadly expected to find nothing more than a porcupine pancake. Instead, it was a prime example of how cooperation between people and agencies – in this case the general public, the City of Calgary 311 hotline, the Calgary City Police Service, and AIWC – can truly save lives.

Dennis Hanna: *Police Pull Over Porcupine, Recovery Review, Volume 15, Issue 4, Winter 2008*

Specialists cont'd from p. 3

in the brain, and some small nasal-bone fractures. According to Dr. Diaz, all of these could eventually subside or heal so he suggested we continue to provide supportive care and let time do its thing. Like the fox, the bobcat's story has no 'conclusion' at the time of this writing but we are hopeful she will make a full recovery and that her

temporary permit will be extended by authorities, long enough to achieve

that. When she was admitted, the bobcat was lactating; without her protection and mothering, her kittens are undoubtedly deceased by now.

Both of these cases are a typical mix of hope and sorrow for AIWC personnel. We can never thank Dr. Ramey and Dr. Diaz enough for their wonderful contributions to AIWC and these two amazing animals.



MOVING? Don't miss out on AIWC news!
Please contact us with your new address.