

RECOVERY REVIEW

GREAT HORNED OWL 25-9

by Katie Grant

Great horned owl at intake, covered in manure.



This adult female great horned owl came to AIWC after being found in a pile of cow manure on a ranch near Picture Butte, AB. All of her feathers were covered in manure and, since bathing her could cause dangerous levels of stress, the medical team chose to start her on subcutaneous fluids and pain medication to stabilize her. While being stabilized, she managed to get a lot of the manure off herself by preening. She was provided with bathing dishes to help with the process and she continued to remove a lot of the contaminate herself.

During the healing process, the team found a wound on her wrist which was treated with bandage changes every day. She was also found to have bilateral corneal ulcers which were treated with eye drops for a few weeks.

Once her wrist and eyes were healed, she was moved to a small outdoor flight space to ensure she was self-feeding for a few days.

In mid-April the clinic team determined it was safe to bathe her to remove the last remnants of the manure. Following this, she was moved to the Runway enclosure for full flight conditioning to prepare her for release.

Great horned owl in care.



Great horned owl being bathed.



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

Did you know that great horned owls are among Alberta's earliest nesters, sometimes laying eggs as early as February? It's a quiet but powerful reminder that, even while winter still has its grip on the landscape, nature is already in motion.

As spring unfolds, we enter what is undoubtedly the busiest time of year at our centre. From May through August, the number of patients in our care can leap from a manageable 10-18 per day in the winter to a staggering 200-300 animals at any given time. While winter often brings us intense and complex medical cases, the volume and pace of spring and summer demand an entirely different level of response.

Picture this: a room full of tiny, open-beaked baby birds needing to be fed every 15 to 45 minutes from sunup to sundown, depending on their age and species. At the same time, our mammal nursery is filled with babies requiring bottle feedings every 2-3 hours—often overnight. It's an around-the-clock effort that only grows as the weeks go on, and our incredible staff and volunteers rise to meet it every single day.

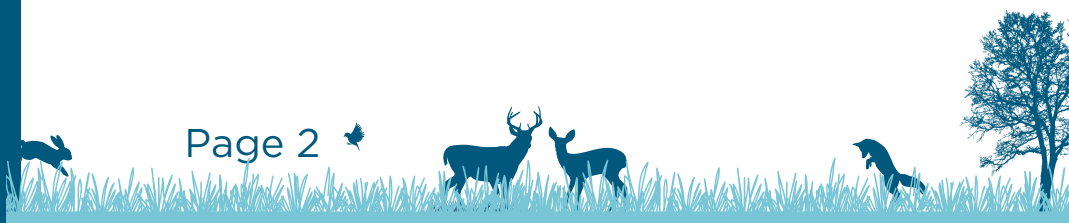
To keep up with the increased demand, we bring on seasonal staff through grant funding and expand our volunteer schedule dramatically. Our entire team—human and animal alike—relies heavily on the support of our community to get through this demanding period. That's why we're inviting you to join us for our 14th Annual Wildlife Baby Shower, running from May 1 to May 31, 2025.

Our goal is to raise \$25,000 throughout the month of May, and every dollar helps us provide life-saving care to Alberta's wildlife. With your help, we can ensure these animals not only survive but thrive—and one day return to the wild where they belong.

On behalf of everyone at AIWC, thank you for your continued compassion and support. Whether you're donating, volunteering, or simply sharing our mission with others, you are making a real difference. Together, we're giving wildlife the second chance they deserve.

Warmly,

Holly Lillie
Executive Director



LEAVE THAT BABY HARE THERE!

By Scottie Potter, Communications Coordinator

Prairie hare leveret
in care.



Springtime is birthing season for prairie hares, and we need your help to keep their babies wild!

These large rabbit relatives are found throughout Southern Alberta and are especially abundant in cities and towns. During spring, mother hares give birth to a litter of young in a small depression in the ground called a form. Baby hares (called leverets) have very little scent, which helps keep them hidden from predators, like foxes, coyotes, and bobcats. To avoid attracting attention to their leverets, mother hares spend as little time with their young as possible, only visiting them for a few minutes to nurse, usually at night.

These short visits last until the leverets are weaned at four weeks old and are capable of foraging on their own. That means a leveret that has been on its own for several hours is not in need of human intervention.

Every year AIWC takes in baby hares that were abducted from their mothers with the intent to rescue them. Many of these leverets are not yet eating solid foods, sadly resulting in them not thriving in human care.

We're asking the public to use discretion when they see a baby hare on their own. If the leveret is uninjured, they likely do not need to be rescued. If they are visibly injured, we ask that you call our Wildlife Hotline (**403-946-2361**) before taking action. Together we can ensure our hare neighbours continue to thrive in their wild homes!

Found an injured or distressed animal?

Try out our **NEW** "Found an Animal" questionnaire at **aiwc.ca/found-a-wild-animal**, which includes common call scenarios and animals, along with guidance on how best to respond.



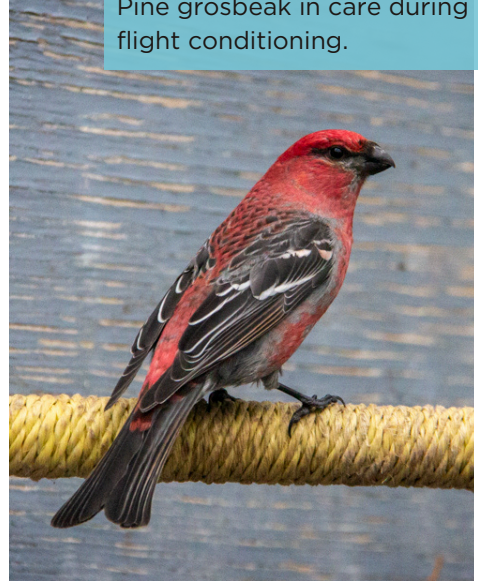
PINE GROSBEAK 25-13

by Courtney Collins

The pine grosbeak is a finch — about the size of a robin — that can be found across Alberta and central-southern areas Canada-wide. These finches are easily identified by their colouration. Females have grey abdomens with dark yellow-orange accents on their heads, upper abdomen, and tail base and males are reddish with grey on their lower abdomen. Both sexes also have dark grey-black and white stripes on their upper wings.

This pine grosbeak came into AIWC after a window strike, in which he sustained head and internal trauma and possible soft tissue damage to his elbow. He spent his first 48 hours in care stabilizing with medications and eating on his own following a series of x-rays. Some internal trauma was discovered but, fortunately, he didn't have any fractures. He then spent five days on cage rest prior to being put in the outdoor flight conditioning area. After a total of twelve days at AIWC, the pine grosbeak was released back into the flock seen around the location he was found.

Pine grosbeak in care during flight conditioning.



Canada goose in care.



A REMARKABLE RECOVERY FOR A CANADA GOOSE

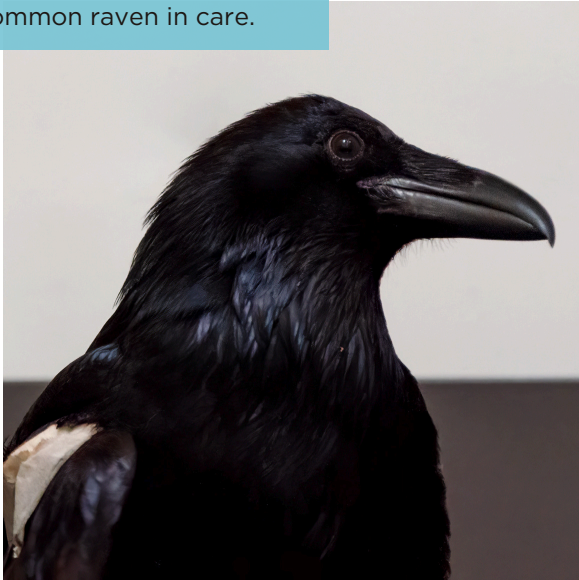
by Carley Goodreau

A Canada goose was found injured in Northeast Calgary on December 18, 2024 and brought to AIWC. Once in care, the goose was diagnosed with a fractured radius. Unfortunately, the team found that there were also four airgun pellets lodged in his body cavity. The bird immediately underwent surgery to remove the pellets, and a wing wrap was used to stabilize the injured wing, along with medication.

AIWC believes that we all have a responsibility to the environment and wildlife we share our habitat with. We can all play a part in reducing negative wildlife interactions, and promote conservation in our communities.

Over the next few weeks, this patient recovered well with rest and was moved to a pool on January 1, 2025. As his condition continued to improve over the next month, he was allowed to acclimatize to an outdoor enclosure. On February 8, the goose was ready to be released and rejoin a flock of other Canadian geese in Calgary.

Common raven in care.



PERCEIVED TO BE SIMPLY A PEST, NEVERMORE

by Courtney Bogstie

Though often associated with their tendency to be found foraging in garbage dumps and their overall intimidating demeanor, the common raven is among the most playful species in the animal kingdom. Not only have ravens been observed making their own toys, playing catch with sticks and rolling in fresh snow, ravens are also among only four known animals (along with bees, ants, and humans) to possess the ability to communicate about events in the here-and-now.

On January 28, 2025, a raven arrived at AIWC after having been discovered in High River with a fractured and infected ulna (bone in the wing). Although the cause of the injury was unknown, treatment began immediately which included a body wrap, daily wound cleaning, and physical therapy. The raven began to improve steadily and on March 6 was successfully moved to an outdoor space to begin flight conditioning. As ravens typically forage in pairs and nest-building is a collaborative effort between both sexes, this patient is unlikely to spend much time alone after their release from AIWC!

A ONE-OFF

by Heike Lippmann

A homeowner in Northwest Calgary must have been quite surprised to find a two-year-old female boreal owl on their doorstep in early March. These uncommon and rarely encountered birds are nocturnal and usually stay in remote mountain and boreal forests.

It could be that this little fellow moved south in a movement called an “irruption,” possibly due to a food shortage in their usual prey areas. Unfortunately, due to their preferred habitat of mature forests with abundant snags, they are very susceptible to habitat changes from forestry operations.



Boreal owl in care.

Regardless, this beauty was initially unable to fly because of head trauma and a broken clavicle (collarbone), possibly due to striking a window. From the beginning, she was self-feeding very well. The fracture was well aligned, so with three weeks of cage rest and medication, she improved quickly. After moving her into our outside enclosure, she impressed us by only needing one week of flight conditioning before she was ready to be released.

She is only the second boreal owl on record that has been released from AIWC's care.



Bobcat in care.

A BOBCAT'S RETURN TO THE WILD

by Scottie Potter, Communications Coordinator

Look how much our bobcat patient has grown! For those who don't remember him from the Fall 2024 newsletter, he arrived at AIWC with three siblings in June 2024 after they were confirmed to be orphans. This made them the first bobcat patients at the AIWC in over a decade! Sadly, all three of his siblings succumbed to an E. coli infection shortly after intake. Despite this tragic event, the surviving kitten thrived in care, and was weaned by mid-July.

In order to accommodate a growing bobcat, the AIWC team "cat-proofed" an enclosure by installing extra mesh. Climbing "furniture" was also added to the space to provide the bobcat with plenty of physical enrichment.

To prepare the bobcat for the challenges of living in the wild, the clinic team provided him with challenging puzzles. Food was placed in hard to reach areas or inside boxes he had to rip open. His caregivers also took precautions to prevent him from becoming too comfortable around humans, including wearing a ghillie suit to disguise their appearances.

With the return of spring it was determined the bobcat was ready for life on his own. After 316 days in care, he was driven to a remote property full of natural habitat and released back to the wild on April 23, 2025.

MUSKRAT MAKEOVER

by Roxanne Selkirk

Move over, beavers — there's an unsung ecosystem engineer we need to talk about! Like beavers, common muskrats build lodges and burrows in wetlands. Through their digging and building activities, they create open water areas and pathways that support other wildlife.

Last November, this common muskrat was rescued from a cistern (water storage tank) she had become trapped in. With low energy levels and a low body temperature, our team suspected pneumonia and immediately began treatment, providing medication and supportive care to get her back into tip-top shape.



Common muskrat in care.

While she recovered well, we needed to ensure she had access to open wetland habitat for her release. As a result, she remained in our care through the winter until spring temperatures finally melted away the wintry Calgary conditions. We're thrilled to report she's back where she belongs — and we wish her the best of luck with her engineering endeavors for many years to come!

A NORTHERN VISITOR

by Scottie Potter, Communications Coordinator

With the return of spring, Alberta welcomes the arrival of millions of migratory birds, but it also signals some birds to leave the province – including northern shrikes. They are one of a handful of bird species that overwinters in Alberta. These predatory songbirds are most well known for their habit of storing prey by skewering them on branches, thorns, and barbed wire. When warm weather returns, they fly north to their breeding grounds in Alaska, the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut.

Like many migrating birds, windows are significant obstacles for travelling shrikes, including one individual who came to AIWC on March 31, 2025.



Northern shrike during flight conditioning.

Although she showed signs of head trauma, this shrike was one of the lucky few birds to survive a window collision. The clinic team prescribed her 48 hours of cage rest, followed by time spent in an outdoor enclosure for flight conditioning. She was returned back to the wild on April 3, 2025, making her the second northern shrike on record to be released by the AIWC.

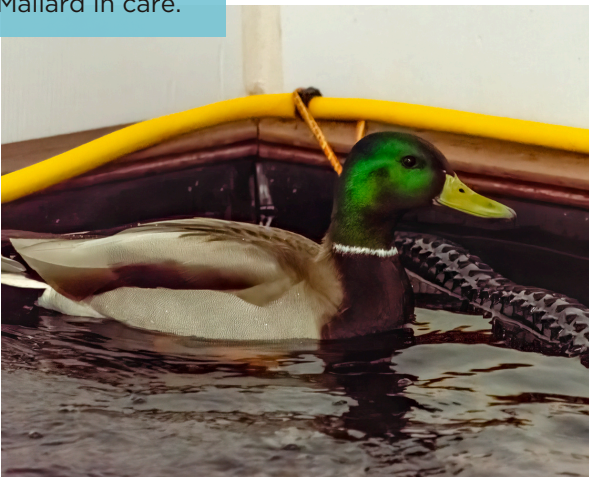
A FROSTBITTEN MALLARD

by Scottie Potter, Communications Coordinator

Cold weather can have severe impacts for wildlife, like this mallard. He arrived at the clinic on February 17, 2025 after he was found injured in a snowdrift being attacked by ravens. During his intake exam, he was found to have frostbite on his right foot, as well as an injury to his right wrist. He was provided with supportive care while the clinic team kept a close eye on the frostbite to ensure it did not go necrotic.

It wasn't long before he was stable enough to be moved to a pool and, after a week of care, his wrist

Mallard in care.



injury had healed. Thankfully, the frostbite never went necrotic and, after three weeks of care, this mallard was released back to the wild on March 6, 2024.



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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 \$1,100,000 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

WILDLIFE CAN'T WAIT — AND NOW, YOU DON'T HAVE TO!

by Robyn Cunningham-Dunlop,



Every year, AIWC receives over 7,000 calls about injured, orphaned, or oiled wildlife. To help more people (and animals!) quickly, we've launched a new online tool: the 'Found an Animal' questionnaire. Conveniently located on our website.

This self-guided resource, launched in March 2025, offers immediate, reliable advice—especially helpful when our hotline is busy or a call isn't possible. It's part of our ongoing mission to make wildlife support more accessible, inclusive, and effective for everyone.

We're excited to see the difference it makes in the 2025 season—because every animal deserves a chance, and every moment counts!

Visit aiwc.ca/found-a-wild-animal or scan the QR code to fill out the questionnaire.



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/

