

RECOVERY REVIEW

Great blue heron patient being released back into the wild.



A HERON SUCCESS STORY

by Courtney Collins

Great blue herons are a beautiful bird to find around Alberta. They are very tall, with a long neck and long yellow legs. They have a distinctive blue-grey colouration, with lighter blue-grey on their backs and darker blue-grey toward the end of the feathers. They have short white and long black feathers on their head.


This heron was rescued from a wastewater pool in late April 2023, covered in a variety of contaminants, with no additional injuries, but they were very subdued. Once in care, the heron was found to be 2.78 kg and have a high white blood cell count, most likely due to an infection. Herons are known to be very stressed when in captivity, and this heron was no exception.

After a week, the heron was stabilized, so AIWC staff were able to provide supportive care and wash off the contaminants. Due to the stressful demeanor of these birds in captivity, this heron would not eat on their own, so they were tube-fed four times daily to ensure they were getting enough calories.

Thanks to the wonderful staff at AIWC, this heron was a success story and has already been released, only a little over two weeks after intake, in May 2023. It was a beautiful release that you can watch for yourself using the link below! If you see a heron, or another animal in distress, please give us a call at 403-946-2361



Great blue heron being washed.

Watch the heron release here! 

www.youtube.com/shorts/NWO1Le8h1BA?feature=share





30
YEARS
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1993-2023

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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.

Volume 30 | Issue 3 | Summer 2023

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PRINT: Little Rock Printing

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE

While no day is ever the same in wildlife rehabilitation, one constant every year is that the demand for our services continues to rise. So far this year we're seeing an 8% increase in patients admitted compared to this time last year. While 8% might not seem a lot, it's nearly 100 more animals.

We have cared for over 1,000 animals so far in 2023. From long-tailed weasels, to robins, mallards, hares, ravens, flickers, and much more. The black bear cub we admitted in December 2022, after being emaciated and suffering from an encounter with a porcupine, was able to return to the wild in June 2023 and is doing well. The beaver we have had in care was also able to return to the wild this summer, along with many more wildlife that received a second chance thanks to your support.

As you know, AIWC celebrated 30 years of helping wildlife this year. To celebrate this amazing milestone, on Saturday, September 16, 2023 we are hosting a free admission event at cSPACE in Calgary from 10am to 2pm. We will have silent auction items to bid on, and a 50/50 cash raffle. We hope to see you there and encourage you to invite your loved ones. If you're not able to attend in-person, you can also take part in the silent auction and 50/50 cash raffle online! For more info, please visit aiwc.ca.


Thank you for all you do to care for Alberta's injured and orphaned wildlife in need. It has been another busy year at AIWC and we could not do our important work without your help. Thank you!

Sincerely,
Holly Lillie
Executive Director



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EDUCATION UPDATE - SKUNKS AND THE SUMMER

by Katrina Terrill, Community Engagement Manager

I am thrilled to be back at AIWC following my maternity leave, and things got off to a great start in June with a fun-filled series of “Supremely Skunks” programs with the kindergarten classes at Monterey Park School. The kids learned about the special adaptations that skunks have (they’re much more than just their spray!) along with what we humans can do to help protect skunks. Most importantly, we always emphasize that skunks are peaceful animals, and that it is completely possible to live in harmony with these smelly but important neighbours. Seeing the transformation of students who at first go “eww, skunks!” to ending with “we should help skunks!” is always an incredibly rewarding experience for a presenter!



School programs may be over for now, but education at AIWC is year-round. We are continuing to add new videos to our YouTube page every month, and our summer education calendar includes presentations both in-person and virtual for a variety of summer camps.

The fall calendar is now available for booking! If you are interested in learning more about our programs, please head to our website at www.aiwc.ca/get-involved/wildlife-education/wildlife-education-programs/ or e-mail us at education@aiwc.ca.



PUBLIC AWARENESS UPDATE

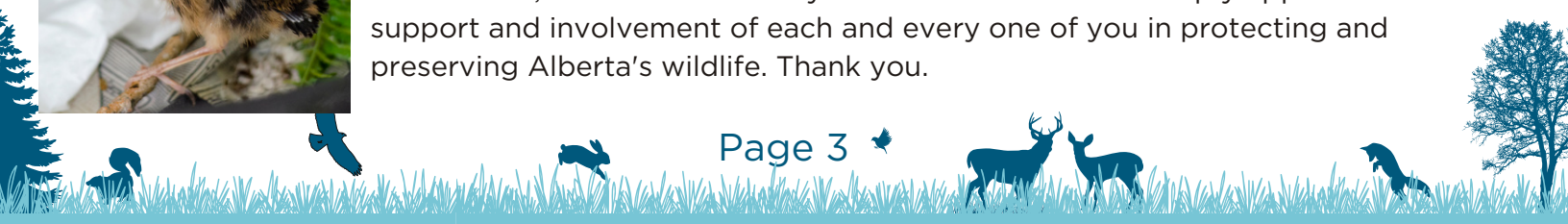
by Cassidy Taylor, Fundraising Coordinator

Through education and awareness initiatives, we aim to inspire individuals to become advocates for wildlife in their own communities. When people understand the interconnectedness between human activities and the well-being of wildlife, they are more inclined to start taking action. Through this collective effort, AIWC envisions a future where humans and wildlife coexist harmoniously, ensuring the preservation of Alberta’s rich biodiversity for generations to come.

AIWC is excited to participate in several upcoming events this summer. Mark your calendar for the following events:

- Saturday, August 12, 2023 - Walk the Block in Carstairs
- Saturday, August 19 and Sunday, August 20, 2023 - Priddis and Millarville Fair at the Millarville Racetrack
- Thursday, August 24 and Friday, August 25, 2023 - Calgary Farmer’s Market (South)
- Saturday, September 9, 2023 - Parkdale Petfest in Calgary
- Saturday, September 16, 2023 - 30 Years of Helping Wildlife at cSPACE in Calgary

These events serve as a wonderful opportunity to connect with AIWC, learn about what we do, and discover how you can contribute. We deeply appreciate the support and involvement of each and every one of you in protecting and preserving Alberta’s wildlife. Thank you.



Common raven in their outdoor enclosure.



A RAVEN'S RECOVERY

by Katie Grant

This common raven came into our care on May 9, 2023. An examination revealed the raven to be quite thin, weighing only 1.14 kg, and severely dehydrated. Notable lung sounds and wheezing resulted in antibiotics being prescribed.

A review of the raven's bloodwork, which was also showing poor signs of clotting, lead the veterinarian to suspect rodenticide toxicity. Ravens feed on smaller prey such as rodents. When people use rodenticide, the rodents eat the poison, and then the raven eats the poisoned rodent. The raven was started on the appropriate medications to treat the toxicity.

It took some time, but slowly the raven recovered and became much brighter. On May 24, 2023, we moved the raven to an outdoor enclosure to begin flight conditioning. This allows the bird plenty of space to stretch their wings and get back into the air before we release them.

Following further blood tests, it was determined that the raven had fully recovered, and a release date was set for June 17, 2023. We encourage everyone to look into appropriate pest control solutions when dealing with unwanted pests, in order to prevent harmful situations like this.

BUSY LITTLE BEAVER

by Bonnie Weiss

A beaver kit came into our care on June 16, 2022. He weighed in at 1 kg upon entry to AIWC. He received feedings of a specialized formula to increase his weight, during which time he came to settle in to his new surroundings. As he grew, he began to display normal behaviours - swimming and constructing with the materials with which he was constantly provided. He was moved to an outside enclosure this spring and demonstrated wariness towards humans and eating all natural food items - behaviours that indicated he was ready for release.

On June 7, 2023 (almost one year later) he was taken back to a location very close to where he was first found (now weighing over 13 kg) and the release went amazingly well! When the crate was opened, our lengthy visitor left his crate, walked to the edge of the river and went on his way! Hopefully he is busy being an engineer of amazing projects in his natural surroundings.



North American beaver just before his release!

One of the red squirrel patients at 3 weeks.



AN EARLY INTERVENTION: A TALE OF TWO SQUIRRELS

by Roxanne Selkirk

This spring, two little baby squirrels (called kits) were found in a parking lot in Calgary. They weighed just 23 g when they were admitted to AIWC and still had closed ears and eyes, indicating they had been born very recently. How they ended up in the parking lot is a mystery, but our care team were able to stand in for the round-the-clock care their mother would have provided. They were syringe-fed formula every two hours, given fluids and medication to treat an infection, and provided with a safe and warm place to grow. The squirrel patients are doing well and are due to be released in the coming weeks.

AFTER A LONG STAY SHE'S ON HER WAY!

by Chelsea Blyth

A female big brown bat, weighing 17 g, was admitted into the care of AIWC on November 1, 2022, after she was found hibernating in a horse blanket and subsequently disturbed. As the intake was so late in the year, it was determined the bat would need to spend the winter at AIWC.

Throughout her time in care, the patient exhibited excellent progress. She remained alert and was provided with a varied diet consisting mainly of mealworms and supplemented with essential nutrients. The bat's enclosure was equipped with a light timer to simulate natural daylight, while a humidifier was used to recreate the humidity levels found in its natural environment.

In the spring, she was gradually exposed to outdoor temperatures to facilitate acclimatization. Remarkably, the bat achieved impressive flight capabilities and was deemed ready for release. On June 3, the bat was successfully released back into the wild. The AIWC team extends their gratitude to all supporters and volunteers who contributed to the successful care and release of this remarkable big brown bat.



Big brown bat munching on mealworms.

THE TRIPLET UPDATE

by Rachel Swart



Black bear triplets on their climbing structure.

AIWC's three American black bear triplets are thriving under the care they are receiving. They have transitioned to a larger enclosure where they have become very adept at climbing and swimming. The fact that the siblings arrived together is highly beneficial as they provide each other with abundant enrichment and socialization, engaging in play-fighting and chasing throughout the day. Their caretakers ensure they receive additional stimulation by offering hollowed-out logs, stumps, and floating fruit in their pool to prevent boredom and prepare them for various scenarios they may encounter in the wild.

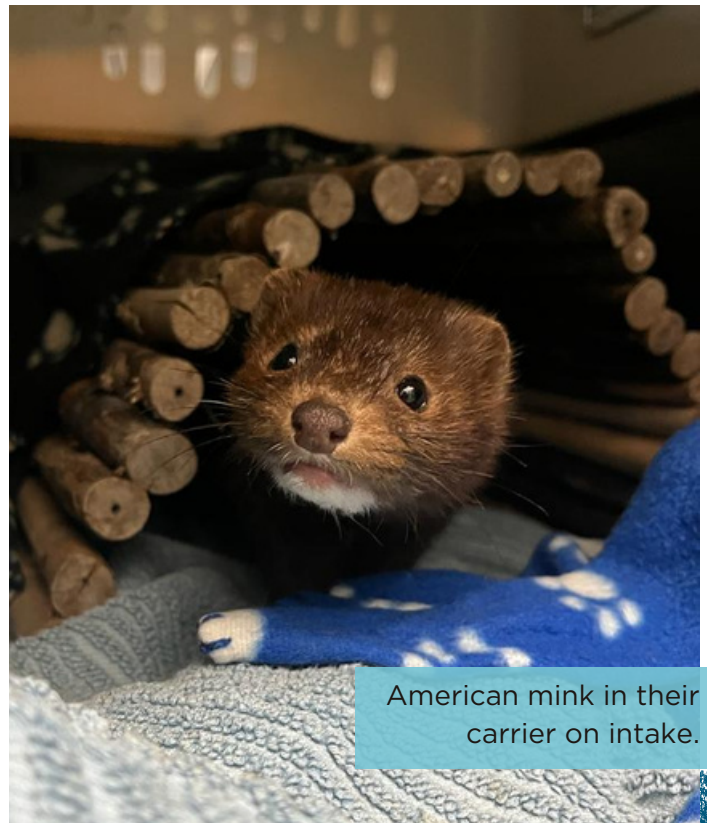
At nearly 6 months old in July the cubs started the weaning process from formula and will gradually shift towards a diet consisting of a higher proportion of fruit, as well as eggs, meat, and fish. Within the three months of being in care at AIWC, their weight has increased from an average of 2.5 kg to over 8.5 kg! We deeply appreciate your support in raising these cubs for their eventual release!

A CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY: AMERICAN MINK PATIENT'S SHORT STAY AT AIWC

by Courtney Bogstie

Similar to their weasel relatives, minks are nocturnal and solitary mammals who only interact with other minks during breeding season. American minks are considered semi-aquatic and prefer to source their food from along shorelines and banks. They are exclusively carnivores and typically eat a variety of aquatic/semi-aquatic prey including fish, frogs and salamanders. They also can be found investigating crevices, deep-water pools and terrestrial burrows for mice, rabbits and bird eggs. Part of the mustelids family, minks are the smallest, with the largest being the sea otter.

On May 6 of this year, a call was made to pest control in the Calgary area to trap a reported skunk. Upon arrival, pest control identified the animal as an American mink and thankfully called AIWC. The mink was taken to AIWC where they were assessed by staff to ensure the mink was healthy as he initially appeared. Once cleared by staff, the mink was soon released on May 10, 2023, to minimize interactions with humans, ensuring a smooth transition back into nature!



American mink in their carrier on intake.

American robin in an outdoor enclosure.



SPRING INTERRUPTED FOR AMERICAN ROBIN

by Sydney Nelson

Robins are a sure sign of spring here in Alberta. Unfortunately, American robin 23-46 had their spring interrupted this year when, on March 26, they were admitted to AIWC after striking a window and being caught by a dog. They were missing many feathers and had several superficial wounds as well as bruising on both flanks and subcutaneous emphysema in their left flank. Subcutaneous emphysema means that air was sitting underneath the dermal layers of the robin's skin. They also had a left shoulder and keel fracture.

Many injuries meant a long recovery for this robin. They required regular bandage changes and medication intake. On April 28 they were ready to move outside, and by May 15 their feathers had grown back, and they were able to fly again. On May 19, they were successfully released after more than 7 weeks in care.

EVOLVING CARE FOR A GROWING FOX

by Carley Goodreau

AIWC admitted a female red fox kit on May 1, 2023. Weighing only 1 kg, she was found lying unresponsive and alone in an open field. Upon intake, she was very dehydrated and quiet. Although she had a good appetite, it was noted that her growth seemed stunted and it is possible that she was the runt of her litter. Her hearing and sight were also developing more slowly than expected.

During her time in care, her diet has evolved with her progress. She was started on formula and smaller pieces of typical species-specific foods, she then moved on to whole mice and quail when she was weaned. Her habitat is filled with a den, brush and vegetation so that she can hide, and climbing structures to practice climbing and improve her agility.

It is estimated that this red fox is approximately 3 months old. Fox kits typically spend the first 6 months of their lives with their parents before they are considered independent, and so she will remain in care until she reaches a more mature age. Prior to being returned to her natural habitat, rehabilitation staff at AIWC will monitor her to ensure that she shows appropriately wild behaviour, such as a healthy weariness of humans. She will also be tested with prey to make sure she can hunt and forage for herself when she is on her own.



Red fox patient in her outdoor enclosure.



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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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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
- 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.

Charitable #14041 6140 RR0001

ADOPT A PATIENT - LONG-TAILED WEASEL

by Robyn Cunningham-Dunlop, Office Administrator

This long-tailed weasel was brought to us from Strathmore, AB, just east of Calgary. He was found alone in the wheel well of a trailer and the mother had not returned after a day and a half. He was estimated to be about a month old on intake, which is a critical stage where they are entirely dependent on their mother. Because of this, he was immediately brought to AIWC. Despite being orphaned, he is now in good body condition and has also opened his eyes in care. He will remain with us until old enough to be returned to the wild. Thank you for supporting his care!



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.**

AIWC Centre Hours

Our clinic is open to the public to admit patients and accept donations and supplies at these times:

May to August: 9:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.

September to April: 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

(With modified hours in 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:

www.aiwc.ca/found-a-wild-animal/after-hours-assistance/

