

Resilient Red Fox Returns to the Wild!

By J. Gaume

If you've been following along with our newsletters and social media posts, you're probably familiar with the red fox who has been in our care since August 27th, 2022. For those who are unfamiliar with this patient, after being found emaciated, dehydrated and with widespread wounds, our incredible care team was able to give this animal another chance at life. With his extensive injuries, ongoing treatments were required and he underwent three major surgeries. Two by AIWC's veterinarian, Dr. Cassandra Lapham-Simpson, and one by board-certified surgeon, Dr. Amy Little of CARE Centre.

This fox continued to improve each day in care and his wounds healed wonderfully and minimal scar tissue formed on the surgical sites. Throughout all of his treatments, he was a great patient, allowing our team to care for him and change his bandages. After a couple of months in care, he was moved to one of AIWC's outdoor enclosures in the late fall to help begin the transition back to the wild.

We are pleased to report that after his wounds were fully healed and he was doing well in his outdoor enclosure, AIWC was able to return this long-term patient back to the wild on January 12th, as one of the first patients released in 2023!

We would not have been able to treat this animal without the collaborative efforts of our entire care team of veterinarians, technicians and volunteers, Dr. Amy Little, and all of our amazing donors. Thank you for doing your part to contribute to the health of Alberta's wildlife population!



Red fox patient recuperating after his surgeries



Recovered red fox patient outside in his winter coat





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.

Volume 30 / Issue 1 / Winter 2023

Adopt a Patient - Tiger Salamander:	3
Education/Volunteer Update:	4
Silver-haired Bat Recovery:	4
A Squeezed Skunk:	5
Merlin's Full Recovery:	6
A Winter Bear:	6
The Great Horned Owl:	7
The Wonder of Frosty Frogs:	7
Windows and Waxwings:	8

EDITOR: J. Kaiser

COPY EDITOR: A. Wingenbach

DESIGNER: D. Cresswell

PRINT: Little Rock Printing

CONTRIBUTORS:

C. Collins, J. Gaume, V. Hindbo,
J. Kaiser, H. Lillie, S. Nelson,
W. Pawlak, T. Scully, R. Selkirk,
C. Taylor

PHOTOS:

AIWC, D. Cresswell

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

Executive Director Update

By Holly Lillie, Executive Director

Thanks to your support, over \$100,000 was raised through our Give the Gift of Saving Wildlife campaign in December. We cannot thank you enough for your generous contributions, thank you!

Last year we cared for over 1,950 animals. From black bear cubs, to bald eagles, tree swallows, hoary bats, and more! It is thanks to your help we are able to live out our mission.

This year AIWC will celebrate its 30th anniversary. An amazing milestone, but also bittersweet in some ways. Ideally, organizations like ours wouldn't need to exist. The fact remains, however, that over 95% of our patients continue to be admitted due to human conflict in some way. Be it hitting a window, being hit by a car, or a domestic cat or dog attack.

Throughout the year we'll look back at AIWC's thirty years and ask you to join us in celebration. Did you know that AIWC has cared for over 36,000 animals since its founding? Stay tuned for more details on things to come!

Thank you for all you continue to do for Alberta's wildlife. I hope you have a wonderful year ahead and I hope you and yours remain safe and well.

Sincerely,

Holly Lillie

Executive Director

AIWC 2022 Recap

Check out our numbers for 2022!



132 volunteers
helped us in
2022



1,960 animals
cared for in 2022



8,210 hotline
calls in 2022

Thank you to everyone who called in, volunteered, donated,
shopped, supported us and followed along on social media!



Adopt a Patient: Tiger Salamander

By C. Collins

After being accidentally dug up during construction, this tiger salamander came into care at AIWC in early October 2022.

Tiger salamanders, with stripes like a tiger, are one of only two salamander species in Alberta. They spend most of their adult life burrowed underground and are also nocturnal, meaning that even though they are common in central and southern Alberta, it is rare to see one. They are considered to have “special concern” status by the Canadian Species at Risk Act, due to the risks associated with habitat loss.

As the seasons change to colder weather, these salamanders will burrow further underground to wait out the winter freeze. Since this salamander was admitted in October, it was too late in the season to release him right away. Instead, he will overwinter at AIWC and has a piece of grass sod in his enclosure, to replicate his wild habitat and allow him to burrow.

Luckily, this tiger salamander will be well taken care of at AIWC over the next few months. He is doing very well and will be released back into the wild in the spring, where he will have the best chance at survival.



Tiger salamander patient becoming increasingly well-hidden as winter progresses

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 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!
Visit aiwc.ca for more info.**



Education/Volunteer Update:

By T. Scully, AIWC Community Engagement Manager

Winter has brought quite a few virtual talks with it, and there are a few more to go in the early months of 2023. One of our volunteers, Cassidy, has been amazing at moderating those and it has been a real thrill to see how engaged attendees are and it has been wonderful answering some excellent questions. Check out our events page for more upcoming talks!

We have been very lucky to welcome some new faces to the volunteer team over September and beyond, and sad to say goodbye to some wonderful volunteers who have had exciting new chapters start in their lives recently. Thank you once again to every volunteer who helps make AIWC what it is today.

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 to access our program request form, or get in touch via education@aiwc.ca with any questions! Please note, we are currently booking programs for April 2023 onwards.

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

Not Dracula: Recovery Journey of a Silver-haired Bat

By R. Selkirk



Silver-haired bat patient waiting to be fed

If you're a lover of classic novels or scary movies, you may not be the biggest fan of bats – a creepy and imperative part of gothic vampire stories! What if, instead of an imposing and terrifying Count Dracula, you stumbled upon an unimposing bat with white-tipped fur weighing in at a mere 10 grams? If you sound intrigued, you may be a contender for someone who can appreciate silver-haired bats (*Lasionycteris noctivagans*).

While some of Alberta's bat species choose to hibernate through winter, our silver-haired bat friends are known to migrate out of the province. One female patient of ours was admitted back on September 20th after being found in Calgary with a visible wing injury. A closer examination revealed an injury to the left wrist,

which was able to be treated with painkillers and antibiotics. Our patient had a smooth road to recovery and, much to our delight, she is flying normally again. Our team will keep her warm at AIWC until the spring when she will be released, and will hopefully meet up with other bat friends when they return to the province later this year.

A Squeezed Skunk

By J. Kaiser



Striped skunk patient

Admitted on December 30th, this striped skunk was one of the last patients admitted to AIWC in 2022.

He was found with a plastic six-pack ring around his neck, and, since the summer, had been monitored in that condition around the northeast Calgary neighbourhood he called home prior to his rescuer calling AIWC for help.

Upon intake, AIWC staff noted the young skunk would have just been born that summer and therefore has spent most of his life to date with his unfortunate necklace. He had a large neck wound due to the plastic can holder, as well as some other small wounds on his face and feet, and was also dehydrated upon admission.

AIWC staff removed the plastic ring and began a schedule of regular cleaning and bandaging the

wound, as well as administering medications to ease pain and prevent infections.

He continues to recover well in care and is putting on weight – a healthy appetite is always a good sign in a patient! He will remain in care until he's fully healed and can be returned to the wild for a second chance.

Thankfully, such plastic rings will become an item of the past, now falling under Canada's ban on single-use plastics. Unfortunately for this little skunk, that ban comes into effect just a little too late.

In the meantime, please remember to always cut your plastic rings before throwing them away (please note that in Calgary, the plastic rings are not recyclable and should go in your black bin)!

GO GREEN IN 2023!

Receive the Recovery Review straight to your inbox, saving paper and postage!

To add yourself to the email distribution list, please send an email to info@aiwc.ca

Follow AIWC online!

Like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter (@AIWC) and Instagram (@albertawildlife)!



No Wizardry Necessary for Merlin's Full Recovery

By S. Nelson

The name "Merlin" conjures images of alchemy, long robes, and crystal balls, but in real life, these falcons have no relation to the famous wizard. Merlins utilize specific adaptations for hunting, traveling, and reproducing: no magic needed! These formidable carnivores use sickle-shaped talons to catch their live prey in midair, so when an adult male merlin was lying on the ground near a bus shelter in southeast Calgary, his finder knew something was wrong.

The merlin was admitted to AIWC on November 21st, 2022, with no external wounds, but suspected head trauma. He was treated with painkillers and was a great eater right away. In nature, merlins have a varied diet that includes small animals like sparrows, bats, and insects, as well as relatively larger birds like pigeons and sandpipers. While this particular merlin was in care, his meals were not caught but instead prepared for him by professionals. AIWC uses monetary donations, in part, to provide specialized diets for all patients.

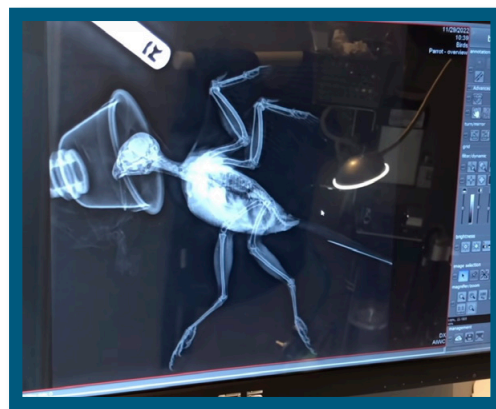
After one week of care, he was healthy enough to move to an outdoor enclosure. When the merlin demonstrated that he could fly competently and comfortably again, he was released by AIWC on December 2nd, after 16 days in care.



Merlin patient in outdoor enclosure



Merlin patient under anaesthetic



Merlin patient x-ray

A Winter Bear

By J. Kaiser

Extremely thin and with a muzzle and paw full of porcupine quills, this black bear cub was rescued in early December and brought to AIWC for care. We don't know why, but he is far too thin to hibernate and was struggling to survive on his own. He is being monitored by AIWC's staff veterinarian and we expect a full recovery.

Due to the time of year and his poor body condition, he is not able to return to the wild yet and will continue to overwinter at AIWC. He will be returned to the wild in the spring of 2023. Thank you for helping to support his care!



Black bear cub under anaesthetic



The Great (and Resilient) Horned Owl

By C. Taylor



Great-horned owl patient

This great horned owl was brought to our facility in late November after he was found on the side of the highway after a suspected collision with a car. Our clinic staff performed their initial examination and determined that he had severe head and eye trauma which will require surgery once he is in stable condition. His left eye is being closely monitored as it will likely have to be removed due to pain and loss of vision, leaving him on pain medication until he is ready for surgery.

Thankfully, AIWC has had previous success with this type of eye surgery (as recently as October 2021, with a different great horned owl). However, we see many similar cases to this for various owl and bird species due to unintentional collisions with vehicles. Unfortunately, patients who are injured by vehicle collisions typically undergo an extended recovery phase and can be in our care for months. There is hope that with lots of rest for this owl and the continuous hard work from our dedicated staff and volunteers, he will make a full recovery and be able to be released back into the wild.

AIWC staff and volunteers work around the clock to ensure expert care and rehabilitation is provided to the wildlife in Alberta. Thanks for your support!

The Wonder of Frosty Frogs

By V. Hindbo

While most of AIWC's patients are birds and mammals, we also admit reptiles and amphibians. On October 19th, a wood frog was brought to us after being rescued when his burrow was disturbed during construction. Luckily, he did not sustain any injuries and remains healthy. He is quite secretive, so we bother him only when necessary, such as when feeding him his favourite food: crickets. Unfortunately, the weather was quite cold and it was too late for our patient to burrow down for the winter – so we will keep him until spring.

Wood frogs hibernate in the winter, typically under leaf litter, and in a mostly frozen state! They survive freezing by producing increased levels of blood glucose, which acts as anti-freeze and prevents the water in their cells from forming ice crystals (which is lethal to other living things when they freeze). This amazing adaptation has enabled wood frogs to move farther north than any other amphibian – even north of the Arctic Circle!

Wood frogs are one of the first frogs to emerge in spring, often arriving at breeding sites when there is still some snow on the ground. It is no wonder that, with their cycle of hibernation in winter and re-emergence in spring, many cultures associate frogs with renewal, rebirth, and transformation. The wood frog's transformations are especially remarkable!



Wood frog patient having a swim



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

AIWC MEMBERSHIPS

Buy Your Membership Today!

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.

Your membership fee entitles you to:

- A mailed, paper copy of The Recovery Review, our quarterly newsletter;
- 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

Windows and Waxwings

By W. Pawlak

Back in September, AIWC admitted two cedar waxwings on two separate occasions. Both had flown into windows and sustained head trauma along with other injuries. While they have since made a full recovery and can fly normally, they missed the autumn migration and will stay at the clinic until spring. Waxwings are very social birds, and waiting until they can join a returning flock is the best thing for them!



Cedar waxwing patients in winter indoor enclosure

Waxwings are a common window strike victim, partially due to their love of berries and other fruit. Unfortunately, too much of these can have an intoxicating effect on the birds and lead to disoriented flight. Clearly marked windows, especially during migration times, when fruit is ripe, or if you keep feeders near your house, can help reduce the risk to waxwings and other birds. Patterns made of washable paint, stickers and specially made tape make for good markers, as long as they're affixed to the outside of the window.

Your support helps us care for animals like these waxwings and raise awareness to keep other birds safe!

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/