



ALBERTA INSTITUTE
FOR WILDLIFE
CONSERVATION

2020
ANNUAL
REPORT

2020 HIGHLIGHTS



2,064

patients admitted
with a 47%
success rate



\$85,000

dollars raised through our 4th Annual
Give the Gift of Saving Wildlife
fundraiser, exceeding our goal by 41%



Created **online content and videos** for virtual learning



Continued to see **success in our new black bear rehabilitation program**, successfully releasing all both black bear patients in 2020



Deployed our **Wildlife Emergency Response unit** to respond to 2 oil spill events.



Updated our **Adopt an Animal program** for virtual gift-giving



162

a record number
of different species
admitted into care



Hosted our 2nd Annual Work Out for Wildlife in August, encouraging participants to get outside and active in their own backyards, and raised

\$7,000



6,000+

volunteer hours donated, for everything from fundraising, website design, animal care support, and rescue driving



6,600+

calls answered by our Wildlife Hotline



Redesigned our **website**



Sold out our first **50/50 cash raffle fundraiser** and awarded **\$10,000** to the lucky winner!



Attended **8 community events**, hosted **2 virtual talks**, and presented **73 education programs**



Attended the **National Wildlife Rehabilitator's Association Symposium** in February 2020

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE

If 2020 was to be summed up in one word, “unprecedented” would be a top contender, both considering world events and those here at AIWC. Despite the several challenges the year threw at us, however, 2020 was still a year of many successes.

Perhaps most notably, AIWC admitted the most wildlife patients in a single year since we were founded in 1993. 2,064 animals were admitted for care, representing 162 different species – also a record! This represents a 39.4% increase over our intakes in 2019.

We are proud to report that our patient success rate from 2020 remained steady at 47%, well above the industry average, and our wildlife hotline fielded over 6,600 calls throughout the year.

In addition to this incredible demand for our services, AIWC, like many of you, was also tasked with operating during a global pandemic. Considered an essential service, AIWC remained open to receive patients every day in 2020. There were many challenges to assess in keeping our staff and volunteers safe, and we are pleased to say we did not have to undertake any permanent layoffs of our staff. For much of the year, many staff members were able to work from home, while those critical to patient care observed strict guidelines to reduce the risks of COVID-19.

In-clinic volunteers were eliminated and reduced from March to June, and we are so proud of our staff for providing industry-leading patient care to a record number of patients without the usual level of support they would receive from our dedicated volunteers. Even so, our volunteers still donated over 6,000 hours of their time in 2020 towards our operations.

Of course, the pandemic had a significant impact on our education and community programs. Our team pivoted to creating, hosting, and attending online events, as well as creating educational videos accessible to those at home and learning virtually. Through these channels, our education team was still able to attend 8 community events, host 2 virtual talks, and present 73 education programs in 2020.

AIWC also looked at new fundraising initiatives in 2020 and sold out our first 50/50 cash raffle in October. In December, our Give the Gift of Saving Wildlife annual fundraiser exceeded all expectations and raised over \$85,000.

“ We are so proud of our staff for providing industry-leading patient care to a record number of patients without the usual level of support they would receive from our dedicated volunteers.



2020 also brought AIWC.ca a new look with a redesigned website and our updated Adopt an Animal program.

Of course, none of this is possible without the outstanding generosity of our community. 2020 brought unexpected challenges to everyone and we thank you so much for your continued support to ensure wildlife in need continue to receive essential care.

Thank you for supporting Alberta's wildlife! Your contributions save lives in need.

HOLLY LILLIE
Executive
Director

JENNIFER KAISER
Chair, Board
of Directors

WILDLIFE HOTLINE

Throughout the past few years, AIWC's Hotline Program has experienced gradual growth and improvement. Our dedication to accurate, compassionate education and public engagement is something we uphold when responding to every call made to our hotline.

Adapting to the circumstances of 2020 and knowing that summer students were not able to start until July, AIWC instituted a new protocol to allow volunteers to assist with the daily maintenance of the Hotline. Volunteers were able to operate the Hotline from home, covering early morning and evening hours to ensure our accessibility to the public, and animals in need, never wavered. Our call response times improved, meaning our drivers could be deployed at a faster rate, and patients could be cared for sooner, improving their chances of recovery. Additionally, new Hotline time slots were opened on the weekend to provide additional support. With our new arsenal of enthusiastic Hotline warriors, we were able to tackle our busiest summer yet!

In 2020, approximately 69% of our calls were received between May and September, resulting in over 4,600 incoming calls. This reflects an increase from previous years during the same time period: 2018 received 2,985 calls, and 2019 received 3,919 calls. During

those five spring and summer months, June brought the most Hotline calls (1,263), followed closely by July (1,140).

AIWC credits our 2020 Hotline success to the incredible commitment of our volunteers, whom without we would not be able to do a lot of what we do on a daily basis.

It is also our observation that the pandemic had a substantial impact in the nature of calls we received in 2020. Calls about distressed or orphaned animals in backyards increased considerably. During lockdown, Albertans still made the most of their time by re-discovering their neighbourhoods, and quite literally their own backyards. Many concerned citizens reached out to our Hotline to inquire about new spring nests in their backyards, and of course the nature of the species themselves.

Callers were interested in knowing what signs they should look for to indicate injury or abandonment, or rather how to navigate the ever rapid teenage 'fledgling' phase of our common backyard birds. From conversations like

these we were able to ascertain which animals needed assistance, and which were simply exhibiting natural behaviour.

With the help of the public, and their eagerness to reach out to us, we were able to prevent 292 healthy young animals from coming into care in 2020. Through education, this number has increased 40% since 2019, and we do hope that these preventative measures will continue to rise.

Another trend that appeared to result from quarantine was the increase in the number of 'nuisance animal' calls we received. Statistics show these inquiries increased 24% from 2019 to 2020.

One type of nuisance call AIWC receives is the request to relocate wildlife perceived as intrusive or destructive. To address these concerns, and mitigate human-wildlife conflict, AIWC has

partnered with our first humane removal and relocation experts: *Innovative Pest Solutions*, out of Airdrie, Alberta. While we of course encourage co-existing with wildlife whenever possible (humane deterrents and prevention are the best approach to wildlife conflict, after all), we understand that there are still some unavoidable situations that necessitate the relocation of wildlife for the safety of the animal and the residents. In this case, expert help can ensure the best possible outcome for all, and our Hotline team can connect residents in need with a resource who can help. Going forward, AIWC hopes to establish more of these partnerships to help advocate for the wellbeing of native wildlife throughout the province.



6,681

total calls in 2020



The **highest number of calls** we addressed in one day was **59 calls** on June 11th.



Organized over **1,738 pickups/rescues**. Often with multiple animals at each pickup. **58% increase** compared to 2019.



Our busiest month was **June with 1,263 calls**. **28%** more calls than we received in June 2019.



Over **69% of our calls** are received during our summer season (May – Sept), with **4,612 total calls** this year.



292 healthy animals protected from unnecessary intervention in 2020, increased from 203 in 2019.

WILDLIFE REHABILITATION

AIWC is proud of our amazing team of wildlife care experts who stepped up to the challenges of 2020; our standard of animal care remained high, and patients received the same expert care that has always been expected at AIWC.

In 2020, AIWC had a record year with 2,064 animals admitted for treatment. The patient breakdown for those admitted was 78% avian species and 22% mammal species. The hospital saw 122 different species of birds, with 56% of those species being songbirds, 12% raptors, and 20% waterfowl and aquatic

birds. We saw 28 species of mammals, with 53% being white-tailed prairie hares and 11% being striped skunks. We received two mammal species never before admitted at AIWC: a long-eared myotis (bat) and an elk calf.

704 animals were released back to the wild in 2020, with AIWC achieving a

**PATIENTS
ADMITTED
IN 2020**



78%
avian
species

22%
mammal
species



47%

success rate for animals released back into the wild in 2020, compared to a national average of 33%.

success rate of 47%, raising us far above the national average (33%) for another outstanding year. Among the patients released were two black bear cubs that were admitted in the winter. The first cub we received was a male and the second cub was a cinnamon-coloured female. Both were severely emaciated from either being woken up during hibernation due to human disturbances or from not having put on enough weight in the fall to survive through hibernation. They were slowly introduced back to food, and, after only a week inside, they were transitioned to their large outdoor, pre-release enclosure. Since the cubs were in such poor nutritional health, neither of them were able to enter hibernation because they require a certain amount of fat on their body for that natural process to occur. The cubs did not seem bothered by the cold, but they would sleep for multiple days during the more severe cold snaps. While in care, both cubs gained around 20kg before the time of release, so they were in great body condition when they were returned to the wild. They were released in the spring, separately by Alberta Environment and Parks, into suitable habitat near where they were found.

Another highlight release of 2020 was the two moose calves we received in 2019. The calves were released on April 3rd and 8th. It was a bittersweet farewell seeing our first successful moose calves returning to the wild after being in care for almost a year.

The successful raising and releasing of two Wilson's snipes chicks was another first for AIWC in 2020. This was a very

exciting and proud moment for the clinic because these patients are particularly difficult to rehab, especially at such a young age. Wilson's snipes are born precocial, with downy feathers and well-developed beaks and legs. Precocial means they are born more developed and are able to feed themselves almost immediately after hatching. Although these chicks can eat on their own, they are not able to thermoregulate (maintain their body temperature), so they still rely heavily on their parents for warmth. Unable to maintain their body temperature, these chicks often come in severely debilitated after losing their parents unless they are found immediately, which is one of the many reasons they are such difficult babies to raise in a rehab setting. Luckily the two snipe chicks admitted this year were still very bright and in good condition, which allowed us to give them a fighting chance at recovering and being released once they were old enough. Both chicks ate on their own once they were in care and continued to grow at a rapid pace. Since their preferred method of eating was out of deep mud dishes, the clinic staff were faced with the task of sourcing fresh mud on a regular basis, as well as finding their favorite food items: earth worms. Each species admitted to AIWC holds their own unique challenges in terms of their care and it often pushes the staff to come up with new and creative ways to make them comfortable while they are recovering with us. When the time came for release, after 37 days in care, both the snipes and the staff were eager for their return to the wild.

VETERINARY PROGRAM

Veterinary Partnership

In July 2020, AIWC partnered with the National Wildlife Centre and the University of Guelph to start a Veterinary Internship program at the clinic.

The internship program will help bring new veterinarians to the field of wildlife medicine as well as provide AIWC with a full-time veterinarian for care of injured

wildlife. This partnership makes the Alberta Institute for Wildlife Conservation the only rehab center in Alberta that has a full-time veterinarian on staff at this time.

Remarkable Patients of 2020

▶ SWAINSON'S HAWK 20-1635



Patients often present to the hospital following trauma, whether it is flying into a window, being hit by a car, or other unknown trauma. Following severe trauma, patients will often show signs of head trauma and possible fractures. A Swainson's hawk presented to the clinic in August 2020 after being found on the ground and unable to fly. AIWC staff assessed him on intake and noted a

humerus fracture (bone in wing) and unusually quiet behaviour. He was stabilized by the animal care team and prepared for surgery. Surgery was performed by the veterinary team and pins were placed to stabilize the fracture site. Once the fracture was stabilized, he was started on strict cage rest and physical therapy. Physical therapy is performed regularly on the patients to prevent the joints from stiffening and the ligaments from contracting. After approximately three weeks, the fracture was stable and the pins were removed. He remained on exercise restriction for one more week before moving to an outside enclosure to begin flight conditioning. After three more weeks of care and monitoring, he was released back into the wild just in time for migration.

▶ BALD EAGLE 20-2078



Lead toxicity is a common reason for wildlife to present into rehabilitation. Wildlife will often ingest lead from discarded shot or carcasses with lead ammunition present. The most common patients to present with lead toxicity are waterfowl and birds of prey such as eagles and vultures. When wildlife ingest lead it is absorbed in their system significantly faster than any other route. Lead toxicity can lead to a number of

problems in animals, from neurological to gastrointestinal and cardiac. It can cause irreversible damage to the animal and possibly death. This year we seemed to have an increase in lead cases which presented to the hospital. 4 animals, a bald eagle, golden eagle, rough-legged hawk, and Canada goose presented to the hospital with varying degrees of lead present within their system. When patients present for suspected lead toxicity, a blood test is performed to monitor the amount of lead present within their bodies. Once lead is confirmed within their blood, radiographs are performed to see if there is any lead present within the gastrointestinal tract. If lead is present it should be removed as soon as possible as it will continue to leach into the animal's body, causing the levels to continue to rise and the toxicity to worsen. Patients will also be started on medication to help remove the lead from their bodies.

An adult eagle presented to AIWC in December 2020 after being found on the ground, and unable to fly. When admitted, he was unable to stand or move his legs. He was tested for lead and found to have a high level within his system. AIWC staff treated him with intravenous fluids and specific medications designed to remove the lead from his system. After just a few days of treatment, he showed significant improvement, and was standing on his own and was much more active. Once his lead levels were low enough to be considered safe, he was moved out to one of AIWC's outdoor bird of prey flight pens for conditioning. He was released after 13 days in care.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Volunteering

2020 was a challenging year for all of us at AIWC, but our volunteers really stepped up to meet the increased demand for services.

While we had to restrict clinic and public awareness volunteering significantly due to COVID-19, our volunteers made huge contributions in other areas of AIWC's operations, including a 30% increase in Rescue Driving and a 166% increase in hours donated to our Hotline service!

In a year where the number of animals admitted and phone calls skyrocketed, this support was essential to AIWC's operations. Thank you so much volunteers – we couldn't have done it without you.



2,712 HOURS

donated by clinic
and construction
volunteers



2,310 HOURS

donated by
rescue volunteers



658 HOURS

donated by hotline
volunteers



900 HOURS

donated by the
board of directors

Wildlife Education Programs

COVID-19 made delivering in-person education programs a major challenge in 2020; however, AIWC's education team was able to quickly adapt to this new world, and our shift to online programming meant that we were still able to reach large numbers of people.

We transitioned to programming in a live, online format, where participants were able to directly speak to an AIWC staff member and see photos and videos from our clinic.

In addition to moving our classroom education programs online, we also worked to take our bi-monthly on-site talks to an online platform as well. This

has been a great success, and enabled us to bring AIWC into the homes of supporters from all across Alberta and beyond!

Despite the challenges 2020 brought, we were still able to directly reach nearly 2,000 people with our education programs, and we look forward to this number increasing in 2021.

Wildlife Education Videos

One new area our Education team began work on in 2020 was in creating online videos, both for partner organizations to put up during online events and others that are available directly on AIWC's YouTube channel.

So far, we have created videos featuring information about familiar species like skunks, beavers, and hares, and we have videos on owls and a virtual tour of the centre planned for release soon. Some

of these videos have received over 1,000 views already, and it is exciting to see so many new people discovering AIWC and the work we do!



281 HOURS

donated to facilities construction and maintenance



213 HOURS

donated to fundraising, public awareness, and office support



113 HOURS

donated to newsletter, blog, and social media

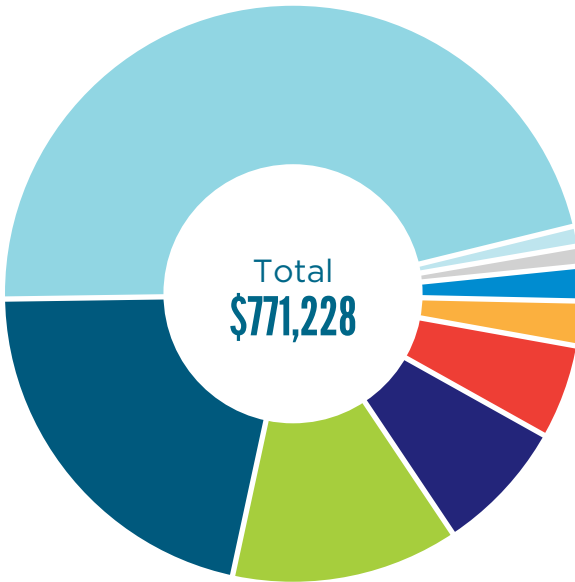
COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- ▶ A. KATHERINE CHECKLAND
- ▶ A.E. BOWERS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - MRS. MCMURRAY'S GRADE 3 CLASS
- ▶ AIRDRIE LIQUOR STORE
- ▶ ANNAPOLIS CAPITAL LIMITED
- ▶ ARCHIASMO ARCHITECTURAL WORKS
- ▶ ARCTEC ALLOYS LIMITED
- ▶ BACK TO NATURE APPAREL
- ▶ BAKER CREEK MOUNTAIN RESORT
- ▶ C.H. ANDREWS FARMS LTD.
- ▶ CANADIAN NATURAL RESOURCES
- ▶ CANADIAN WESTERN BANK
- ▶ COCHRANE FOUNDATION
- ▶ COMMUNITY NATURAL FOODS
- ▶ DONMAR FOUNDATION
- ▶ DT KAYRA FUND AT CALGARY FOUNDATION
- ▶ ECOLE EDWARDS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
- ▶ EDGEWATER COMPANION ANIMAL
- ▶ GIFTFUNDS
- ▶ GLUCK LIFESTYLES
- ▶ GRANT MACEWAN CHARITABLE FOUNDATION
- ▶ GREYGATES FOUNDATION
- ▶ HARRY AND MARTHA COHEN FOUNDATION
- ▶ IMPERIAL OIL RESOURCES
- ▶ INTER PIPELINE LTD
- ▶ JACKIE AND GEORGE PALMER FUND AT CALGARY FOUNDATION
- ▶ JK GROUP/TECH RESOURCES LTD.
- ▶ JSS BARRISTERS
- ▶ LAWSON FOUNDATION
- ▶ LOIN INSPECTION LTD.
- ▶ LOTUS FARMS

- ▶ MADDEN LIONS CLUB
- ▶ MILLENNIUM EMS SOLUTIONS LTD.
- ▶ NATURE'S WAY
- ▶ NICKLE FAMILY FOUNDATION
- ▶ NORALTA TECHNOLOGIES
- ▶ NORTHBRIDGE FINANCIAL CORP.
- ▶ PARKDALE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
- ▶ PARKDALE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
- ▶ PARKDALE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION
- ▶ PAUL DUNPHY PRODUCTIONS
- ▶ PAUL'S PIZZA SHAWNESSY
- ▶ PCL CONSTRUCTORS
- ▶ PRIVATE GIVING FOUNDATION
- ▶ RED DEER & DISTRICT COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
- ▶ RICHARD BUCKLEY PROF. CORP.
- ▶ ROCKY VIEW COUNTY
- ▶ SAFEWAY - LAKE BONAVISTA
- ▶ SHERLING ANIMAL WELFARE FUND AT CALGARY FOUNDATION
- ▶ SHERRITT INTERNATIONAL CORP.
- ▶ ST. MATTHEW SCHOOL - MRS. CHAMPION'S GRADE 2 CLASS
- ▶ SUMMIT LIABILITY SOLUTIONS
- ▶ TAIL BLAZERS
- ▶ THE BUCKLEY FAMILY FOUNDATION
- ▶ THE BYLER FOUNDATION
- ▶ THE HINDLE FAMILY FOUNDATION
- ▶ THE MAJA FOUNDATION AT CALGARY FOUNDATION
- ▶ THE SCOTLYN FOUNDATION
- ▶ THE SUMMERLEE FOUNDATION
- ▶ TOTEM CHARITABLE FOUNDATION
- ▶ UNITED WAY OF ALBERTA CAPITAL REGION, DONOR CHOICE PROGRAM
- ▶ UNITED WAY OF CALGARY, DONOR CHOICE PROGRAM
- ▶ UNITED WAY OF CENTRAL ALBERTA, DONOR CHOICE PROGRAM
- ▶ UNITED WAY OF TORONTO, DONOR CHOICE PROGRAM
- ▶ UNLEASHED
- ▶ VINTAGE WEST WINE MARKETING

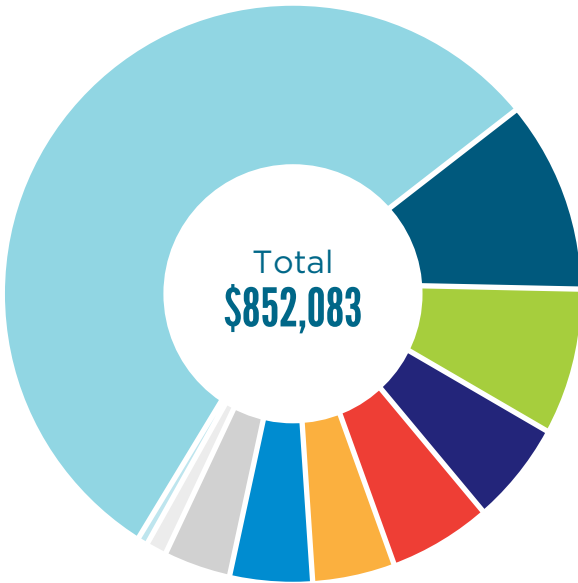
2020 FINANCIALS

REVENUE



● \$357,406	Donations
● \$164,767	Grants
● \$97,712	In-Kind Travel & Donations
● \$59,154	Government Subsidies
● \$40,332	Special Events, Sales, Rebates
● \$18,823	Casino
● \$14,696	Amortization of deferred capital contributions
● \$9,568	Training & Education
● \$8,770	Memberships

EXPENSES



●	\$477,946	Salaries & Wages
●	\$92,969	In-Kind Travel
●	\$67,199	Supplies
●	\$47,592	Office & General Supplies
●	\$46,692	Facility Expenses
●	\$39,138	Amortization
●	\$38,177	Fundraising
●	\$30,211	Professional Fees
●	\$8,769	Travel
●	\$3,390	Medical Services

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 as 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 2021.



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AIWC.CA