



Message from the Executive



1,066

ANIMALS ADMITTED FOR CARE IN 2018

122

DIFFERENT ANIMAL SPECIES ADMITTED IN 2018

411

ANIMALS RELEASED BACK INTO THE WILD IN 2018

Since our founding in 1993, AIWC has admitted over 31,000 patients through our doors, and in April 2018, we celebrated 25 years of providing care to orphaned and injured wildlife and serving as a resource for wildlife questions and concerns.

AIWC has come a long way, from operating in our founder's basement to now taking up a 9.5-acre property of our own with 21 different species-specific outdoor enclosures, to help provide the best possible care to hundreds of patients each year. In 2018, our operations were made possible with the dedication of 6 full time staff, a part-time veterinarian, 4 casual, part-time, and summer staff members, and the generosity and commitment from more than 125 volunteers.

Despite only admitting 1,066 patients in 2018 (down from 1,412 in 2017), AIWC still provided care to over 122 different species of Alberta wildlife and admitted 21 patients in a single day in June, at the height of our busy summer season. Even in the colder months, when it is the quietest, AIWC still admits an average of one new patient each day. As usual, most of our 2018 patients came from the City of Calgary (72%).

We suspect that part of the decrease in admissions in 2018 is attributed to our increased focus on public education and dedicated hotline management to field the calls received from the public each day. The more we can prevent healthy wildlife from needlessly coming into our care, such as in the case of frequent accidental kidnappings of baby hares and birds we see each summer, the more wildlife is left to thrive where it should be – in the wild with their natural parents. For those patients who do end up in our care, AIWC continues to boast quality care and a success rate of 49% for 2018, well above the industry average.

2018 HIGHLIGHTS

- In 2018, we also continued our focus on infrastructure improvements, with the construction of two new outdoor mammal enclosures.
- We delivered education programs to over 2,860 individuals and represented wildlife concerns at 22 community events.
- We continued welcoming the public to our facilities, hosting 9 talk and tours and 2 garage sales.
- We launched a successful spring media campaign to educate the public about nesting geese in urban areas and how to prevent geese from nesting in unsafe locations.
- Our volunteers donated over 7,500 hours of time, covering tasks from mailing newsletters to helping in the clinic with our patients.
- Our social media presence continues to grow far and wide, with AIWC reaching over 30,000 unique user accounts across our platforms. Perhaps the biggest highlight was the successful release of our two long-term beaver patients in May 2018, a story that was picked up around the world!
- We hosted 5 volunteer work event days for local businesses.
- AIWC staff attended and presented at the National Wildlife Rehabilitator's Symposium.
- Continued with the success of our online store (aiwc.shop) and expanded to add new products such as reusable tote bags and WindowAlert decals to help reduce bird/window collisions.

As we look forward in 2019, AIWC is going to plan both short-term and long-term. In the short term, AIWC will continue to provide industry-leading care to our patients and work towards reaching as many members of the public as possible and explore additional preventative measures that will help healthy wildlife from unnecessarily being admitted into care. In the long term, AIWC is going to revisit and revise its strategic plan in 2019, with a focus on sustainable long-term funding and the legacy of the organization.

Thank you for your support in 2018 to help ensure that wildlife continue to receive the critical care they need, saving wild lives in need. Our work is made possible by the generosity of our devoted community.

Holly Lillie
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Jennifer Kaiser
CHAIR, BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Wildlife Hotline



181

TOTAL RESCUES COMPLETED IN 2018

4,100+

TOTAL CALLS MADE TO THE WILDLIFE HOTLINE IN 2018

335

ANIMAL PICKUPS ORGANIZED THROUGH THE HOTLINE

70%

OF CALLS WERE RECEIVED BETWEEN APRIL AND AUGUST

AIWC's Wildlife Hotline is dedicated to educating members of the public regarding Alberta's diverse wildlife, and assisting them with both common and atypical wildlife concerns. The Wildlife Hotline also provides a point of contact for all concerned citizens who might have come across an injured, orphaned, or oiled animal in need of assistance. Investing in the advancement of our Wildlife Hotline resources in the early months of 2018 was a first for AIWC, a venture that has now paid off triple-fold.

AIWC is dedicated to the rescue and rehabilitation of distressed wildlife, in addition to the preservation and preclusion of healthy wildlife that have come in to contact with humans. Last year, in the month of June alone, our Wildlife Hotline Staff prevented the admission of 132 animals who did not otherwise need medical intervention. Investing in our new Wildlife Hotline has allowed for a substantial increase in calls addressed, and resolved, in addition to a reduction in healthy patients accidentally finding their way to our centre. This new system is by no means perfect, and we fully intend to constantly improve and expand our hotline capabilities in order to better support wildlife-related concerns in Southern Alberta.

In November 2017, we welcomed to the team Robyn Dunlop, our Office Administrator, who took on a large percentage of our day-to-day hotline management. We need to continue to support our Wildlife Hotline program to address the immense quantity of calls we receive on a regular basis. Last year we received well over 4,100 calls to our wildlife hotline.

In attempts to develop a more robust hotline management structure, efforts were made to encourage the training and preparation of skilled Wildlife Hotline volunteers who could provide additional support for such an increased demand. At this time, we currently have 14 fully qualified volunteers who assist AIWC staff in addressing calls that come through our Wildlife Hotline. We are constantly on the lookout for new volunteers who

want to gain some experience in the field of wildlife conservation, or who have a strong passion for helping injured wildlife and their community. If you think Wildlife Hotline volunteering is right for you, please visit our website at www.aiwc.ca/volunteer.

The summer of 2019 will see yet another exciting development to our Wildlife Hotline program, and to the AIWC Team! We have been provided with the opportunity to bring on two summer staff, full-time, to assist with our Wildlife Hotline and Wildlife Rescue programs. We hope that this expansion will allow us to reach more individuals than ever before, and to be substantially more accessible for both the public and animals in need.

Juvenile American Coots preparing for release in our new outdoor waterfowl enclosure.



854

CALLS RECEIVED IN JUNE, OUR BUSIEST MONTH OF THE YEAR

132

ANIMALS PROTECTED FROM UNNECESSARY INTERVENTION

55

THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF CALLS ANSWERED IN A SINGLE DAY, ON JUNE 25TH

Veterinary Service



The wildlife hospital at AIWC is open every day to receive any injured or orphaned wildlife. These animals, which include many species of birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians, are expertly triaged and cared for by our amazing Wildlife Rehabilitators.

Working closely with the rehabilitators, our wildlife Veterinarian performs detailed medical examinations of injured animals in order to determine the optimal course of treatment, which may include surgery and/or medical therapies, or euthanasia. We are fortunate to have Dr. Julie DeCubellis on staff at AIWC. Dr. DeCubellis has spent more than a decade focusing on avian medicine and surgery as well as the care of exotic pets ranging from rabbits to rodents to reptiles.

The veterinarian's role begins even before seeing a patient, as they are always on call and available to assist with rehabilitators' medical questions and with emergency situations. Once animals are triaged and it is determined that there may be a medical and/or surgical issue needing attention, a thorough exam and assessment is necessary. Performing an exam on a tiny bat, injured eagle, or cantankerous porcupine is not the same procedure as for a puppy. For many of our animals, an examination begins with sedation to enable safe handling. Following a complete physical examination, the wildlife vet may obtain x-rays, take blood and other fluid or tissue samples for diagnostics, treat wounds, and give initial treatments including fluids and medications. For sick and/or orphaned animals, repeat medical interventions, including wound care and medical therapies, are often required for the animal to regain their health prior to release. Other animals have received traumatic injuries and may require surgery to correct fractures. Surgical interventions may also be needed for severe wounds and infections. Following successful treatment and rehabilitation, some animals also require a veterinarian for sedation to safely transport them to the destination of their release. The wildlife vet must also consider the potential impacts of what is seen in individual patients as an indicator of the overall health and well-being of that species in the wild. Specific illnesses, infections and patterns of injury may require wider consultation with Provincial authorities to determine if a species is at risk or poses a public health risk.

During the past year, our veterinary service has been engaged in all of these types of activities. Dr. DeCubellis has been busy performing orthopedic surgeries to correct wing and leg fractures in birds, performing microsurgery on an injured bat, and even a dental exam on a muskrat. She has grappled with neurologic issues in a porcupine and skunk and has seen a few medical mystery cases. Countless wounds and infections have been successfully treated and healed. The bitterly cold winter also reinforced the extreme challenges our wildlife must endure. The veterinary service has also been busy modifying pain management and other treatment protocols in order to provide optimal care and comfort for our patients. In order to ensure that AIWC is at the forefront of wildlife care, Dr. DeCubellis regularly consults with fellow experts all over the world for particularly challenging cases. Here are a couple of cases examples from the past year to highlight these issues:

STRIPED SKUNK CURIOSITY

Skunks are intelligent, inquisitive animals, and like all intelligent animals, they tend to be very curious. AIWC commonly sees this curiosity get the better of them and lead them into potential danger. This striped skunk (18-969) presented in September after being found stuck in a fence. He was unable to walk and had difficulty sensing the position of his hind limbs- evidence of spinal trauma. Radiographs confirmed lumbar vertebral swelling, but fortunately no fractures. The skunk was treated with fluids, antibiotics, pain medications as well as selamectin for fleas. Improvements were slow, but our experienced rehabilitation staff monitored closely and could see small improvements over time. There were significant improvements over his stay with us, and he returned to normal, healthy level of activity and was returned to the wild in spring 2019.



HEAD TRAUMA IN RAPTORS

This Northern Saw-whet Owl (19-6) was hospitalized in January after being attacked by magpies in downtown Calgary, sustaining head and eye trauma. Fortunately, she did not have evidence of fractures or neurologic damage, and was able to be treated with fluids, anti-inflammatory and pain medication. Rather quickly, this little raptor recovered and was successfully released in March 2019.



Wildlife Rehabilitation



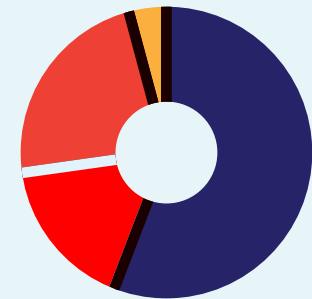
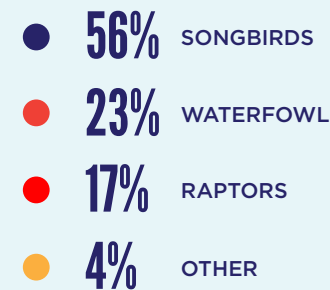
PATIENT STATISTICS

In 2018, AIWC admitted an impressive 1,066 animals for treatment. The patient breakdown for those admitted was close to exactly three quarters birds, and one quarter mammals, with conditions ranging from serious polytraumas, to orphaned babies in need of specialized care to be raised and released.

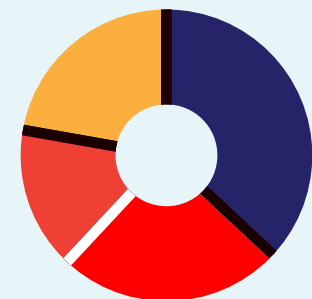
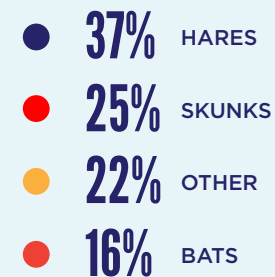
The hospital saw 102 different species of birds, with 56% of those species being songbirds, 17% raptors, and 23% waterfowl and aquatic birds. We saw 19 species of mammals, with 37% being white-tailed prairie hares (jackrabbits), 25% being striped skunks, and 16% various bat species, one of which was a rare species for AIWC: the hoary bat, which is the largest bat species in Canada.

This year, we released 411 animals back to their wild habitat, a release number that offered us a success rate of 48%, raising us far above the national average for another successful year. Among the patients released was beloved patient 16-946, an orphaned beaver kit who came to us in June of 2016 after being found abandoned at 4 weeks old. The youngster presented with a laceration to her tail, and was thin and dehydrated on intake. After almost 2 years of specialized care, and a serendipitous relationship that formed with another beaver in care at the time, a young male, the pair were ready to be returned to the wild. On the beautiful spring morning of May 18th, the young couple was released to suitable habitat at the Ann and Sandy Cross Conservation Area. Continued post-release monitoring has confirmed the pair has continue to thrive, almost 8 months after their release, a feat that fills our staff with pride. The success of these special cases would simply not be possibly without the support of our community.

BIRD SPECIES ADMITTED



MAMMAL SPECIES ADMITTED



IMPROVED PROTOCOLS

As we continue to strive for the best patient care possible, our protocols for nutrition and husbandry have been reviewed and improved. Some of the most notable improvements in 2018 include our mealworm care, a key food item for many of our patients.

Upon implementation of the new protocol, our mealworms went from dull and unimpressive, to shiny, plump and juicy! By improving the health of our mealworms, we have improved the nutrition we offer the patients when we feed them. We see this most notably when raising our insectivorous songbird patients, who are now raised on a strictly mealworm diet, thus mimicking more closely the natural food items their parents would offer. We saw less complications during growth, improved feather condition, and greater release success. We also saw great strides in the condition of our hatchling sandpiper patients, which we introduced a special calcium slurry supplement to. This reduced the occurrence of greenstick fractures (a common condition in young shorebirds), and improved bone density and strength.

Additionally, all orphaned young that were raised at the hospital were prescribed 30 minutes of daily direct sunlight. Every day, one by one, every hatchling songbird, corvid, raptor, skunk kit, squirrel pup and duckling were taken outside for a supervised period that allowed them to soak up the important UV rays from the sun, stimulating crucial vitamin D production that allowed for improved plumage and pelage condition, bone and muscle development, and a more content mentation. Instead of relying on artificial UV light, this switch to natural sunlight saw great improvements in the growth and success of our infant wildlife.



Canada goose, admitted with shoulder trauma. After 34 days in care, he was returned to the wild.

FACILITIES AND ENCLOSURES

Thanks to the generous sponsorship of the Harry and Martha Cohen Foundation and Imperial Oil Resources, two new enclosures for small mammals were installed: Mini-Mammal 1 and Mini-Mammal 2.

These two enclosures allow for extra outdoor housing for groups of smaller mammals such as skunk kits. With our ability to house more juvenile skunks in smaller groups, we can ensure less competition is occurring between litter-mates, and all individuals receive adequate amounts of food, space to play, and space to rest.

2018 was the first year the new Outdoor Waterfowl and Aquatic Mammal enclosures, sponsored by Inter Pipeline Ltd., were put to use, housing their first patients for pre-release conditioning. These enclosures helped house juvenile waterfowl such as Mallards, Gadwalls, Redheads and American Widgeons. Shorebirds, such as American Coots and Spotted Sandpipers, also benefitted from these specialized enclosures.

The Aquatic Bird Building received several upgrades, including an improved filtration system and cleaning equipment for our three indoor pools, which has helped ameliorate the daily water quality of pools. Additionally, we improved access to pool enclosures for cleaning and checking patients, which has made keeping enclosures clean and monitoring patients much easier for staff, and less stressful for patients. The most exciting addition to the Aquatic Bird Building this year was a specially designed Hospital Pool, a smaller, portable pool that can be filled and ran with warm water to help unstable and under-waterproofed aquatic birds work on their waterproofing without the discomfort and stress of cold water on their skin.

Waterproofing is a crucial feature of an aquatic bird's plumage that impedes water from penetrating their feathers. This pool helped return 100% of the pelagic birds we admitted in 2018 back to the wild, an unprecedented success rate for such a specialized group of birds! This group included Horned, Pied-billed, Red-necked and Eared Grebes, all who are lack the ability to stand adequately on land, thus requiring specialized husbandry and housing.



Black-billed magpie in care, admitted with poor feather condition and needs to go through a full feather moult before release in summer 2019.

Education and Community Engagement



4,001

HOURS DONATED BY CLINIC AND CONSTRUCTION VOLUNTEERS

1,681

HOURS DONATED BY RESCUE VOLUNTEERS

550

HOURS DONATED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

161

HOURS DONATED BY HOTLINE VIOLUNTEERS

VOLUNTEERING

Though 2018 was something of a quieter year, our volunteers still gave all they had to AIWC! Between clinic and construction work on-site, driving out to rescue wildlife in distress, fundraising and spreading knowledge of AIWC and its mission, AIWC's volunteers made a fantastic impact in many different areas last year.

AIWC's volunteer program is holding steady, with 120 active volunteers participating in a wide variety of roles. While we are still actively recruiting new volunteers, we are also focusing on retaining volunteers from year to year. 2018 saw our highest retention rate of new volunteers ever, with 68% of new recruits staying with us for more than 1 year!

WILDLIFE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Our wildlife education programs remained popular throughout 2018, with our education team delivering 115 in-class programs and 8 on-site talk and tour events. Education is a vital component of enacting AIWC's mission; after all, the more people know about animals, the more people will care about their local wildlife, and know to call AIWC when they find an animal in distress.

We offer a wide variety of programs, but our most popular options in 2018 were the general wildlife program "Who's in Your Backyard?" followed closely by the "World of Owls" presentation. All told, our education programs reached nearly 3000 people in 2018!

Junior Forest Wardens of Calgary out at AIWC to help paint our new aquatic mammal enclosure.



Bottle drive fundraiser from June 2018.



471

HOURS DONATED BY
FUNDRAISING AND PUBLIC
AWARENESS VOLUNTEERS

40

HOURS DONATED BY
NEWSLETTER AND
BLOG VOLUNTEERS

PUBLIC AWARENESS EVENTS

Our public awareness events provide a great opportunity for people outside of AIWC's regular audience to become acquainted with the organization, and to have a chance to speak to wildlife experts regarding the wildlife they see in their own backyards. We spoke to nearly 2000 people during regular booths, such as at MEC in Calgary, and to some different markets this year, including the Spruce Meadow's Christmas Market and Vet-U-Can, an event put on through the University of Calgary Veterinary school. We look forward to expanding our outreach efforts in 2019!

AIWC booth at Calgary Library.



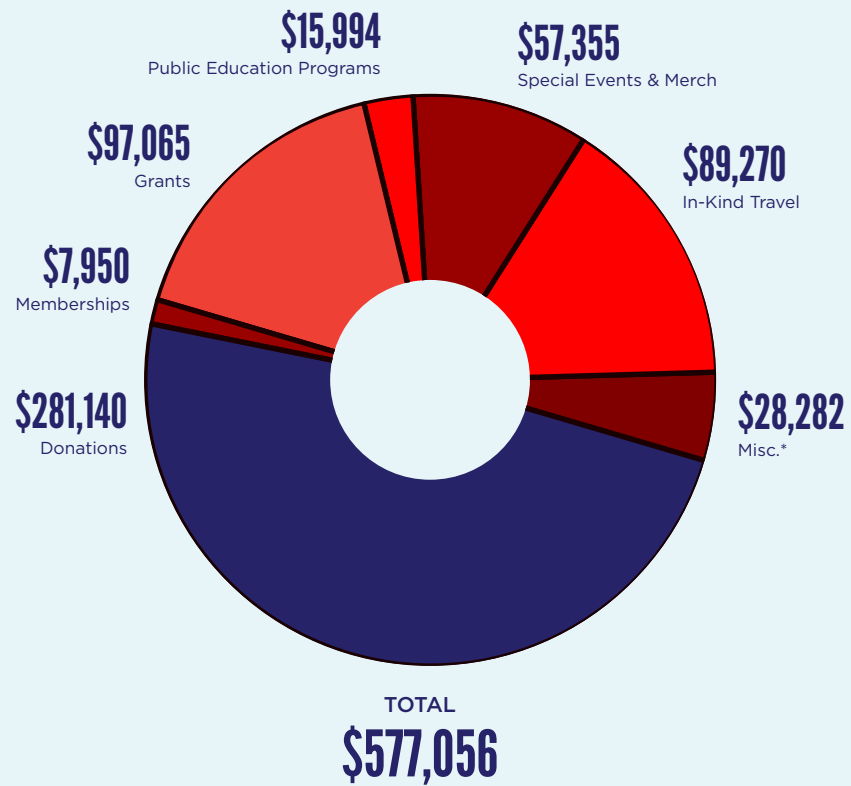
Osprey admitted with trauma to left wing.



2018 Financials

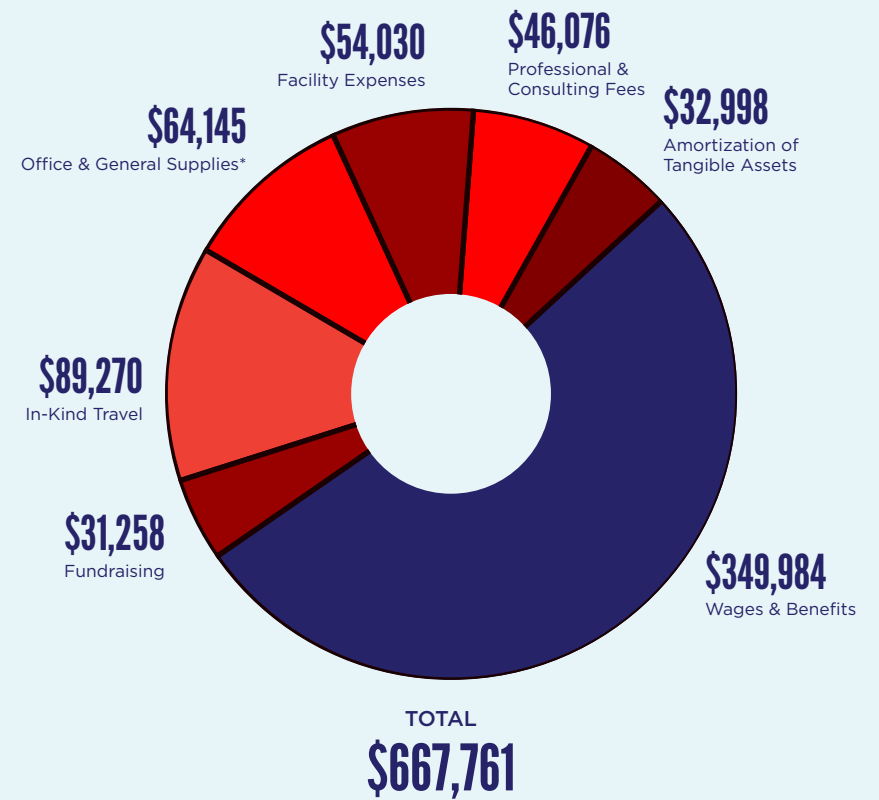


REVENUE



* Misc. is comprised of: in-kind bookkeeping, amortization of deferred capital contributions, and casino.

EXPENSES



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

Community Partners



A. Katharine Checkland Prof. Corp.

A.E. Bowers Elementary School – Mrs. McMurray’s Grade 3 Class

Airdrie Liquor Store

Animal Welfare Foundation of Canada

Annapolis Capital Limited

Archiasmo Architectural Works Ltd.

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ARVS

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The Byler Foundation

The Greygates Foundation

The Hindle Family Foundation

The Summerlee Foundation

Time Travellers Car Club

United Way of Calgary, Donor Choice program

Western Canadian Spill Service

Words’ Nest

Thank You



AIWC relies on the generosity of our community in order to support our operations and give wildlife in need the second chance they deserve.

On behalf of the Alberta Institute for Wildlife Conservation, and Alberta's wildlife, we wish to express our thanks and gratitude to all who have contributed to our important cause in many different ways, and we encourage all Albertans to share in our deep appreciation of our wild neighbours.

Best regards,
The Board of Directors