

**BRAGG
CREEK**

WILD



wildlife and people living in community

Newsletter

Summer 2023

How to help injured or orphaned wildlife - 2

BCW's board and priorities - 3

The importance of habitat connectivity - 4

Wild & Wise - tips for safe and respectful wilderness exploration - 6



"I don't have to take a trip around the world or be on a yacht in the Mediterranean to have happiness. I can find it in little things, like looking out into my backyard and seeing deer in the fields."

Queen Latifah

Check us out
on
Bragg Creek Days

HELPING INJURED OR ORPHANED WILDLIFE

This article is a summary of a guide developed by the Cochrane Ecological Institute for our community. Please visit our website for the full guide.

You have encountered an injured owl or collided with a deer. What steps should be taken to help yourself and/or the wildlife? First, stop and assess. Observe the wildlife from a safe distance to determine the extent of its injuries and the level of distress it's experiencing. Next, ask a few questions: What do you see in the surrounding environment? Where is the animal located? Is the animal alone? Taking photos of the injured wildlife and surrounding area will help the agency contacted determine what is required. Lastly, decide who best to call – a rehabilitation centre or the authorities?

Emergency

You encounter an injured wild animal that poses immediate danger to human safety. It is important to contact wildlife authorities. The Alberta Fish and Wildlife Enforcement Branch will properly assess the situation and execute a plan that will address the emergency. While waiting for assistance, maintain a safe distance from the injured animal to avoid causing further stress or harm, keeping in mind that wildlife can act unpredictably when injured, so it's essential to exercise caution.

Collision

You're involved in a wildlife collision and the animal died on impact. Reporting the incident to the wildlife authorities ensures that the details of the incident will be recorded. This information provides valuable data for future conservation purposes such as identifying where mitigation is required for stretches of road that see regular wildlife collisions.



Injured and Posing No Threat

An animal is injured, but not in immediate danger and does not pose a threat to human safety. For example, a bird with a wing injury. In these circumstances a local wildlife rehabilitation centre is here to help. Organizations such as CEI in Cochrane specialize in providing medical care and rehabilitation to injured wildlife. They will provide you with instructions as to how to keep the wildlife safe. For example, they might ask you to keep the immediate area as quiet as possible and ensure that children and pets are kept away from the injured animal to avoid causing additional stress. They may ask you to cover the animal’s head with a blanket, towel or any covering available to create a sense of calm by making its surroundings dark. This may help lower the animal’s stress level until a wildlife technician arrives.

Orphaned

A young animal appears to be orphaned. Here too it’s best to contact a wildlife rehabilitation centre as they have the expertise to assess the situation and will provide appropriate advice, care and possibly facilitate reunification with the animal’s parents. Remember that some species such as deer leave their young for long stretches of time to forage for food. Keep watch for a while as they typically return to their young near dawn or dusk.

Regardless of the situation or who you call, wildlife authorities and wildlife rehabilitation centres often work together and will refer you to the appropriate organization based on the situation to ensure the best possible outcome for the orphaned animal.

Injured / Orphaned Wildlife	Wildlife Emergency	Wildlife Collision	Wildlife Poaching Violation Emergency
Cochrane Ecological Institute (CEI) 403 932 5632	Alberta Fish and Wildlife 403 932 2388 and press 2	RCMP Cochrane 403 851 8000	Report a Poacher (RAP) 24/7 hotline 1 800 642 3800
Alberta Institute for Wildlife Conservation (AIWC) 403 946 2361		Alberta Fish and Wildlife 403 932 2388 and press 2	
Calgary Wildlife Rehab 403 214 1312			



WE HAVE A NEW BOARD

committed, passionate, driven



Gord McDonald
Rosalind Greenwood
Lucy Curtis
McKenzie Latham

Renée Delorme
Shannon Bailey
Mike Decore

Wild priorities

- Advocates for our wild neighbours
- Garbage bylaw and littering
- Wild Smart Education
- Wildlife-vehicle collisions
- Wildlife access to the river over the berm
- Understand Spray Lake Sawmills clear-cutting plans in our area



JOIN THE TEAM!



BECOME A MEMBER, VOLUNTEER
www.braggcreekwild.ca



THE IMPORTANCE OF HABITAT CONNECTIVITY

Article first published in the High Country News and the chatter in the Wood

One of the principal factors to the success of nature's timeless renewal process rests on accessing sufficient spaces safely. Habitat connectivity is considered a cornerstone of a healthy ecosystem. Without it, wildlife, plants and ultimately, humans cannot thrive.

The National Wildlife Federation reminds us of the importance of habitat connectivity and its opposite - habitat fragmentation: "Wildlife moves both daily and seasonally to survive. However, the habitats animals rely on continue to be fragmented by housing, roads, fences, energy facilities, and other man-made barriers. As a result, animals are struggling more and more to reach food, water, shelter, and breeding sites."

Spring is a key time for wildlife. Mammals are on the move in search of food after enduring a lean winter. They are looking for shelter to birth and protect their young. Migratory birds are returning, settling along waterways, into birdhouses and forested areas. Pollinators, birds, bats, butterflies, moths, flies, beetles, wasps, small mammals, and most importantly, bees begin their part in plant rejuvenation. They visit flowers to drink nectar or feed off of pollen, transporting pollen grains while moving from one spot to another, providing essential food to other wildlife and humans alike.

The good news is we bipeds can help our wild neighbours.

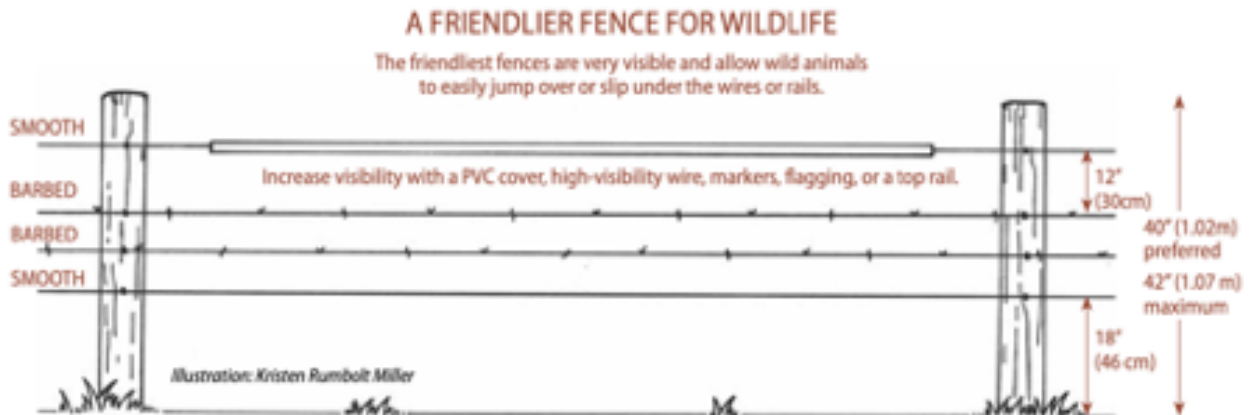
Drive Mindfully

May to the end of June are the deadliest months. Fawning season modifies wildlife behaviours and increases their susceptibility to vehicle collisions. An eye on the ditch, slower speeds, and a readiness to stop immediately saves lives. Road crossings happen throughout the day with dawn and dusk bringing the greatest movement.



Be Fence Friendly

A fence can be a barrier to wildlife migration and some are wildlife traps. The friendliest fences are highly visible, allowing wildlife to jump over or slip under the wires or rails. It is heartbreaking to witness an animal entangled in a wire fence or a baby stuck and unable to get to the adults on the other side. “Wildlife Friendly Fencing” by the Alberta Landholder’s Guide is an excellent resource. You can find it on the Bragg Creek Wild website.



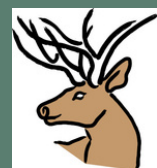
Man’s Best Friend Can Pose Peril to Wildlife

Dogs can cause disturbance, stress, habitat destruction, predation, disease transmission and the spread of invasive plant species. Dogs should be under control in wildlife areas. On-leash areas should always be respected, but especially during breeding season. Training is key. A well trained dog will respond to recall commands and will not chase wildlife. Training is all part of the fun and an important piece in practicing responsible dog ownership. (Note: Recently, local social media is reporting that daily occurrences of dogs roaming freely on local roads are being witnessed. Dog owners, please do your part to curtail this and consider installing a dog run, an enclosure or invisible fence to keep your pet on your own property).

Feline Friends Can Be Both Predator and Victim

Cats are best kept indoors for two reasons: to protect them from being hunted and protect the wildlife they hunt. It’s a win-win for the cat and their would-be prey. In Canada, cats kill an estimated 350 million birds every single year.

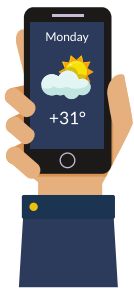
For more information, please visit our wild smart page on our website www.braggcreekwild.ca/wild-smart-ressources



WILD AND WISE

Tips for Safe and Respectful Wilderness Exploration

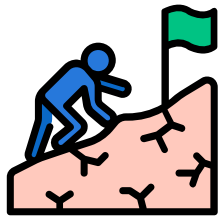
Heading out into the wilderness, it's important to be mindful of the wildlife out there and take steps to prevent encounters that can be dangerous to both humans and animals. Following these straightforward tips will ensure you'll have a safe and respectful outdoor experience in the wild.



Prepare Before You Head Out

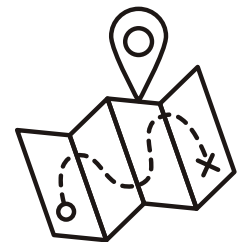
Do a Weather Check

Look at the region's forecast before heading out and pack for the unpredictable. Rain gear, warm layers, extra food and water are essentials in case of an unexpected overnight stay.



Know Your Limits

If possible, have a route plan for your outing with a time frame that matches your experience and fitness level. Turn around and head back if you start feeling tired or unwell.



Pack It Out and Pack It Back

Whatever you bring out with you must come back with you. Leave no trace of your visit. Bring along something to contain your garbage, including dog poop and don't leave your bagged dog poop on the side of the trail!



Your Adventure Begins

Stay On The Trail

Help protect the fragile ecosystem and prevent erosion by ignoring the presence of mud or puddles encountered on the trail. You'll also reduce your risk of getting lost.



Keep A Safe Distance

Don't approach wildlife or their young. If you see a baby animal alone, don't touch it! Mother deer stay away from their fawns to avoid leading predators to them and will return to move or feed them when safe, usually at dusk or dawn.



Do NOT Feed Wildlife

Human food does not offer the right nutrition for wildlife. In addition, feeding them provides animals with an alternative easy-to-get calorie source that can cause them to lose their natural fear of humans and lead to human/wildlife conflicts. The plant ecosystem lifecycle can be affected, as vegetation renewal relies on seeds from many trees and plants to be consumed and excreted by wildlife to germinate and reestablish new growth.



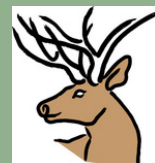
Make Noise

Let wildlife know you're there. Bear bells are not enough. Call out, clap, sing or talk loudly - especially near streams, dense vegetation and berry patches, on windy days and in areas of low visibility.



HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM TICKS & LIME DISEASE

<https://www.alberta.ca/lyme-disease-tick-surveillance.aspx>





Bear Presence and Bear Encounters on the Trail

Watch for fresh bear signs. Bear tracks, droppings, diggings, torn-up logs and turned-over rocks indicate that a bear has been in the area. If the signs are fresh, leave the area. If you do encounter a bear, know what to do to keep both yourself and the bear safe.

1. Stay calm and focused and don't make eye contact:

Bears are frightened of you and see direct eye contact as a threat. Don't panic, don't run away, don't make sudden movements and don't act in a threatening manner. Keep your eyes on the ground to appear non-threatening to the bear as you back away and speak in a calm voice to let it know that you are not a prey animal.

2. Make noise to scare it away:

If the bear continues to approach you, make noise by clapping your hands or by shouting loudly.

3. Carry bear spray and know how to use it:

If the bear charges you, use your bear spray. Aim for the bear's face and be prepared to use multiple bursts if necessary. Be mindful of the wind direction to avoid spraying yourself in the eyes.

4. Travel in groups:

A party of four is ideal according to Parks Canada.

5. Keep dogs leashed and under control:

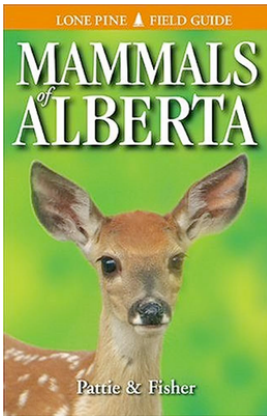
Uncontrolled dogs can provoke strong defensive behaviour in bears.



Remember, the wilderness is a beautiful and wild place that with a little respect and care, we can all enjoy together. So get out there, have fun and keep wildlife and humans safe!

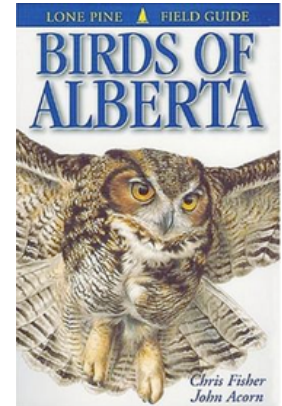


SUMMER READING



Essential guides to Alberta wildlife by Chris Fisher and John Acorn

These illustrated field guides help readers identify, understand and appreciate the mammals and birds of Alberta. They contains full-colour illustrations and detailed descriptions of hundreds of species, with each account including information on: * Size * Status * Habitat * Nesting * Feeding * Voice * Similar species cross-referenced * Best sites for viewing * Range maps showing seasonal occurrences of the bird and migration routes. * Colour-coded header bars and a quick reference guide make finding information fast and easy. Also included are a glossary of terms and a birder's checklist



Wildlife Mapping Citizen Research Project



Share your wildlife sightings. Scan the square for the intake form and visit our website for more information



EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

DRIVE WITH CAUTION

