

## Sponsor a recovering animal!...

**LARGE RAPTOR (\$60)**  
SWAINSON'S HAWK (*Buteo swainsoni*)



This Swainson's hawk was spotted in the middle of a busy highway near DeWinton, Alberta on September 4, 2014. She was most likely hit by a vehicle, and was unable to move. She was quickly transported to AIWC.

Her examination revealed bruising to her left wing and hip, as well as severe head trauma, specifically, torticollis, a condition defined as a fixed or dynamic tilt, rotation or flexion of the head and/or neck, often a result of a traumatic injury.

Unfortunately, her injuries did not heal in time for migration; each fall Swainson's hawks travel 10,000 kilometres south to Argentina! She will overwinter at AIWC and be released in the spring when Swainson's hawks once again return to Alberta.

If you would like to donate directly to her care by adopting her, please visit our website or call us at the centre.

**Thank you for helping us keep her forever wild!**

Adopting any of our wild patients helps AIWC with the expenses associated with their rehabilitation. For more details [www.aiwc.ca](http://www.aiwc.ca) or 403-946-2361

This issue of the **Recovery Review** features one of AIWC's 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. AIWC's "adoption option" is particularly popular as a gift!

# Recovery Review

Quarterly Bulletin of the Alberta Institute for Wildlife Conservation

Wildlife Conservation through Education & Rehabilitation

## 2014 By The Numbers

**2**014 marked another busy year at AIWC, with the successful release of hundreds of recovered patients back to the wild and several rare patients and events that provided challenges, opportunities, and unique experiences for our wonderful staff and volunteers.

Throughout the year, AIWC admitted over 1,600 patients, which is a 10% increase from 2013.

We were able to see nearly half of those patients be successfully returned to the wild, and although this may seem low, it's an unfortunate reality in wildlife rehabilitation that once an animal is ill or injured enough to be captured it often means their condition is quite serious and even the best, most prompt care may not be enough to guarantee their return to the wild.

But do not let that discourage you; due to the actions of our dedicated finders, rescue drivers, volunteers, and staff, AIWC was still able to return over 700 animals back to the wild

last year! And this figure does not include all of the additional successful releases and relocations performed directly by our rescue drivers in the field.

It should also be noted that the severe hail storms that pounded AIWC in August caused several serious injuries to waterfowl in the

surrounding area, contributing to a lower-than-average overall release rate for the year. The hail storm is also likely the reason we saw a spike by 16% in waterfowl admissions for 2014.

Birds in general continue to make up most patients brought to the centre, with songbirds alone

see 2014 continued on p. 3

*Thanks* continued from p. 7

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- Yeti Lacrosse Association



~ by J. Kaiser

One of our 2014 red fox patients surveying her outdoor enclosure.

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

**AIWC Wildlife Hotline: 403-946-2361**



Box 68, Madden, AB ToM 1Lo  
 P (403) 946-2361 • F (403) 946-5689  
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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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PHOTOS: AIWC, C. Vavasour-Williams,  
 J. Kaiser, D. Oldfield

Submissions/comments may be sent to the above address.

# Message from the BOD

Happy New Year to the staff, volunteers and supporters of AIWC!  
 The board of directors would like to thank the great community of people who help AIWC serve our mission: striving to enrich the lives of Albertans through the nurturing of a strong appreciation and respect for wildlife. That's a wordy way of saying saving animals lives.

Over the years, AIWC has had thousands upon thousands of animals come through its doors. Sadly, not all of them leave.

AIWC does the utmost to save the lives of injured and orphaned animals. Our patients are provided with the best care that we can muster to give them the best chances for survival in the wild. The care and feeding of our patients is an expensive undertaking. Our volunteer board is but a part of the large volunteer base that supports AIWC's mission. Without our volunteers, the wild animals that we work to save would not have the hope that AIWC provides.

This is probably the most crucial year in the history of AIWC; we not only need funds to continue operating in our current capacity, we need funds to expand our capacity.

We ask all of you, our supporters, to do what you can to support AIWC financially.

In the coming weeks we will be asking for your financial support. We will be asking you to ask your friends, your family members, your Facebook friends, your co-workers, your employers, and your employees to help us help those who can't help themselves.

Thank you to all of our supporters and we look forward to your continued support in 2015.

The Board of Directors, AIWC

## AIWC's Wildlife Education Programs had our best-ever year in 2014!

Throughout the year, our volunteer team of four presented to 124 groups, with a total of 3,639 attendees, most of whom were children. We already have more than thirty programs booked for 2015.

**If you would like to add your group to the list and book an AIWC Education Program for a classroom or group, please contact us.**

**(403) 946-2361**  
**education@aiwc.ca**

Keep up with the exciting world of wildlife rehabilitation



by following AIWC on



Facebook and Twitter (@AIWC)!

## Time to Renew Your Membership!

Current memberships expire March 21, 2015

New and renewed memberships will be valid until March 21, 2016. Your annual membership fees (\$35/single or \$45/family) help support local wildlife conservation and education.

**Your membership entitles you to:**

- Our quarterly newsletter, *The Recovery Review*, mailed to you;
- Discounts on AIWC merchandise;
- Discounts at local businesses;
- Exclusive Members Only 'Talk & Tour'; and
- Participate at the AIWC Annual General Meeting.

**There are four easy ways to purchase or renew your AIWC membership:**

- Complete and mail in the Membership Form insert in this edition of *Recovery Review*;
- Complete the secure online form at aiwc.ca;
- E-mail membership@aiwc.ca; or
- Call 403-946-2361.

# 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. This list covers January 1 to December 31, 2014

WATCH YOUR NAME MOVE UP THE LEVELS AS YOU DONATE THROUGHOUT THE YEAR!

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see **Thanks** continued on p. 8

# AIWC offers many ways you can help wildlife too!

This cedar waxwing is resting in a Christmas tree donated to provide natural enrichment to our patients.

~ by H. Duvall

It's a New Year, and therefore a time for New Year's resolutions.

A lot of resolutions can fizzle out by February, so why not try incorporating some of these ideas to help wildlife all throughout 2015?

## • Volunteer at AIWC

Volunteer information sessions start in February. Email [volunteer@aiwc.ca](mailto:volunteer@aiwc.ca) or visit our website [www.aiwc.ca](http://www.aiwc.ca) for more information.

## • Follow AIWC on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram

This may seem simple, but the more followers and shared posts we have on these social platforms, the more we are known in the community and the more wildlife we can help. Like us today!

## • Keep a cardboard box and towel in your vehicle at all times

You never know when you could come across wildlife in distress so it's best to always be prepared with these key items. If you do find wildlife in need of help, give us a call at 403-946-2361.

## • Collect your bottles and donate them to AIWC

Not only are you recycling, but the proceeds go directly to helping wildlife.

## • Become a member of AIWC

Or renew your membership for 2015. Your membership fee goes directly to helping wildlife. See page 2 for more information.

## • Adopt a recovering animal

A great gift idea for wildlife lovers! The price of adoption goes to the care of the animal, and the gift recipients are mailed a colour photo of their adopted animal and an adoption certificate. Learn more on our website: [www.aiwc.ca](http://www.aiwc.ca)

## • Challenge your friends & family

If weight loss is one of your resolutions, why not ask friends and family to donate to a charity of your choice when you reach milestones on your journey?

We want to hear about your ideas for helping wildlife. Use the hashtag #newyearhelpwildlife when posting your New Year's resolutions that will benefit wildlife in 2015 and beyond.

AIWC Volunteer, Sue, helping with the numerous loads of laundry we do each day.



## Introducing AIWC's new Executive Director

I am very happy to introduce myself as the new Executive Director of AIWC. I started with AIWC in June 2014, and moved into the role of Executive Director in October.

I am originally from England and have been fortunate to live in Scotland, the United States, and now Canada, which has been my home for the past seven years. I have worked in the field of animal care for the past 10 years, with roles such as: big cat rescue keeper, wildlife program assistant, volunteer coordinator, project manager, wildlife rehabilitation centre manager, and oiled wildlife specialist.

A highlight of my career was as project manager of the Wildlife Rehabilitation Society of Edmonton's move from a 1-acre parcel of land to a 53-acre property. It was an enormous amount of work, but I loved every minute of it.

Thank you to AIWC's Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, and all the wonderful supporters that have welcomed me into my new role. I am very passionate about the valuable work that AIWC does, and am dedicated to ensuring that AIWC continues to serve the wildlife that so desperately need a second chance.

I invite you to contact me and share any ideas you may have regarding AIWC, and how together we can ensure its future. You can call me at the Centre, 403-946-2361 or by email to [holly.duvall@aiwc.ca](mailto:holly.duvall@aiwc.ca).

Thank you for your continued support of AIWC; it is a wonderful organization and I'm proud to represent it!

- Holly Duvall, Executive Director



2014 continued from p. 1

Red Fox

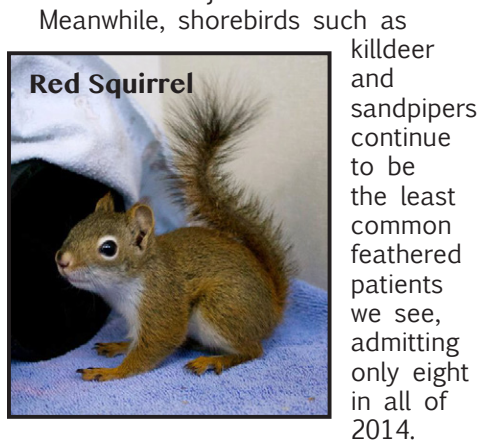


accounting for 37% of all admitted patients. The American robin continues to be the most common songbird admitted, and in 2014 we saw 127 of them in our care. AIWC also provided care to over two hundred corvids in 2014 (ravens, magpies, crows, and blue jays).



American Robin

It is also no question that great horned owls are the bird of Alberta - we admitted fifty of them in 2014 - an 8% increase from the previous year. Great horned owls make up almost three quarters of all owls we admit and over one quarter of all raptors. At one point in the summer, we had fourteen in our care at the same time - all juveniles.



Red Squirrel

Meanwhile, shorebirds such as killdeer and sandpipers continue to be the least common feathered patients we see, admitting only eight in all of 2014.

The admission of white-tailed prairie hares (mostly young hares, called leverets) makes up over half of all mammal admissions and approximately 10% of all AIWC patients. We were happy to record a small decrease (2.6%) in the admission of leverets from 2013, which we hope indicates a

reduction in the amount of accidental "kidnappings" that can often take place when finders come across leverets that might be unattended, but have not actually been abandoned (it is very natural for the mothers to leave them for long periods of time during the day so she doesn't attract predators).

2014 saw a significant increase - almost double - in the number of bats admitted to our care (thirty total), meaning we admitted as many bats as we did skunks. Beavers and porcupines were matched in admissions with eight each, and we also saw a substantial increase in red squirrel patients, more than tripling from four in 2013 to thirteen in 2014. We also saw the extremely rare admission of a flying squirrel.



Great Horned Owl

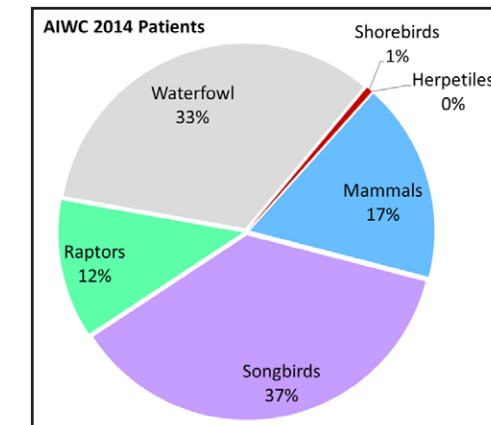
2014 also provided the unique opportunity to treat a bobcat who had been hit by a car. Unfortunately, she did not regain her sight within the maximum amount of time permitted to provide her care and could not

be responsibly released. Similarly, we also saw two red fox kits that had been struck by vehicles in separate incidents, suffering serious injuries. Happily, one did regain her sight and fully recovered, and we released her back to the wild in September after several weeks of care.



American Crow

and salamanders) comprised less than 1% of admissions - a lone salamander was admitted in 2014, compared to six total herpetile



## Support AIWC's 3rd "Bunnies for Bunnies" Easter Fundraiser!

Easter is just around the corner, and so is AIWC's busiest season of the year!

You can help support the care of injured and orphaned wildlife by ordering delicious Purdy's chocolates - **25% of all sales will be donated to AIWC!**

Purdy's has made ordering your Easter chocolate easy: go to [www.purdysgpp.com](http://www.purdysgpp.com) to register, search for **Group number 27575**, and start shopping.

**Order deadline date is March 14, 2015.**

You will be contacted for pick-up/delivery arrangements and receive your order no later than March 28.

Orders from Calgary and area accepted. If you have any questions, please contact us at [info@aiwc.ca](mailto:info@aiwc.ca).



Thank you for your support!

# Myth Busting

~ by J. Kozak

## Is being a “birdbrain” a bad thing?

The term ‘birdbrain’, which is intended to be an insult, suggests that birds have very little intelligence. Is this true?

Of course not! Research shows that birds can’t all be

to sing in a fashion very similar to how humans learn to speak. When they are young, songbirds exhibit unstructured song patterns similar to the way human infants start off by babbling. Over time, and through mimicking the adults around them, speech emerges, or, in the case of birds, songs. For male songbirds, this skill is crucial to learn so that once mature,

he can use his songs to entice potential mates.

The art of mimicking the sounds of humans and other animals is another supporting case in the unique intelligence birds possess. This ability is a result

of vocal learning, and requires repetition and encouragement. For example, Professor Irene Pepperberg from the University of Arizona, denounced the notion that parrots are simply mindless mimics. Her test subject Alex, an African grey parrot, is one of several parrots and macaws believed to have intelligence similar to that of a three to four year old child. Through the course of his life, Alex acquired a vocabulary of over 100 words.

Of course, there is an abundance of anecdotal stories of birds surprising us with their intelligence and problem-solving. At AIWC, the majority of our patients are birds – even the young nestlings we see each spring quickly learn the sounds of our timers that prompt their thirty minute feedings.

Blue jay juvenile



painted with the same brush. Each species carries unique brain mass and structure suited to fit that bird’s everyday needs in nature – whether they are solving challenges, creating symphony-like displays of sound, or simply logging where they stored that winter seed-stash.

The true “Einsteins” of the bird kingdom would likely lie in the Corvidae family, who have some of the largest brains of all bird families and include crows, ravens, magpies, jays, and nutcrackers. There are countless documented studies and experiments showing how birds, such as crows, are able to solve puzzles of varying patterns once they understand that a reward lies at the end of the challenge.

But corvids aren’t the only intelligent birds out there. Songbirds, for example, learn

# This Year’s Over-Wintering Patients ~ by C. Vavasour-Williams



## American Crows

Two American crows were admitted from Calgary neighbourhoods. The first crow arrived in early October 2014 and just over a month later the second crow was admitted. Both crows had substantial damage to their

feathers. They will remain at AIWC until their new feathers have grown in and they are once again able to fly.



## Big Brown Bats

Admitted two weeks apart in December 2014, both bats’ examinations revealed no significant injuries; however, since the temperatures were dropping, staff decided that it would be unsafe to release them as they would not have a warm hibernacula in which to spend the winter. Instead, they will overwinter at AIWC and be released in the spring together with a third bat that was admitted late in the winter.



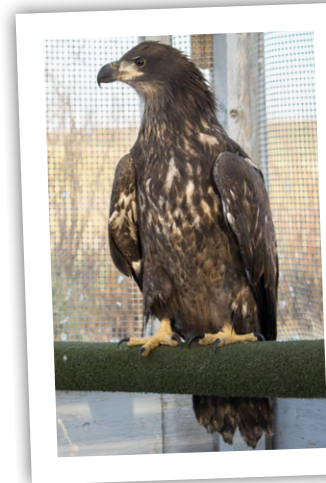
## Swainson’s Hawks

In September 2014 AIWC admitted two Swainson’s hawks. They were found independently near busy Alberta highways (one near Standard and one near DeWinton) and were suspected to have sustained injuries, including substantial bruising, from being struck by a vehicle. Since neither hawk’s injuries had healed in time for the annual fall migration south, they will both remain in our care to be released in the summer when Swainson’s hawks once again return to Alberta.



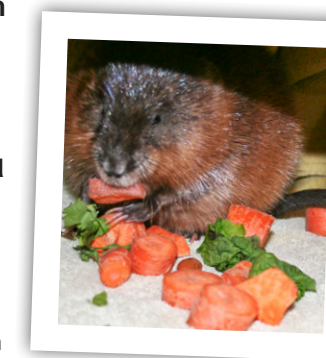
## Golden Eagle

This golden eagle was found in the Northwest Territories. As was the case with the bald eagle nestling, Fish & Wildlife assisted with this eagle’s long journey to AIWC. At AIWC, his examination revealed blood parasites, which staff began treating. He will spend the winter at AIWC growing into a healthy adult golden eagle.



## Common Muskrat

This juvenile muskrat was found on the side of a busy road in northeast Calgary in November 2014. His examination revealed some minor head trauma, likely the result of having been hit by a car. After several days in AIWC’s care his condition had improved significantly; however, the decision was made that he would over-winter at AIWC, because he would not be able to find a suitable den to spend the winter if released in late fall. He is not alone though - there are four other muskrats also over-wintering at AIWC.



## Cedar Waxwing

This cedar waxwing was discovered in September 2014 in a residential backyard in Cremona, Alberta. Unable to fly, her examination revealed minor spinal trauma, perhaps the result of being attacked by a domestic cat. Each fall, cedar waxwings migrate south to the southern United States and Central America; since this waxwing’s injuries did not heal in time for migration, she will spend the winter at AIWC and be released in the spring.



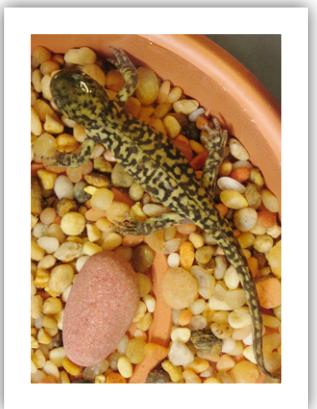
## Bald Eagle

This bald eagle nestling was found on the ground on an island just outside of Yellowknife, Northwest Territories in early July 2014. With the help of Fish & Wildlife, the young eagle was transported to AIWC where he will safely grow into a healthy, adult eagle.



## Tiger Salamander

This tiger salamander was found in a northwest Calgary parking lot in November 2014. His examination revealed a wound to his tail; perhaps he was dropped in the parking lot by a predator. His tail takes some time to heal, so he will remain in AIWC’s care and be released in the spring.



## You Can Help AIWC Help Wildlife

Complete and mail in the enclosed form or visit our website at [www.aiwc.ca](http://www.aiwc.ca) to make a donation, adopt an animal or sign up for a yearly membership.

**Your support is vital to the operation of AIWC!**

## 2015 Calendars still available



Large

**\$15**

Members: \$12



Small

**\$10**

Members: \$8