

RECOVERY REVIEW

A HAPPY ENDING TO A SHAKY BEGINNING

by Vivian Hindbo

In our Summer 2023 newsletter, we introduced you to a female red fox that we admitted on May 1, 2023. She was found lying flat in an open field, not far from AIWC. She was thin, dehydrated, and seemingly unable to see or hear. She also had problems using her hind limbs. We suspected her symptoms were due to severe dehydration, starvation, and possibly avian influenza or distemper. We started her on fluid therapy, and quarantined her until we had tested for avian influenza and distemper.

Fortunately, the tests came back negative. We then concluded her issues were due to severe dehydration or a developmental/congenital abnormality (which we were unable to confirm). After a few weeks in care, she began walking properly and we were able to move her to an outside enclosure where her mobility only got better!

Fox kits typically spend the first six months of their lives with their siblings and parents, and this fox was estimated to be only three months old at intake. Fortunately, we were able to provide her with a companion: WILDNorth also had a red fox in care that needed a buddy, so that fox was brought to AIWC.



Red fox in care.



This fox kit was believed to be an orphan and was generally healthy, other than needing to be treated for endoparasites prior to being transferred to us.

The foxes got along well, often sharing the same den (even though they each had their own) and cuddling together on an elevated platform. We are happy to report that both progressed well over the summer and were returned to the wild on September 14, 2023.

Your support makes our important work possible, thank you!



30
YEARS
★ ★ ★
1993-2023

PO 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 4 | Fall 2023

Education and outreach updates	3
Rose-breasted grosbeak	4
A common merganser success	4
Swainson's hawk back in the wild	5
Ready for take-off	5
Ruler of the sky	6
Rising from the ashes	6
Predator in peril	7
Five fawns ready to run free	7
Adopt a Patient	8

EDITOR: H. Lillie

COPY EDITORS: J. Kaiser, A. Wingenbach

DESIGNER: H. Lillie

PRINT: Little Rock Printing

CONTRIBUTORS: A. Kellington, B. Weiss, C. Blyth, C. Collins, C. Goodreau, H. Lillie, H. Lippmann, K. Grant, K. Terrill, R. Cunningham-Dunlop, R. Selkirk, S. Nelson, V. Hindbo

PHOTOS: AIWC, D. Cresswell

Submissions/comments may be sent to info@aiwc.ca

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE

What an eventful year it has been! With a staggering 1,600 animals admitted so far, each day at AIWC has been far from mundane. Our dedicated team has been tirelessly working to meet the relentless demand for our services.

In September, AIWC hosted our 30 Years of Helping Wildlife event to raise awareness and funds to support our mission. Thanks to your generous support, we managed to raise an impressive \$26,000.00. This funding is crucial in our ongoing efforts to care for injured and orphaned wildlife.

Your unwavering support has played a pivotal role in successfully rehabilitating numerous animals and releasing them back into the wild. Among the many success stories this year, you can see the red foxes featured on page 1 and the common merganser showcased on page 4.

On a personal note, I have some exciting news to share. By the time you are reading this I will be on maternity leave, eagerly awaiting the arrival of our first baby (human baby that is, we have plenty of fur babies!). I'll be taking a year off, during which time Katrina Terrill will be stepping in as the Acting Executive Director. Katrina has been an integral part of the AIWC team for many years and will provide outstanding support and leadership in my absence. You can reach Katrina at 403-946-2361 or katrina.terrill@aiwc.ca.

As we approach the holiday season, I kindly urge you to consider including AIWC in your seasonal giving. Every contribution, regardless of its size, makes a meaningful impact. Your donations ensure that AIWC continues its vital mission of caring for wildlife in need.

I want to express my deepest gratitude for your steadfast support of AIWC. It is truly an honour, and we cannot thank you enough. Wishing you all the joys of the season from our entire team at AIWC. Season's Greetings!

Sincerely,

Holly Lillie
Executive Director



FALL PROGRAMS WITH THE CALGARY LIBRARY

by Katrina Terrill, Acting Executive Director

What's better than wildlife education programs? Being able to access them for free with a Calgary Library card! We have partnered with the Calgary Library to deliver twenty programs at their locations in person this fall, along with a number of online programs through their STEM Explorers series.

Topics for the programs range from preschooler-friendly "Who's in Your Backyard?" to programs on bats, owls, birds of prey, and more! Library cards are available for free to all Calgary residents, so get yours today and sign up for an AIWC program near you at:



calgarylibrary.ca/events-and-programs/programs



Red-breasted nuthatch

The fall and winter calendars are 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.



INTRODUCING AIWC'S NEW COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR

by Alex Kellington, Community Engagement Coordinator

Hi everyone, my name is Alex, and I am the new Community Engagement Coordinator at AIWC. I am so excited to be starting this job and I am looking forward to learning more about the role.

I started out as a volunteer at AIWC, first as a rescue driver, then as a public awareness volunteer and, finally, as a clinic volunteer. I was lucky enough to work at AIWC as a summer student in 2022 and 2023 in the education assistant role.

My educational background is in human health science, and I have work experience in research as well as animal husbandry. My true passion has always been animals, though, and I am grateful to be able to work in the area of animal conservation. I especially love talking to people about animals and can often be found sharing wildlife facts. I love being in nature and I feel very grateful to live and work in a place that provides me with the opportunity to view wildlife.



Rose-breasted grosbeak in outdoor enclosure.



ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK

by Chelsea Blyth

On August 3, 2023, a rose-breasted grosbeak became a patient at AIWC after colliding with a window. The incident left the bird with injuries to their left wing and spinal column. Despite these initial setbacks, dedicated care and rehabilitation efforts have allowed the grosbeak to regain her ability to perch and fly effectively. However, before she can be safely returned to her natural habitat, additional flight conditioning is necessary.

These songbirds are a familiar sight in North American woodlands during their breeding season, adding a touch of colour and melody to the natural landscape. The story of this grosbeak underscores the importance of wildlife rehabilitation in mitigating the impact of urban hazards on avian populations.

A COMMON MERGANSER SUCCESS STORY

by Courtney Collins

Common mergansers, or *Mergus merganser*, are beautiful waterfowl that can often be found in freshwater lakes and rivers across Alberta. There are a variety of mergansers, but the common merganser adult female has a grey/brown body, with a brown-red head that includes a crest of feathers, and the adult male has a white body with some dark colouration on their back and feathers, along with an iridescent dark green head.

This common merganser came in as a juvenile and was quite lethargic without adequate waterproofing – an integral part of not becoming waterlogged.

After 1.5 weeks, their waterproofing had begun to significantly improve, and the merganser was exhibiting normal behaviours including diving. They were then moved to a larger pool, and finally to an outdoor pool where they displayed consistent diving for food (super worms and smelt fish). Once their primary feathers had grown in enough, they were able to be released back into the Bow River in Calgary, where other mergansers had been seen.



Merganser in indoor pool after intake to AIWC.



Swainson's hawk in outdoor enclosure before release.

SWAINSON'S HAWK BACK IN THE WILD

by Carley Goodreau

On August 17, 2023, this Swainson's hawk was admitted with the tip of his upper beak, known as a rhinotheca, broken after being hit by a car. Beak injuries are unfortunately common with birds, with many injuries related to impact trauma from windows, cars, or falling from a nest or perch.

Typically, the closer the fracture is to the tip, the better the outcome is expected to be. A consequence of beak injuries is misalignment of the top and bottom beak, which impacts a bird's ability to self-feed. Encouragingly, this hawk was able to feed himself even with his beak injury.

After 25 days in care, this Swainson's hawk was fully healed and able to be returned to the wild in time to make his migration south for the winter.

READY FOR TAKE-OFF

by Bonnie Weiss

This past summer, AIWC had a northern goshawk brought in as a young fledgling. This bird exhibited small sores on both hock joints - either from a fall from a nest or from sitting on the ground for an extended period of time.

When bloodwork was completed, it was determined that this patient was healthy in all other respects. The staff began tweezer feeding the young juvenile and, after approximately 2.5 weeks, the youngster began to fly - resulting in them promptly being moved to an outside enclosure. There, about 3 weeks of flight conditioning took place.

A hunting test occurred to ensure the bird could naturally hunt for food in the wild. This was passed with 'flying' colours! After 6 weeks in the care of staff at AIWC, this patient was ready for release and a return to his/her natural environment.



Northern goshawk as a fledgling in care.

Eagle being examined for injury.



RULER OF THE SKY

by Heike Lippmann

While swooping through the air in search of food or to protect their territory, unfortunately a lot of birds can be involved in vehicular collisions. This was the case for this juvenile American bald eagle who was admitted in late September. She suffered from head trauma and damaged feathers, but is otherwise in good condition.

After being assessed by our veterinarian, she is doing well and has gained strength since her admission. She is very alert and happily eating any food given, especially smelt. Our team did further bloodwork to ensure there are no underlying issues and she is now in an outdoor enclosure and is starting to fly around. Overall, she has made great progress. The goal is to give her a bit more time to recover, and then her flight will be fully assessed in hopes she can be returned to the wild soon.



Bald eagle in outdoor enclosure.

Thankfully this eagle was able to get quick care due to her rescuers reporting the incident to AIWC right away. If you are involved in a vehicular collision with a wild animal, or you see wildlife that have been hit and are still alive, please do not hesitate to call our Wildlife Hotline at 403-946-2361. For larger animals, such as adult deer and moose, please call Alberta Fish & Wildlife at 1-800-642-3800.

RIISING FROM THE ASHES OF THE BC WILDFIRES: AMERICAN KESTREL

by Sydney Nelson

This summer, AIWC received permission to care for a wildfire victim from Shuswap Lake, BC: this American kestrel patient. On August 28, AIWC admitted American Kestrel 23-1470, a victim of the BC wildfires.

The fire had scorched off her wing and tail feathers, rendering her flightless. Some birds struggle to re-grow their feathers completely when severely damaged, meaning this kestrel will be a long-term resident at AIWC and remain in care until she moults successfully. We expect her full moult to be complete next summer, and she will receive specialized care from AIWC staff until then.



American kestrel in care at AIWC.

PREDATOR IN PERIL

by Roxanne Selkirk

Talons strong enough to sever spinal columns of prey larger than itself. Hooked beak designed for effortlessly tearing meat from bones. Exceptionally soft feathers enabling silent flight. Eyes equipped with excellent night vision to better see you in the dark. Head with an ability to rotate more than 180 degrees to keep its eyes on everything. Hearing strong enough to detect the faintest of rustling. Are you feeling nervous yet?

This creature isn't a monster of fiction or a beast from a Halloween story, it is the large and powerful great horned owl. We received a great horned owl into care in early August after they were found caught on a barbed wire fence. As you can imagine, the sharp barbed wire managed to do some damage and the owl had multiple lacerations as well as a soft tissue injury.



The patient spent the first part of recovery indoors as our clinic staff kept an eye on their wounds and general mobility. We are pleased to report that this patient has been moved to an outdoor enclosure for the final stage of rehabilitation.

FIVE FAWNS READY TO RUN FREE

by Katie Grant

The month of June brought five orphaned deer fawns into our care. All were between one to two weeks of age upon their arrival. The first fawn of the season was a white-tailed deer whose mother was killed by a cougar. The other four, another white-tailed deer, and three mule deer, were admitted under unknown circumstances.

The fawns were kept inside for the first three to four weeks and were bottle fed six times per day. After being moved outdoors into the first section of our brand-new corral, we slowly weaned them off of their formula between eight to ten weeks of age. At this time, they were eating solid pellets and lots of natural browse. Browse refers to the twigs, buds, and leaves of trees and shrubs which they feed on, making up a primary component of their diet. During the weaning process, we opened up the largest sections of the corral, giving them the most natural setting possible and allowing them to learn how to forage naturally. The five fawns are doing very well, eating lots, and after just over three months in our care, these five fawns were ready to run free and were returned to the wild in early October.





30
YEARS
★ ★ ★
1993-2023

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

**Buy your
AIWC 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 E-news
- Discounted prices on select AIWC merchandise
- 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
- Call 403-946-2361

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 Katrina Terrill at 403-946-2361.

Charitable #: 14041 6140 RR0001

**ADOPT A RECOVERING ANIMAL IN
AIWC'S CARE!**

by Robyn Cunningham-Dunlop, Office Manager

Have you ever wanted to make a profound impact on the life of a wild animal on its journey to recovery? AIWC's Adopt an Animal program offers you a unique opportunity to do just that!

From bald eagles to red foxes, and grosbeaks to black bears, AIWC cares for a wide variety of native species year-round.

Support their recovery this fall, and that of many other incredible patients at our hospital. Your contribution not only aids in their healing but also allows you to become a part of their journey towards rehabilitation and release.

A gift that truly matters! Consider AIWC's Adopt an Animal program as a remarkable and meaningful gift for birthdays and holidays. Share the captivating stories of these creatures with your loved ones, and together, let's support their rehabilitation and return to the wild.



Adoption packages include a certificate, a glossy 8x10 photograph of your patient, and a tax receipt for the full amount of the adoption.

**On a time crunch or want to save paper?
You can send and receive adoptions electronically!
Visit aiwc.ca for more info.**

AIWC Hours

Our clinic is open to admit patients and accept donations/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 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/

