

Black Bear Cubs on Their Way to Recovery

By F. Kennedy



Male black bear cub during admission



Male black bear cub learning to climb

AIWC received a very young orphaned male black bear cub on May 22. He was found alone in a ditch on the side of the highway. His mom was never located, so it is uncertain how he became orphaned.

The cub was quite thin when he was admitted and weighed only 2.5 kg. He responded very well to his treatment and immediately took to the formula we made for him. He is now weighing in at 7 kg after just three weeks in care. He has been moved to his outdoor enclosure where he will stay until he is released in the fall in time for winter hibernation.

On June 30th, our male patient was joined by a female companion: an orphaned bear cub found just north of Edmonton. A local farmer had been observing her for several days, and after they were certain there was no mom around, they called AIWC for help.

Upon intake, she was found to be thin and moderately dehydrated. Within a few days, her feisty disposition began to show and she can now be found exploring all areas of her enclosure. Once her quarantine period is over, she will join our male bear cub patient so they can recuperate and grow up together.



Female black bear cub



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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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Executive Director Update

By Holly Lillie, Executive Director

Wildlife baby season is here and, as of early July, already over 1000 animals have been admitted to AIWC so far this year. No day in our clinic is the same and we never know what animals may need our help. From an orphaned black bear cub in need over the May long weekend, to a clutch of baby merlins that were blown out of their nest, the need never ceases and we are thankful to rely on your support as the demand for our services is high.

This year we have admitted the highest number of deer fawns in our history. Currently, we have twelve fawns in care. Most of them are orphaned after their mothers were hit and killed by cars. Thankfully they have each other and are all doing well as we provide them with specialized deer fawn formula until they are old enough to be weaned.

While we are seeing large numbers of animals in need, we don't seem to be seeing the diversity of species as in recent years. We are seeing less songbirds, and maybe they aren't in need of our help, or this could be a new normal as wildlife adjust to climate change. We are working with a University of Calgary group to look at our past admissions to track trends of species admitted.

In April of this year, Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza hit Alberta and it hit hard. I don't think we will ever understand the full impact of this virus to wild populations. For a while we were admitting patients daily that had succumbed to the virus. And it wasn't just waterfowl, which are commonly associated with avian flu, that were impacted. We saw great horned owls and hawks, and other wildlife centres admitted foxes and skunks that are presumed to have gotten sick after eating infected birds. Thankfully, we have seen a significant slowdown in the spread of the virus since spring migration has ended.

Next year is AIWC's 30th anniversary which is a huge milestone. It's incredible to think of all the amazing work the organization has done to help Alberta's wildlife, and we could not do it without the support of members like you. Your support is critical to AIWC being able to live out its mission.

Sincerely,

Holly Lillie

Executive Director



Matching Wraps for Pair of Cedar Waxwings

By J. Kaiser



Cedar waxwings with matching bandages

On June 5th, a cedar waxwing was admitted to care after a window strike in a SW Calgary backyard. He was admitted with a fracture to both his beak and his right clavicle. He would not be recovering alone. Earlier that same day, another cedar waxwing was admitted after being found at a dog park in SE Calgary unable to fly and with a significant wing droop. He was also treated for possible bacterial infection in case of an encounter with a dog prior to being found. The waxwings are sporting matching wing wraps to help reduce movement and progress healing while in care.

The pair were joined on June 22nd by a third waxwing patient, found unable to fly in southeast Calgary. Aside from a wing injury, the patient was otherwise healthy and joined the other waxwings in care.

Once they are further along in their care, all three will be moved to a larger outdoor enclosure to recondition for flying and eventual release.

Least, but Not Last

By J. Kaiser

The least weasel earns its name for being the smallest carnivore, but that doesn't stop this weasel patient from leaving a big impression at the AIWC clinic.

After being found in a barn near Vulcan, Alberta in late May near her deceased mother, this least weasel patient was brought to AIWC for care. She was so young her eyes were still closed and it was estimated she was only a couple of weeks old.

AIWC staff started the tiny patient on formula with feedings every 60-90 minutes during the day, and she opened her eyes on her third day in care. She immediately started exhibiting healthy tunneling and hiding behaviour in her enclosure, and her diet was slowly transitioned to gradually more solid foods.

After 40 days in care, she has successfully prey tested and has grown to a healthy weight. We expect her to be successfully released back to the wild soon!



Young least weasel patient closeup



Education Update: The New Kid and the Mayor's Expo

By T. Scully, AIWC Community Engagement Manager

The wonderful Katrina is now enjoying her maternity leave and I have been privileged to get to know the AIWC team in her absence. The amazing staff and volunteer force have been working very hard during this busy spring period and have made my transition a truly enjoyable one! As everyone's summer plans take off, we're thrilled to see the number of volunteers still consistently helping out, both on-site and off-site.

Along with a terrific number of in-person programs, including a reoccurring one with Calgary Public Library, we've had our biggest event of the year already! The Mayor's Environment Expo saw thousands of students and teachers attending from all over Calgary and the surrounding area. Our education team presented 3 in-person programs to about 120 kids in the brand new Platform Innovation Centre, and a live online program to about 1,200 people from 57 different schools. We also had an educational booth set up in the Municipal Building that saw 1,500 attendees throughout the week.

If you are interested in booking an in-person or virtual program for any age, please visit <https://www.aiwc.ca/get-involved/wildlife-education/wildlife-education-programs/> for more information and our request form, or get in touch via email at education@aiwc.ca with any questions!



Eager young students enjoying one of our in-person programs

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

Short and Sweet Stay: Richardson's Ground Squirrel

By R. Selkirk

We were able to assist a Richardson's ground squirrel this spring who came to us at just a few weeks old in mid-May. He was found by a member of the public following a bird attack and brought to AIWC for some TLC. To our relief, upon our initial examination, he was found to be free of major injuries and had a rather bright disposition. We kept him in care for further observation and he seemed to especially enjoy the specialized milk formula we provided to him. While he had been through a lot in his short life, our patient proved himself to be independent and ready to be released within a few short weeks. He was released into a colony of Richardson's ground squirrels where we hope he makes some friends and enjoys the summer months before hunkering down for winter hibernation.



Young Richardson's ground squirrel patient

An Abundance of Goldeneyes

By J. Kaiser

Goldeneye is not just the name of Pierce Brosnan's best outing as James Bond; it's also shaping up to be AIWC's most frequent patient of 2022!

By early July, AIWC has already admitted 35 goldeneye ducklings for care. Most of them were admitted in early June, likely separated from their mothers during the flooding that occurred in Calgary and the surrounding area.

Upon admission, these little ducklings can weigh less than 30 grams (one ounce) and would not survive alone for more than a day or two in the wild without warmth and protection from their mothers. Instead, this large brood of found siblings will grow up in the safety of AIWC and be released in the fall once they're old enough and ready to prepare for their migration south.



The youngest goldeneye patient



Goldeneye ducklings in indoor enclosure



Goldeneye duckling in outdoor pool

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Magnificent Ferruginous Hawk (*Buteo regalis*)

By J. Carlielle

The ferruginous hawk, with a wingspan of almost two feet long, is Canada's largest hawk. They are secretive, wary of humans, and often sit on the ground. Their favourite prey are Richardson's ground squirrels. In Alberta, ferruginous hawks are considered a threatened species due largely to habitat loss, lack of nesting spots, and declining prey numbers.

In mid-May, this female ferruginous hawk was injured after becoming caught in barbed wire. Fortunately, she was rescued and brought into our clinic where a tear in the vicinity of her wing needed suturing. Given her size and strength it was not surprising that she was extremely aggressive and hard to handle!

Nonetheless, she was successfully assessed, treated, and monitored. Handling was also kept to a minimum to reduce stress. Thankfully, her injury began to heal and after only two and a half weeks she was ready to return to the wild. We were able to return her to the exact area where she was found and where, it seems almost certain, she had a mate.

What a rare privilege to encounter and participate in the rehabilitation of this female ferruginous hawk and to reunite her with her mate. We sincerely hope they will help increase the number of ferruginous hawks in Alberta.



Ferruginous hawk in indoor enclosure

A Dozen Deer

By J. Kaiser



One of six white-tailed deer fawn patients

Six mule deer and six white-tailed deer (so far) will be growing up in AIWC's care this summer, which may be close to a new record. They were admitted for a variety of reasons including being hit by a vehicle, losing their mother after she was hit by a vehicle, orphaned or otherwise separated from their mum, or unintentionally kidnapped by well-meaning rescuers, but unfortunately unable to be reunited with their parents. Once they are old enough and healed from any wounds they may have had, they will be released in the fall.

Large mammals can be time-intensive and expensive patients to care for, often requiring specialized care and diets. Without your support, we wouldn't be able to give these patients the second chance they so richly deserve - thank you!

Adopting this patient, 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 8×10 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!
Visit aiwc.ca for more info.**



Porcupines: Not as Prickly as You May Think

By V. Hindbo



North American porcupine patient

back may be up to 12.5 cm long. Despite this amazing defence mechanism, porcupines prefer to retreat rather than confront a threat. When retreat isn't possible, a porcupine will resort to an intimidation tactic: it will turn with its tail facing the threat, erect its quills, stomp its back feet, and lash its tail. Although quills will fly off its tail, a threat can be "quilled" only through direct contact with the porcupine.

So, as with all wildlife, respect these misunderstood, gentle creatures by keeping your distance. And, if you want to help support the porcupine in our care, you can symbolically adopt him on our website at aiwc.shop.

In April of this year, we admitted a North American porcupine with a pelvic fracture and multiple wounds to his back. After six weeks of cage rest and wound care (requiring bandage changes every two to three days), he was moved to his outdoor enclosure. Although the wounds on his back have fully healed, his pelvic fracture progress was much slower, so, at first, we were not allowing him to climb around his enclosure. It was not until late June that alignment in his pelvis was sufficient to introduce climbing enrichment. He will remain with AIWC for a few more weeks while his fracture continues healing and he recovers.

When they are not up in a tree, you may find porcupines in caves, hollowed out logs, and abandoned buildings – or even on a pile of rocks. But don't let the intimidating exterior of porcupines fool you. They are docile and passive creatures that avoid confrontation – and even each other! They are solitary creatures, with the exceptions of gathering for winter denning, sharing a food source, or mating.

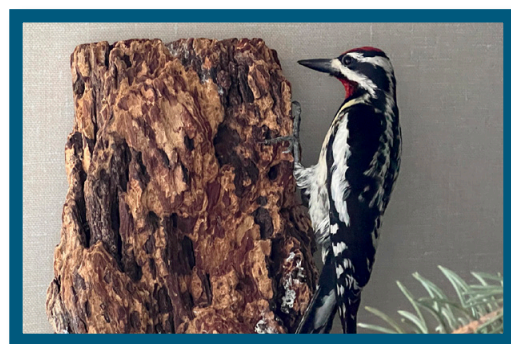
Porcupine have an estimated 30,000 quills. Those on the face are relatively short and those on the

Yellow-Bellied Sapsucker Patient

By J. Kaiser

Canada Day festivities may have been too much for this yellow-bellied sapsucker patient admitted on July 1st after a collision with a window.

Thankfully the patient was admitted quite stunned but had no breaks, fractures, or other trauma. After some cage rest and flight conditioning in one of our outdoor enclosures, it is our expectation that this small woodpecker patient will be returned to the wild after a couple of short weeks in care.



Yellow-bellied sapsucker



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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

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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.

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WILDLIFE HOTLINE: 403-946-2361

Merlin Patient in Care after Methane Flare

By V. Hindbo

Merlins are small falcons that can be found throughout Canada during their breeding season and usually arrive in Alberta around March. Their speed and agility make them effective hunters, using the element of surprise to bring down their prey, primarily songbirds. Typically, merlins hunt by watching from a perch and then swoop down to catch their prey in mid-air. Unfortunately, methane flare stacks (tall metal tubes) are ideal perches.

Flaring is the controlled burning of waste methane gas that takes place at landfills and oil and gas facilities. Methane flares are a hazard to all birds that like to perch on tall structures. Birds are injured either when they are sitting on a flare stack when the gas is ignited or when they fly through the flare at the exact point of ignition.

In September of 2021, we admitted a merlin whose flight and tail feathers were badly singed, presumably a victim of a methane flare. Sadly, he is not the first merlin admitted to our clinic suffering burns, and we have also admitted a number of great horned owls with burns.

Our patient continues to recuperate well in our care and will need to go through a full feather moult, growing new flight feathers, before he can be returned to the wild. Typically, the species goes through a moult in the summer so we anticipate he will be released later this summer, after being in care for almost a year.



Long-term merlin patient

AIWC Centre Hours

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

May to August: 9:00a.m. – 7:00p.m.

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/

