

## Four American Black Bear Patients Recovering at AIWC this Summer

By J. Kaiser

AIWC first began rehabilitating black bear cubs in 2002, back when we were known as Rocky View Wildlife Recovery (we changed our name in 2004). AIWC cared for bears until 2010 when the province ceased allowing the rehabilitation of black bear cubs. Then, when the province reinstated black bear cub rehabilitation in 2018, AIWC received our permit in 2019 to continue providing care for black bear cubs in need. Since then, we are proud to report a 100% success rate in our black bear cub rehabilitation program.

This spring and summer, AIWC has admitted a record number of black bear cubs, with four patients currently receiving care.

The first two patients, twin sisters, were admitted at the end of May from the Grande Cache area after their mother was killed. Upon admission, they were thin and malnourished, but had healthy appetites. They were moved to an outdoor enclosure in early June and enjoy exploring and playing on the climbing structures.

A third female black bear cub patient originally found in the Fort McMurray area and was brought to AIWC in early June via Alberta Environment and Parks (Fish and Wildlife), also orphaned.

Our fourth black bear cub patient was also admitted in early June, after being observed alone with no mother around for several days in an area west of Edmonton. He was thin and dehydrated, but was eating very well from the start. Although timid for the first couple of days, it wasn't long before he was growling at his care givers and exploring his enclosure – all excellent signs his rehabilitation is progressing well.

Upon completing necessary quarantine periods to ensure everyone was healthy and could not inadvertently transmit anything to the others, all four bear cub patients were eventually introduced in our large outdoor enclosure to be rehabilitated together.

Having each other's company and minimal interaction with our staff will ensure these cubs have minimal stress and are not habituated to humans, which will provide them the best chances of survival when they are released later this fall. AIWC will work closely with Alberta Environment and Parks (Fish and Wildlife) in the release of these patients, as well as post-release monitoring.

We cannot thank our community enough for the support you show AIWC and our patients that allows us to continue providing essential care to our patients in need.



*Our orphaned female black bear cub patients*



*Black bear cub practising his climbing skills*



Box 68, Madden, AB T0M 1L0  
(403) 946-2361  
info@aiwc.ca  
www.aiwc.ca

MISSION:

AIWC is committed to the rescue, rehabilitation, and release of injured and orphaned wildlife. We provide expert advice and education that fosters an appreciation of wildlife.

Our Vision:

Preserving the legacy of wildlife.

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EDITOR: J. Kaiser

COPY EDITOR: A. Wingenbach

DESIGNER: D. Cresswell

PRINT: Little Rock Printing

CONTRIBUTORS:

J. Carlielle, J. Cooke, V. Hindbo,  
J. Kaiser, F. Kennedy, H. Lillie,  
H. Lippmann, R. Selkirk, K. Terrill

PHOTOS:

AIWC, D. Cresswell, V. Hewitt,  
L. Horbachewski

Submissions/comments may be sent  
to the above address or emailed to  
jennifer.kaiser@aiwc.ca

## Executive Director Update

*By Holly Lillie, Executive Director*

Our busy season is in full swing! Already over 1,000 animals have been brought to AIWC for care this year and it is definitely shaping up to be the year of the mammal.

Typically, around 75% of our patients are birds, with the rest mostly being mammals, aside from the odd amphibian. This year we are seeing a huge variety of mammal species being admitted, ranging from black bears, to moose, deer, beavers, a badger, foxes, and squirrels, in addition to the usual bats, skunks, porcupines, and hares. Mammal patients tend to require longer-term care than birds and their needs are quite different; treatment is often more labour-intensive, especially in the case of neonate (young infant) mammals that require around the clock care.

Thankfully with a dedicated team of staff, volunteers, and supporters like you, we are able to meet the continued demand for our services.

This summer we are welcoming a new veterinary intern to our team and sadly saying goodbye to Dr. Jessica Khodadad. In July 2020 AIWC partnered with National Wildlife Centre to provide 1-year veterinary internships at AIWC. Dr. Khodadad's term has come to an end as of July 2021 and we welcome our new veterinary intern, Dr. Emily Alnutt. We wish you all the best, Dr. Jessica and welcome, Dr. Emily!

Thank you for all you do to support AIWC's mission. I hope you have a wonderful rest of the summer and that you and yours remain safe and well.

Sincerely,

Holly Lillie

Executive Director



## Adopt a Patient... or Six!

By F. Kennedy



*One of seven red fox kit patients*

Red foxes are one of Canada's most prevalent animals and can be found coast-to-coast. Many people enjoy having red foxes on their property, as not only are foxes interesting to watch, they also reduce rodent and insect populations.

We currently have several fox kits in care at AIWC. Five of them were found orphaned outside of their den in a rural area east of Calgary after their parents were killed. They were about four weeks old at the time and were wandering outside crying for food and water. A sixth kit was brought to us from the Didsbury area two days later. She was about six weeks old and was found abandoned outside her den.

All of six of these kits have been doing great in care and are displaying all the normal behaviours that fox kits their age should. They are very avid diggers and climbers and are utilizing every aspect of their enclosure. They have dug themselves a very nice den that they are often seen dashing in and out of.



*Red fox kits at play in their outdoor enclosure*

In early July, a seventh fox kit patient was admitted. He was found under a deck in the De Winton area, and two of his siblings were found deceased in a nearby field. Upon admission, staff discovered he was severely dehydrated and emaciated, suffering from sarcoptic mange, ticks, and fleas. He is undergoing care in the clinic, quarantined from other patients until he is healthy enough to join them. Keep your fingers crossed for a steady recovery.

All of the fox kit patients will remain in our care until September, when they will be released into a suitable habitat to start establishing their own territories.

AIWC estimates it costs \$95/day to feed seven fox kit patients.

Adopting one of these fox patients, or any other current AIWC patient you see in the newsletter or on social media, helps with the costs directly associated with their care and rehabilitation. As part of your adoption, you will receive a certificate, a glossy 8x10 photograph of your patient, and a tax receipt for the full amount of the adoption. Thank you for helping us to keep them forever wild!

**On a time crunch or want to save paper? You can now send and receive adoptions electronically! See [aiwc.ca](http://aiwc.ca) for more info.**



## Education Update: Wildlife Education in the Time of COVID

By K. Terrill, AIWC Community Engagement Manager

This past year has been full of challenges, but it also has revealed some new opportunities for AIWC's wildlife education program. Though we are only just starting to transition back to in-person programming, our virtual programs have been a stunning success, and enabled AIWC's education team to reach people that our in-person programs simply wouldn't have been able to access. Not only have we been able to deliver programs for people across Alberta, but we have also presented for folks across Canada and even internationally!

At the beginning of March 2021, grade 5/6 students from the Carrollwood Day School in Tampa, Florida emailed us asking for resources for a project they were doing on international conservation. After suggesting a few topics for them to explore, their teacher realized we were able to offer online education programs, and requested a special presentation for their class so they could learn more about conservation in Canada! We were happy to help, and the students had many excellent questions about how wildlife rehabilitation centres like ours worked and what they could do to help their own local wildlife species. They were also interested in learning more about species at risk in Canada, which is a speciality of our Community Education Manager, and we had some great discussions on animals, such as whooping cranes and polar bears. Truly, an excellent collaboration for everyone involved!

We are thrilled to be able to offer programs like this for audiences near and far. Given that there are many barriers to accessing wildlife education programs in person, such as cost, distance, and time, we have decided to continue offering virtual presentations (in addition to resuming in-person programs) for the foreseeable future.

If you are interested in checking out our program options, or interested in booking a presentation, please visit our website.



*Yellow-headed blackbird patient*



*Two of four raven patients currently in care at AIWC*

**Book your wildlife education program or virtual presentation today!**  
<https://www.aiwc.ca/get-involved/wildlife-education/>

## Orphaned Badger Grows Closer to Release

By J. Cooke



*American badger patient*

For the first time in several years, AIWC has admitted a badger patient. This baby American badger patient was found by the side of the road near Drumheller on May 31st. The small male was only a few weeks old when rescued near his deceased sibling, likely a victim of a vehicle collision. The mother was nowhere to be found and is also assumed to have suffered this fate. However, the badger had no injuries, and has been developing steadily on a diet of quail and other raw meat.

The American Badger is part of the weasel family and is listed as a sensitive species in Alberta. They frequent grasslands, agricultural areas, and even forested areas, but habitat fragmentation due to agriculture and increasing urbanization threatens populations. There have been reports of some badgers in more urban areas, but it's rare to spot these elusive nocturnal hunters.

The feisty young badger has recently been moved outside and, unsurprisingly, has begun tunnelling in his enclosure. He will be old enough to release in several weeks, at which point he will be returned to the general area where he was found.

# Masters of the Sky

By H. Lippmann

Bald eagles are birds that symbolize strength and excellence. Their wing span measures more than two metres and their perching height is about 76 cm tall. This majestic bird is Canada's largest bird of prey and can only be found in North America. Did you know that it takes four to five years to achieve their famous colouration? Young bald eagles can be identified by their brown plumage with white patches.

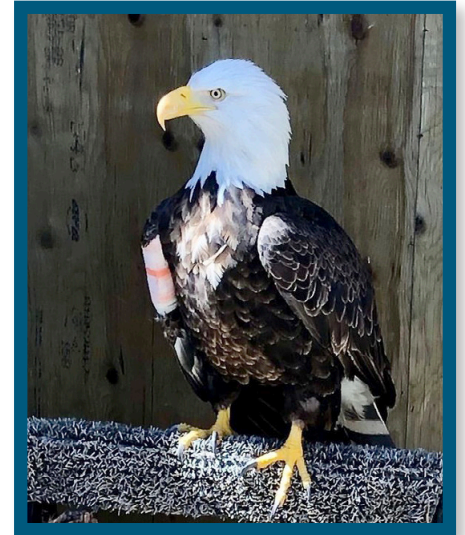
On May 13, Alberta Parks received a call that a bald eagle had been observed being unable to fly at the Three Sisters Campground near Canmore. An officer was able to reach the area by canoe and contained the severely emaciated bird so it could be sent to AIWC.



*Bald eagle being released back into the wild*

For unknown reasons, he suffered from a metacarpal fracture on his right wing which required splinting. In care, he immediately started eating, over time preferring quail as his diet, even though these raptors normally feed on fish, aquatic birds, and mammals.

This bald eagle patient has since made a full recovery and the healed fracture did not impact his ability to fly. He was released back to the wild on June 17, after just over a month in care.



*Bald eagle patient with splint*



*Bald eagle after release*

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## Urban Osprey Recovered after Vehicle Collision on Deerfoot

By J. Kaiser

Calgary commuters with their eyes to the sky along the Bow river are no stranger to seeing all sorts of wildlife along the busy thoroughfares. Within the city, the river attracts birds such as bald eagles, cormorants, pelicans, and osprey, among others.

Unfortunately, wildlife and urban development don't always mix well, and popular nesting sites along Deerfoot Trail can be hazardous, which was the case for this osprey patient. Admitted toward the end of April, she was found near the road, unable to fly, the likely victim of a vehicle collision.

Upon admission to AIWC, she was diagnosed with head trauma and associated eye injuries, as well as a clavicle fracture. Her fracture was wrapped, and she was given medication to heal her injuries. After a few weeks of cage rest in the clinic and she was healed enough, she was moved to an outdoor enclosure to begin flight conditioning.

In early June, after more than a month in care, she was successfully returned to the wild in an area close to where she was found... but not too close.



*Osprey patient with splint*

## Orphaned Red-tailed Hawk Growing up at AIWC

By J. Kaiser



*Red-tailed hawk nestling*

This red-tailed hawk nestling was admitted to AIWC in late June after being found on the ground in the Rockyview area.

Upon admission, AIWC staff found he was very underweight and had a significant parasite infection in his ears, as well as moderately across his entire body. Staff got to work cleaning him up by manually removing both bot flies and fly larvae from his ears, and gently cleaning his ears and body with an antibacterial solution.

This hawk patient will grow up at AIWC as he recovers from his condition, and in the fall once he is old enough, will be released in time to join the rest of his species for their winter migration.

## Speedy Recovery for Great Grey Owl

By R. Selkirk

Would you believe that having asymmetrical ear openings could help you hear better? While this may not be a common trait among humans, great grey owls have this special trait that enables them to hear accurately enough to detect prey using only sound.

AIWC nursed this great grey owl back to health this summer after he was found on the side of the road outside of Calgary after a suspected collision with a car. He was admitted to us on June 1st and a full examination revealed that he was suffering from head trauma and an eye injury. Our staff were thrilled to see him bounce back quickly after just a few weeks in care.

While injuries such as fractures require patients to undergo flight rehabilitation and conditioning, the head trauma injury of this great grey owl didn't impact his flight recovery and he was able to fly beautifully after being moved into an outdoor enclosure. He was released back into the wild before the end of June, and we trust is using his recovered head to listen in for nearby critters.

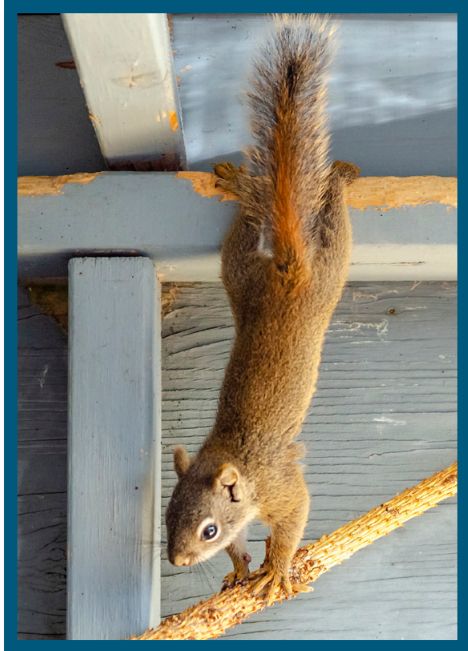


*Great grey owl in AIWC's outdoor flight-conditioning enclosure*

# Nuts about Squirrels

By V. Hindbo

Caring for baby squirrels is a round-the-clock job so AIWC is very fortunate to have dedicated staff who are up to the task! Thankfully, squirrels generally grow up and become independent very quickly.



*Red squirrel acrobatics in one of AIWC's outdoor enclosures*

On April 29th, we admitted three, two-week-old, red squirrels that were found in a car filter in Calgary. Because the squirrels were in poor nutritional condition and very dehydrated, we suspect their mother had abandoned them. When they arrived, they were still naked, had their eyes closed and required formula feeding every two to three hours throughout the night. After being raised by AIWC staff, all three squirrels responded well to care

and were released on June 20th back near the area in which they were found.

In early May, AIWC also received four northern flying squirrels, approximately three weeks old. They were discovered when the finders knocked down a tree snag in which the squirrels were nesting. Unfortunately, although no doubt with the best intentions, the finders took the babies home and cared for them for three days before calling AIWC for help. Not only did this prevent the babies from being reunited with their mother, it also caused them to become very dehydrated and malnourished due to improper care. Like the red squirrels, they initially required round-the-clock feeding. Fortunately, they responded well to care and were returned to the wild once they were old enough in early July.



*Northern flying squirrel patient*

Then, in early June, AIWC received its third species of squirrel patient so far this year: three Richardson's

ground squirrels. They were admitted after being orphaned when their mother was hit by a car. They were a little dehydrated but had no injuries, so after a week-long stay they were returned back to the wild.



*Richardson's ground squirrel in the wild*

Please, if you find an injured or orphaned animal, don't delay in taking it to a wildlife rehabilitation facility for help. The longer you care for that animal, the more harm you do, whether it's feeding an improper diet, not providing lifesaving medical treatment, or habituating the animal to humans. And please spread the word to your family and friends.



*Red squirrel baby feasting on nuts*



**Box 68, Madden, AB T0M 1L0  
(403) 946-2361  
info@aiwc.ca  
www.aiwc.ca**

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By purchasing an annual membership, you support local wildlife, conservation, and education at AIWC for a yearly fee of \$35 per person or \$45 for a family.

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- Our emailed ENews;
- Discount prices on select AIWC merchandise;
- Discounts at local businesses; and
- The opportunity to participate in the AIWC Annual General Meeting.

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

- Complete and mail in the membership section of the insert attached;
- Complete the secure online form at aiwc.ca; or
- Call 403-946-2361

The Alberta Institute for Wildlife Conservation (AIWC) plans to raise \$965,000 this year through fundraising campaigns and initiatives. It will cost the organization approximately \$65,000 to raise this amount. Funds raised will go to support AIWC's mission. For further information, please contact Holly Lillie at 403-946-2361.

**WILDLIFE HOTLINE: 403-946-2361**

**A Secretive Sora**

*By J. Carlielle*

Sora are shy, secretive birds not often brought into our clinic. Despite being common in Alberta, most people have never actually seen one in person.

In late May, a sora was found in someone's pool in south Calgary unable to fly. He was diagnosed with a right radius fracture (a bone in the forearm of the wing) injury, had a lot of bruising and swelling, and was very underweight. As with many of our patients, it is uncertain how he obtained his injury.



*Sora keeping a low profile, in the wild*

Typically, soras are very difficult to rehabilitate because they tend to stress easily and refuse to eat in captivity. Fortunately, AIWC was able to set up this patient's enclosure in such a way that he was comfortable enough to begin eating on his first day in care. His injury was wrapped, and he was prescribed cage rest until he healed and his overall condition improved.

Soras are also very fast and agile, which makes them excellent escape artists! They always seem to find a way to slip through small spaces and disappear. Luckily, this patient settled into care at AIWC well, and after a month (with no escapes!) he made a full recovery from his injuries. He was released at the end of June after a month in care.

**AIWC Centre Hours**

Our clinic is open to the public to admit patients and accept donations and supplies as follows:

**May to August: 9:00am – 8:00pm**

**September - April: 9:00a.m. – 5:00p.m.**

*(with modified hours on select holidays)*

Please call our Wildlife Hotline at 403-946-2361 before dropping off an injured or orphaned animal.

For after-hours assistance, please refer to our website for more information:

**[www.aiwc.ca/found-a-wild-animal/after-hours-assistance/](http://www.aiwc.ca/found-a-wild-animal/after-hours-assistance/)**