

2023

Annual Report



Message from the Executive



2023 HIGHLIGHTS

♥ **1,670 total animals cared for in 2023.**

52 patients admitted on our busiest day, June 22nd.

Hosted **80 educational programs** and webinars.

More than **7,000 members of the community** reached out to our Wildlife Hotline in 2023.



In 2023, Alberta Institute for Wildlife Conservation (AIWC) celebrated our 30th anniversary.

Since our founding in 1993, more than 37,000 injured and orphaned animals have been cared for at AIWC. AIWC has gone from a small, one-room rehab to a full 9.7 acre property with many new, purpose-built enclosures, dramatically increasing our capacity to care for wildlife patients. We are so grateful to everyone who has supported us throughout this incredible journey, and may the next 30 years be filled with even more growth.

We cared for 1,670 animals from 139 different species in 2023, including mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and birds. On our busiest day, June 22, we admitted 52 patients!

2023 appeared to be the year of the duckling at AIWC, and we admitted over 300 duckling patients between June and August; a nearly 50% increase compared to 2022. These unusually high numbers of a single species presented unique capacity challenges for the team and our facilities, however, thanks to a generous donation, we have been able to expand our duckling capacity over the winter and AIWC will be even more prepared should 2024 show a similar demand for waterfowl admissions.

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) continued to present challenges, though luckily there was a significant decrease in the number of cases we saw in 2023, with only 15 animals that tested positive for the disease.

More than 7,000 members of the community reached out through our Wildlife Hotline this year, from people calling to report an injured animal to individuals wondering where to install a bat box on their property. We hosted over 80 educational programs and webinars, reaching over 4,500 students and community members, to promote the conservation of wildlife and their habitats.

Like many Canadians, inflation on groceries and medical supplies also presented large challenges for the organization in 2023; we spent nearly 20% more on food compared to 2022, which stretched our resources even further.

While we had overall fewer patients at AIWC in 2023 compared to 2022, we admitted more critical patients who required urgent veterinary intervention and long-term stays. And thanks to our partnership with the National Wildlife Centre, AIWC is able to provide our wildlife patients with care from a full-time veterinarian; the only wildlife rehabilitation centre in Alberta to do so. Having this incredible resource on-site can mean the difference between recovery or euthanasia for our most critical patients, and we are so happy to be able to continue providing the highest possible level of care.

Thank you for all of your support and for caring for Alberta's wildlife!

Katrina Terrill
Acting Executive Director

Jennifer Kaiser
Chair, Board of Directors

Wildlife Hotline



2023 WILDLIFE HOTLINE STATISTICS

 **7,096 total calls to Hotline in 2023.**

Our busiest month was June with **1,418 calls** to our wildlife hotline.

Organized over **1,326 pickups/rescues**, often with multiple animals at each pickup.

The highest number of calls we addressed in one day was **81 calls** on Friday, June 9th.

238 healthy animals protected from unnecessary intervention in 2023.

Over **70%** of our calls are received during our 'Summer' season (May to September). **4,937 total calls.**



The year 2023 marked another milestone in the journey of the Alberta Institute for Wildlife Conservation (AIWC), showcasing both challenges and triumphs in our mission to protect and rehabilitate local wildlife across Southern Alberta.

The summer season, spanning from May to September, remained our busiest period, accounting for over 70% of the total calls received. June once again emerged as the peak month, with a staggering 1,418 calls flooding our hotline in this month alone. One standout moment occurred on Friday, June 9th, when our hotline team addressed an incredible 81 calls in a single day, showcasing our capacity to handle high volumes of inquiries and emergencies. Throughout the year, we fielded a total of 7,096 calls, slightly reduced compared to 2022, yet still underscoring the critical role our hotline plays in wildlife conservation efforts.

Building upon the successes of previous years, 2023 witnessed significant enhancements to our rescue and dispatch operations. The addition of another summer Service Dispatcher (SD) to our team proved instrumental in optimizing response times and efficiency.

We are exceedingly proud of this program and its effectiveness. Since its inception in 2018, we have trained and mentored 18 Service Dispatchers, who have collectively answered over 11,200 calls, completed over 1,100 patient pickups and rescues, and dedicated over 497 hours to frontline support. The people hired in this role are often at the beginning stages of their careers, and gain an incredibly valuable set of skills during their time with us.

Furthermore, our Service Dispatchers played a pivotal role beyond hotline duties, contributing to essential tasks such as marketing, fundraising, and data entry. Many have transitioned to careers in conservation, education, and veterinary medicine, underscoring the transformative impact of this program on both individuals and our organization.

2023 also saw an increase in patient pickups from veterinary clinics in Calgary and the surrounding area. From May to August, we picked up 433 patients from our partner clinics - a 209% increase from the same time period in 2022. These figures underscore the invaluable support of our partner clinics, who allow patients to be dropped off after-hours and provide supportive care until they can be admitted to AIWC.

As we reflect on the achievements and challenges of 2023, we remain steadfast in our dedication to wildlife conservation and community engagement. We look forward to the opportunities that lie ahead, knowing that together, we can make a tangible difference for the patients we serve.

Wildlife Rehabilitation



REHABILITATION STATISTICS



1,674 new patients at AIWC in 2023.

Admitted **1,416 birds**, 84% of our total admissions.

Admitted **256 mammals**, 15.4% of our total admissions.

Admitted **4 herpetiles**, 0.6% of our total admissions.

A total of **461 animals** returned to the wild in 2023.

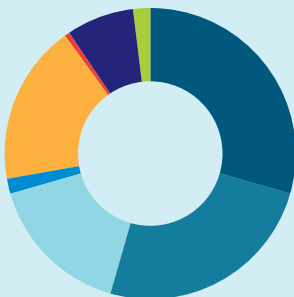


In 2023, we had a total of 1,674 new patients at AIWC, across 140 different species.

The patients were broken down into 1,416 birds (84%), 256 mammals (15.4%), 1 reptile, and 1 amphibian. The most common avian species we saw were mallards at 209 individual patients (12.5%), the highest number of mallards we have ever admitted in one year. Our white-tailed prairie hares were our highest admitted mammals with 94 injured or orphaned hares being brought into our care.

2023 had AIWC admitting breaking numbers of waterfowl in general. On top of the 209 mallards, we also admitted 69 Canadian geese, 35 American wigeons, 32 scaups, 11 teals, as well as a hand full of grebes, redheads, and shovelers. Such high numbers created unique challenges, requiring clinic staff to find new ways to ensure all patients had proper enclosure requirements. Another challenge was the continued management of HPAI (Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza), which can sometimes take up to 30 days for symptoms to present, requiring the team to ensure patients are quarantined appropriately. Of the 21 suspected patients with HPAI, 19 were confirmed, and included Canadian geese, snow geese, a black-billed magpie, a common raven, and a great horned owl.

2023 PATIENT ADMISSIONS BY SPECIES



30% Songbird	18% Corvids
25% Waterfowl	0% Herpetiles
16% Mammals	7% Raptors
2% Shorebirds	2% Other



In March 2023, AIWC also admitted three orphaned bear cubs that were brought in after their den had been disturbed and they were abandoned by their mother. Upon admission, the average weight of the cubs was only 2.3kg, making them the smallest and youngest cubs we have admitted at AIWC since receiving our permit to rehabilitate black bears in 2019. Happily, the cubs were all released back to the wild in the middle of October with tracking collars and were all later reported by Fish and Wildlife to have denned down successfully for the winter.

MEDICAL CARE

While a large portion of our patients in 2023 were orphaned juveniles who only require supportive care since they are too young to be able to survive on their own, AIWC also treated a number of patients with serious medical conditions. Of these, most presented with injuries related to trauma, usually from events such as being hit by a car (approximately 30 patients) or striking a window (approximately 80 patients). We treated 294 patients with oral medications for fractures, wounds, and other injuries. 108 patients were admitted with open lacerations or bite wounds and were treated with wound cleaning, bandaging, topical ointments, and prescribed antibiotics. Our patients are often dehydrated upon arrival as well, and 209 were prescribed subcutaneous fluids. For those with more serious injuries, such as fractures requiring repair, surgery was performed, and we did a total of 8 major surgeries (excluding minor procedures such as laceration repairs).



In addition to many challenging patients, AIWC was also heavily impacted by the rising costs of food and medical supplies in 2023.



Veterinary Program





AMERICAN BLACK BEAR 23-1624

In the fall of 2023, AIWC admitted a black bear cub, approximately 10 months old, who had been wandering into towns, likely orphaned and struggling to find food on his own. He was brought to us after being contained by Alberta Environment and Protected Areas officers for medical care and rehabilitation. On arrival at AIWC, he was very thin, weighing only 12.7 kg pounds – about a third of what a cub his age should weigh. He was stabilized for a few days (meaning little to no handling or examinations), to allow him to de-stress and rehydrate with an abundance of oral fluids, his favourite being Pedialyte. He was started on a refeeding diet that restricts calories and carbohydrates to prevent a sudden surge in insulin, which can trigger fatal electrolyte imbalances. He did well with stabilization, and once he had adequate time to rehydrate, he was anesthetized for a full exam, bloodwork, and x-rays. Other than the emaciation, a tick infestation, and a few small wounds, we found no major concerns. We treated him with anti-parasitic medications and slowly increased his feedings to a full bear diet. He had a great three months of eating as much as he could, going from 12.7kg to over 31.5kg, before going into hibernation in his den at AIWC in January. We look forward to releasing him back to the wild in summer 2024.



SWAINSON'S HAWK 23-1424

This Swainson's hawk was found by a member of the public in the middle of a nearby highway. On presentation to AIWC, the hawk was found to have a fracture of the distal left femur (upper leg bone) and was started on strong pain medications. To provide an optimal bone healing environment, the edges of the fracture should be aligned and stabilized to prevent motion. On the femur, the best option for this is to place an intramedullary (IM) pin down the long axis of the bone and secure this to two side pins placed laterally through each fragment. Two days later, we went to surgery to repair the fracture. The distal fragment was quite small and therefore a bit challenging to pin, but surgery was overall successful. The following day, the hawk was using the injured leg again, which was great progress. Unfortunately, about 1 week later, the patient began holding this leg up. Recheck x-rays showed the IM pin had moved and could potentially be damaging soft tissues just above the knee, likely due to the location of the fracture. We removed the IM pin early, leaving the two side pins to provide stabilization. We additionally performed physical therapy to prevent the hip and knee from tightening up from lack of use. This helped greatly and by 3 weeks post-op, the patient was using the leg well again. With x-rays, we confirmed the fracture healed and removed the remaining pins. After 1 more week of cage rest, the patient was moved outside to continue strengthening the leg and begin flying again. They did great with conditioning, flying well, and using the leg to perch, jump, and eat. They were successfully released after 42 days in care.

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Community Engagement



VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHTS

♥ **8,123 total volunteering hours.**

Clinic Volunteers: **2,820 hours**

Rescue Volunteers: **2,415 hours**

Hotline Volunteers: **1,172 hours**

Cleaning Volunteers: **103 hours**

Board of Directors: **204 hours**

Facilities Construction and Maintenance: **707 hours**

Fundraising, Public Awareness, and Office Support: **414 hours**

Newsletter, Blog, and Social Media: **161 hours**

Other*: **127 hours**

*other= training, check-ins, and supply pick-up

Total Distance travelled **151,686 kms**



VOLUNTEERING

We are incredibly thankful for our volunteers who make it possible to care for so many wild animals. We truly could not do what we do without their support.

In 2023, we welcomed 39 new volunteers to the team and ended the year with a total of 120 active volunteers. Our volunteers contribute in many meaningful ways through diverse roles such as driving injured and orphaned animals to the clinic, assisting in rehabilitation duties, raising awareness about wildlife through writing and events, and much more. There was an increase in the number of hours volunteered in many roles, such as facilities and maintenance as well as fundraising, public awareness, and office support. Our hotline program also continues to grow and the number of hotline volunteer hours increased by 28% in 2023 compared to 2022. This is fantastic to see, as animals have a higher chance of survival the sooner they are able to get into care. Having more volunteers helping on the hotline to offer advice and support means that after-hours calls are still responded to rapidly, and can make all the difference to an injured animal in need.

WILDLIFE EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

Our education programs continue to be a vital tool for spreading awareness about wildlife and the challenges they face. In 2023, we presented 94 education programs. We continue to offer virtual programs and we delivered 20 programs virtually in 2023. Our education programming reached 2,489 people from across Southern and Central Alberta. In addition to education programs, our community engagement team presented three virtual talks, with topics covering human wildlife conflict and avian diseases.

Our public awareness team of staff, summer students, and volunteers did an outstanding job in 2023. We attended 20 events and talked to 2,626 people in total at these events. The highest attended event of the year saw over 1,200 people over two days. The theme of this event was wildlife scat and tracks which was a huge hit. We visited various farmer's markets and other local markets around the Calgary area. It is always such a pleasure to get out in the community and raise awareness about wildlife. With the help of our summer students, we were able to expand our outreach on issues wildlife are facing such as pet attacks and lead poisoning. We are grateful for the opportunity to engage in events and initiatives to bring awareness to the amazing wild animals we share our home with.

Communications

2023 saw the creation of the Communications Coordinator role at AIWC. This position acts as a spokesperson for AIWC by liaising with traditional media outlets and producing relevant social media content with a strong conservation message. The Communications Coordinator also plays a crucial role in fundraising by developing online donation campaigns at key moments throughout the year.

SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

AIWC maintains a strong social media presence across four platforms: YouTube, TikTok, Facebook, and Instagram, having reached a combined 313,200 people on the latter two platforms alone in 2023. This presence has allowed us to spread timely stories about our patients, building a base of followers who support AIWC through donations, sponsorships, and shop purchases.

Social media is also our primary way of spreading the word about our seasonal fundraisers, including the Wildlife Baby Shower and the holiday Give the Gift of Saving Wildlife event.

Expanding AIWC's educational content is a major communications goal for 2024, with an educational video series, "Alberta Wildlife Insider," planned to air throughout the year. This series will focus on the science of wildlife rehabilitation, showcasing the expertise of the AIWC team and educating the public on how they can help reduce negative impacts on wildlife.

MEDIA COVERAGE

Our relationship with media outlets remains a vital way of increasing our brand awareness and ensuring we reach an audience outside of social media. Not only will they cover our own press releases, they also frequently reach out to use AIWC as an expert resource when covering wildlife topics.

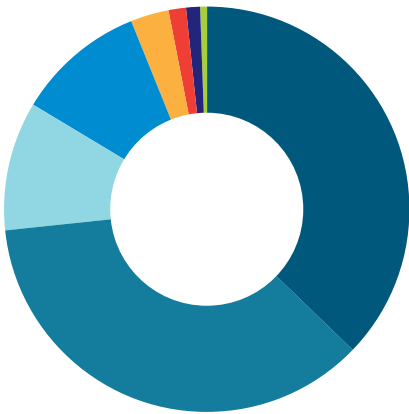


Funding for the first year of AIWC's Communications Coordinator position was generously provided by the Calgary Foundation. Thank you for helping us in furthering our mission

Community Partners

- A. Katherine Checkland
- Amazon.ca
- Annapolis Capital Limited
- Archiasmo Architectural Works Ltd.
- ATCO Electric
- Bounty Developments Ltd.
- Benefaction Foundation
- Bow RiversEdge Campground
- C.H. Andrews Farms Ltd
- Cairn Terrier Club of Canada
- Calgary Foundation
- Calgary Properties Lions Club
- Canadian Institute of Plumbing and Heating
- Cause Funds Disbursement
- Canadian Natural Resources
- Cenovus Energy
- Celero
- Charities Aid Foundation of Canada
- Cochrane Foundation
- Cochrane Veterinary Care Clinic
- Committee of 10,000
- Community Natural Foods
- Donmar Foundation
- Dr. Morris Gibson School
- Eco Canada
- Eric S. Margolis Family Foundation
- Field Law LLP
- Gibson Energy
- Giftfunds Canada
- Golden Life Management
- Grant MacEwan Charitable Foundation
- Harry & Martha Cohen Foundation
- Imperial Oil Resources
- Inter Pipeline Ltd
- KPMG
- Kucher Steels (1992) Inc.
- Lawrence W. West Family Fund
- LMR Speciality Ltd.
- Nickle Family Foundation
- NWP Eco Club
- Nutrien
- Order of the Eastern Star - Chinook Chapter #133
- Paramount Animal Hospital
- Pascal Pascal's Patisserie
- Red Deer & District Community Foundation
- River Path Veterinary Clinic
- Rocky View Chestermere Agricultural Society
- Rocky View County
- Sherling Animal Welfare Fund
- Sherwood Dodge
- Teine Energy
- The Byler Foundation
- The Estate of Randal Raymond Reine
- The Greygates Foundation
- The Hindle Family Foundation
- The Hotchkiss Family Foundation
- The United Church of Canada Foundation
- The Wild Bird Store
- TC Energy
- Totem Charitable Foundation
- Trace Associates
- TransCanada Pipelines Limited
- United Farmers of Alberta

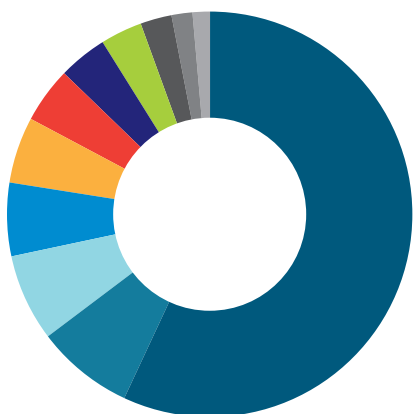
2023 Financials



REVENUE

Total
\$1,115,293

\$431,867	Grants
\$418,281	Donations
\$117,926	Casino
\$117,286	In-Kind Travel & Donations
\$35,436	Amortization of deferred capital contributions
\$17,716	Special events, sales, rebates
\$10,371	Training & education
\$6,410	Memberships



EXPENSES

Total
\$1,239,649

■ \$708,127	Salaries & Wages
■ \$95,766	In-Kind Travel
■ \$85,877	Facility Expenses
■ \$74,113	Supplies
■ \$63,503	Office & General Supplies
■ \$57,207	Amortization
■ \$45,117	Professional Fees
■ \$43,006	Medical Services
■ \$30,450	Fundraising
■ \$21,520	In-Kind Gifts
■ \$14,963	Travel

* Facility expenses is comprised of: interest on long-term debt, utilities, repair and maintenance, and insurance.

* Office & General Supplies is comprised of: office, interest and bank charges, training, telephone, and business taxes, licenses, and memberships.

Thank You



On behalf of the Alberta Institute for Wildlife Conservation, and Alberta's wildlife in need, the Board of Directors would like to express our gratitude and appreciation for everyone who has supported, shared, and donated to our important cause: preserving the legacy of wildlife.

Your support and generosity are critical to our operations and to our ability to provide Alberta's wildlife with the expert care they deserve. We could not do it without you and we hope we can rely on your continued support in 2024.

