

RECOVERY REVIEW

THE SILVER ONE: A NEW CHAPTER IN AIWC'S FOX TALES

by VIVIAN HINDBO

Silver morph fox kit in care at AIWC.



Sibling to the silver morph fox kit.



AIWC receives many orphaned, injured, or displaced fox kits in the late spring and early summer. We have admitted six this season. Our recent arrivals include a silver morph red fox – our first ever at AIWC! The unusual dark-colored fur of silver foxes is the result of a rare genetic mutation. As silver morph foxes age, they will develop the striking silvery guard hairs that give this morph its name.

The silver morph red fox was admitted on May 18, 2025, along with two (non-morph) siblings. The owner of a property near AIWC observed that the kits' mother was no longer feeding them. When admitted, they were very thin and put on a refeeding schedule, starting with formula and slowly transitioned to whole protein items (e.g., mice and quail), hard-boiled eggs, and some vegetation and berries. They particularly love dandelions!

The three sibling kits were joined by another red fox kit (of about the same age) on May 26, 2025, after he was found alone in Mountain View County. He had facial swelling and sarcoptic mange, which was successfully treated with fluid therapy, antibiotics, and antiparasitics. Upon receiving a clean bill of health, he was introduced to the other three fox kits in a large outdoor enclosure.

Socialization with others of their species helps red foxes learn how to interact, play, and develop the survival skills they'll need once released. They are showing a healthy fear of humans, also necessary for their survival. The four kits are playing together in their dirt and grass-based enclosure, digging up a storm and making dens under greenery. They also like to lounge and sunbathe on the high structures in their enclosures.

Fox kits typically gain independence from their parents at around six months of age, so our fox kits will be ready for release around the second week of September.



Silver morph fox kit.

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.

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.

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CONTRIBUTORS:

*K. Grant, H. Lillie,
C. Goodreau, C. Collins, , V. Hindbo,
R. Sle Kirk, R. Cunningham-Dunlop, A. Kellington*

PHOTOS: AIWC, D. Cresswell

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

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE

Wow! What a summer it's been. As I write this, we are currently experiencing a 20% increase in animal admissions compared to this time in 2023. That equates to over 250 additional animals cared for so far this year.

When we talk about our patient statistics, it's important to remember that each of these numbers represents an individual animal—a sentient being who, through no fault of their own, needs our help. I've said it before, and I'll say it again: in an ideal world, wildlife rehabilitation centres wouldn't need to exist. But the reality is that most of our patients come to us as a result of human conflict—birds hitting windows, foxes struck by cars, moose calves caught in barbed wire.

Recently, we admitted a yellow-bellied marmot who had inadvertently hitched a ride from the mountains and ended up in Calgary. Perhaps he was curious about the big city, or maybe he just thought a car was something worth climbing into. Thankfully, he survived the journey and safely dismounted once in Calgary. Thanks to the dedication of community members and our incredible volunteers, he was humanely captured, assessed at AIWC for a couple of days, and then released back to a suitable location in the mountains.

To support our mission, we're thrilled to announce our upcoming online silent auction in September! We have an amazing selection of items to bid on—from artisan jewelry and beautiful artwork to hotel stays and more. Keep an eye on our social media channels and our website, aiwc.ca, for all the details. You won't want to miss it!

Thank you for all you do to support Alberta's wildlife in need. We simply couldn't do this work without you.

Warmly,

Holly Lillie

Executive Director



Yellow-bellied marmot prior to their release back to the wild.



GREY JAY 25-201

by COURTNEY COLLINS

The grey jay, *Perisoreus canadensis*, or Canada jay, is about the size of a robin, with a dark grey back, pale grey/white chest, and white and black head. This bird is considered Canada's national bird, living in boreal forests across much of Canada. This species is related to other jays, crows, and magpies and has a unique Indigenous name from the Algonquin language family, "Wisekejick" (or "whiskey-jack" in English), meaning a mischievous spirit that likes to play tricks.

On May 16, a fledgling grey jay was brought to AIWC with a shoulder (scapula) fracture that had started to heal and some swelling in the shoulder joint. They were started on pain and anti-inflammatory medications immediately and put on cage rest. After three weeks of rest, the fledgling was able to fly and was moved into an outdoor flight enclosure to condition for release. After 48 days in care, this grey jay was able to be returned back to the wild.

This incredible species is an important part of the ecosystem. If you see an animal in distress, please give AIWC a call at 403-946-2361.

Grey jay in care at AIWC.



MOOSE 25-112

by KATIE GRANT

Moose calf while at AIWC.



On May 18, 2025, we took in a young moose calf who was found tangled in barbed wire, separated from her mother and suffering from a painful soft tissue injury. Thanks to quick action and plenty of care at AIWC, she was fitted with a splint and began her road to recovery.

As of June 11, she was healing beautifully and no longer needed the splint. After much thought, our clinic team decided it was best to move our moose patient to another facility.

As young moose are best rehabilitated together, it only made sense to send her to another rehabilitation centre that already had other moose calves in care. Our friends at Medicine River Wildlife Centre will now be providing this calf with the best of care on her rehabilitation journey.

If you find an orphaned or injured moose calf, do not approach or touch the animal as they, and their mothers, can be dangerous. Keep in mind that mothers often leave their calves temporarily while foraging, but if you are concerned the calf needs help, you can contact us at 403-946-2361.

THE COTTONTAIL CHRONICLES: UNEARTHING THE VALUE OF ALBERTA'S NATIVE RABBIT

by ROXANNE SELKIRK

For residents of Alberta, spotting a rabbit or hare can be a common enough occurrence that our fluffy friends simply blend into the background. Rabbits have it especially tough trying to get the recognition they deserve, as they're often lumped together and misidentified as invasive species that wreak havoc on our environment and outcompete native wildlife. However, did you know that Alberta is home to a native rabbit species known as the mountain cottontail (also known as Nuttall's cottontail)?

Okay - you say - mountain cottontails are a native wildlife species and therefore may be worth the effort to help, but aren't they plentiful and prolific breeders? Why should supporters of AIWC be interested in the rehabilitation of a cute, little defenseless rabbit? Because mountain cottontails are important to our environment! Their abundance means these little creatures are an important prey species for native predators such as coyotes, bobcats, badgers, weasels, martens, hawks, eagles, owls, and even snakes. Mountain cottontails also help shape our plant communities through their grazing, seed dispersal, and maintaining trails through dense vegetation to help out smaller animals.

A mother mountain cottontail was unfortunately struck and killed by a car earlier this year, leaving an orphan behind. Once in our care, we were able to provide this orphan a safe place to grow and recover by starting them on a diet of specially formulated formula and then progressing them to solid foods. Because recovery is easier with friends, we introduced this orphan to other cottontails in our care. Normally, this may not be possible as we typically only help 1-5 mountain cottontails each spring, but this year we've had a whopping 20 cottontails in our care! We simply couldn't be providing this care without your support, and the orphan mountain cottontails certainly thank you!



Cottontails in care at AIWC.

MEET BOB THE BUILDER (BEAVER EDITION)

by VIVIAN HINDBO

As you may recall from previous issues of Recovery Review, we admitted a North American beaver kit on May 30, 2024. She was rescued after being rejected and pushed out of the lodge by her parents. Based on her weight and behavior, we suspect this kit may have been the runt of the litter. It is possible that she may have been rejected so enough resources were available to more viable kits in the litter.

Last winter, she was moved from an outdoor to an indoor enclosure where she was very industrious, continually making lodges from new pieces of wood. We would routinely take down the lodges to clean them and let her build them back up. Her building skills improved greatly!

This spring, she was moved back to her outdoor enclosure, which has a man-made lodge with water access beneath it. She seems rather content with the lodge so doesn't build it up, other than pulling in a few new branches under which she stores food. Her diet is 80% native browse that we collect for her every day, 20% rodent block (a specially formulated food to complete her diet), a small piece of sweet potato, and a couple heads of lettuce.

Beaver patients break the rules of wildlife rehabilitation! Because connecting with family is vital for a young beaver's survival, beaver kits need to build a close bond with their caregivers who act as their surrogate parents. This is unique among the animals we care for as we strive for them to have as little habituation to humans as possible - their survival depends on it. Once our beaver matures, she'll decide she wants nothing to do with her human caregivers. She is now becoming more independent and her main caregivers are spending less time with her to aid in this process.

Our beaver kit was only one week old at intake and, as of this spring, she weighed 15.6 kg! She is well on her way to reaching full size, as adult beavers typically weigh between 17 to 32 kilograms. She will be spending another winter with us in an indoor/outdoor enclosure with water access. Because young beavers remain with their parents for two to three years, this beaver will be ready for release in the spring of 2026.



Beaver enjoying her outdoor enclosure this summer at AIWC.



KEEP CATS SAFE AND WILDLIFE SAFER: WHY CATIOS ARE A WIN-WIN SOLUTION

by ALEX KELLINGTON & ROBYN CUNNINGHAM-DUNLOP

Domestic cats are beloved companions in millions of Canadian households—and it's easy to see why. With their expressive eyes, quirky personalities, and soothing purrs, cats have earned a special place in our hearts and homes. But while their hunting instincts once served humans well, they're now having unintended and serious consequences for Canada's native wildlife.

Canada is home to more than 8 million pet cats, many of whom are given outdoor access. Unfortunately, their natural hunting instincts make them one of the leading causes of bird deaths in the country.

It's estimated that between 100 million and 350 million birds are killed by cats every year in Canada. Up to 115 native bird species are vulnerable to cat predation—a staggering statistic at a time when biodiversity across the country is already under pressure.

Even the presence of cats near bird nests can disrupt parenting behaviors, leading to decreased survival rates for chicks. In 2024, AIWC treated 55 patients across 21 species for injuries caused by free-roaming cats. Tragically, only five survived to be released.



American Robin 25-327

72 PATIENTS
IN 2022

27 PATIENTS
IN 2023



White-tailed Jackrabbit 25-97

55 PATIENTS
IN 2024

48 PATIENTS
SO FAR IN
2025

ENTER THE CATIO: A SAFER WAY TO EXPLORE

Catios (short for “cat patios”) offer cats the best of both worlds: fresh air and stimulation, without the dangers of free-roaming. At AIWC, we're proud to be certified cat lovers and passionate wildlife protectors. That's why we're thrilled to spotlight **Fox's Custom Catios**, a local Calgary company leading the way in ethical outdoor cat care.

- Experts in Feline Behavior
- Built for Canadian Weather
- Tailored to Your Space

Special Bonus: For every project that comes through a referral from AIWC, Fox's Custom Catios will make a donation to support our wildlife patients—**no expiry date!**

FOX'S CUSTOM CATIOS



marcella@foxscustomcatios.com
www.foxscustomcatios.com

587-717-1395

SPONSOR THE UNDERDOG

by ROBYN CUNNINGHAM-DUNLOP

Since launching in 2012, the AIWC Sponsorship Program has grown into one of our most beloved ways for supporters to get involved. Receiving a personalized certificate and patient photo in the mail has become a highlight for many donors, and since introducing digital certificates in 2020, sponsorships have become even more accessible and convenient. Digital sponsorships now make up 50% of all certificates sent annually, matching the popularity of traditional mailed versions.

Whether you're marking a birthday, a milestone, or simply looking for a meaningful gift (for a friend or yourself!), sponsoring one of our wild patients is a powerful way to contribute directly to their recovery. Each sponsorship supports essential medical care, nutrition, and enrichment, while also making for a great conversation starter on your coffee table or fridge!

But here's something we've noticed: while some animals regularly steal the spotlight (we're looking at you, beavers and black bears!), others tend to be overlooked, even though they require the same level of care and rehabilitation. And because we know you love a statistic as much as we do, here's a look at our most sponsored—and most overlooked—patients over the past five years:

MOST SPONSORED SPECIES

2020: Moose, Short-eared Owl, Great Horned Owl

2021: Great Horned Owl, Moose, Little Brown Bat

2022: Red Fox, Beaver, Black Bear

2023: Black Bear, Great Horned Owl, Beaver

2024: Bobcat, Beaver, Saw-whet Owl

MOST OVERLOOKED SPECIES

2020: Pine Grosbeak, Canada Goose, Little Brown Bat

2021: Porcupine, Canada Goose, Striped Skunk

2022: Raven, Canada Goose, White-tailed Prairie Hare

2023: Raven, House Finch, Bohemian Waxwing

2024: Canada Goose, Muskrat, Northern Flicker

*From the curious raven to the misunderstood skunk, many species—especially our more common or less “charismatic” ones—receive less attention, but they’re no less deserving of care. This summer, we encourage you to **sponsor the underdog**.*

BYE-BYE BLACK BEAR!

by CARLEY GOODREAU

There's nothing better than a good news update from one of our long-term patients, and we're happy to share that black bear cub 24-1786 has made his way back into the wild.

You might remember this cub from the Winter 2025 issue, where we introduced the young bear, having entered care after being found wandering alone near Barrhead, AB, in December of 2024. Weighing only 15 kg, the cub was emaciated, and due to his low weight, needed to be slowly weaned back onto food. This careful process is done to prevent refeeding syndrome, a condition that can cause serious organ distress from shocks to the metabolic system.

From December to June, the cub gained 38 kg, and after passing his pre-release exam, was released on June 3, 2025, where he will continue to bulk up before the next hibernation season.



Black bear sedated during pre-release examination.

Module 3, Compartment 3, 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, \$45 for a Family, or \$250 for Corporate.

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**

Go Green with AIWC

We're always looking for ways to reduce our environmental footprint—and that includes saving paper wherever we can! If you'd prefer to receive a digital copy of this newsletter instead of a printed one, just let us know at info@aiwc.ca.

Charitable #: 14041 6140 RR0001

HELPFUL AIWC RESOURCES

Looking for ways to support wildlife or get involved with AIWC? Check out the helpful resources below—from reporting injured animals to donating bottles and going green with your mail preferences!

SUPPORT AIWC WITH YOUR BOTTLES THROUGH SKIPTHEDEPOT!

Turn Bottles into Lifesaving Care!



Your empty cans and bottles can help wildlife in need—just **schedule a pickup** through **SkipTheDepot** and select AIWC as your charity. It's free, easy, and supports rehabilitation efforts across Alberta.

Scan the QR code or visit our website to get started!



[skipthedepot.com/aifwc](https://www.skipthedepot.com/aifwc)

WANT TO VOLUNTEER?

AIWC is supported by over 125 active volunteers who play a vital role in wildlife rescue, rehabilitation, and release, as well as supporting our hotline, blog, newsletter, and public outreach efforts. We host two volunteer recruitment sessions each year, in February and September. Applicants must be 18 years or older, and some remote, at-home roles are available. If you're interested in joining our team, visit our website and fill out an application ahead of the next session!

<https://www.aiwc.ca/get-involved/volunteer/>



**FOUND AN INJURED,
ORPHANED, OR OILED
WILD ANIMAL**
FILL OUT OUR FORM



AIWC HOURS

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

May to August: 9:00 a.m. - 8:00 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.

