



2019
Annual Report



OUR MISSION

The Calgary Wildlife Rehabilitation Society is dedicated to providing professional veterinary treatment of injured and orphaned wildlife, valuable outreach and education services to the community and engaging all volunteers in motivational work and skill building experience.



CALGARY WILDLIFE

2019 was an exciting year of change for our organization. Our previous Director of Animal Care, Jenna McFarland, left to pursue other career opportunities and we were thrilled to welcome Melanie Whalen into the vacant position! Melanie comes to us with a wealth of experience from a diverse career that includes wildlife research, rehabilitation, and husbandry spanning over 20 years. Melanie has brought many wonderful ideas to our clinic and we have been busily implementing them to improve our animal care and to create meaningful partnerships with other similar organizations. These partnerships include research projects, rounds for veterinary students and a pilot project to examine the impact of buildings and light on migratory species.

Another exciting development for Calgary Wildlife is the addition of several educational animals which will allow us to expand our educational programming. Our new educational animals are species that are often maligned --skunk, bat, and porcupine--which gives us the opportunity to create programming that dispels fears and myths and advocates for the important role that these species play in our eco-system. While both Oliver the skunk and Echo the bat made their educational debuts in 2019, we are developing their programs for wide use in school and community settings and anticipate being able to fully book these animals in autumn of 2020.

This year marked the beginning of a 4-year funding partnership with the City of Calgary. We are thrilled to be recognized for the essential work that we do in the city and look forward to collaborating with the City of Calgary with regards to wildlife rehabilitation.

Photo Credit: Harshad Karkera

As we look forward to 2020, we are eagerly planning enclosure and clinic expansions which will include a specialized building just for bats to provide appropriate isolation for the many bat patients that we receive. These changes are all in service of the wild lives we are privileged to be able to care for. Added enclosures are only possible through the generosity of the the community and our donors. We are grateful to all our collaborators, to our community partners, to our donors, and always to our team of volunteers who help to make all our work possible. Cheers to another year of change and growth.

Andrea Hunt
Executive Director

Melanie Whalen
Director of Animal Care



CREATING ANIMAL COMMUNITY

Calgary Wildlife is committed to creating and contributing to our community. In addition to our contributions to the Calgary Migratory Species Response Team, which are featured on this page, we have focused heavily this year on creating new partnerships. One of those partnerships is with the University of Calgary Veterinary program, a natural collaboration considering the University of Calgary Spynhill campus property borders our property! This year we invited veterinary students from the avian and ecosystem health clubs onsite for rounds in order to provide an opportunity for these veterinary students to learn about wildlife anatomy and health. In addition, we provide carcasses for the anatomy/disease lab at the University for study. This partnership provides valuable learning for the next generation of veterinary professionals and creates opportunities for future collaborations between our facility of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Calgary. Calgary Wildlife is also providing grazing land for many of the horses that the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine tends to. This area of our 10 acre property is not currently being used and we are happy to be able to help the University of Calgary with their herd.

In 2017 we spearheaded a support group –Professionals in Animal Care (PAC)– after recognizing a gap in support services for our staff and other professional animal care workers. The support group was intended to empower animal care professionals who are struggling with exposure to traumatic experiences that are encountered in their everyday work with animals. The feedback from the support group was positive but attendance was low, a common problem with support groups. In alignment with research on best practices in the field of front-line workers, the support group was evolved into a peer support network (PAC Peer Support Network) in which professional animal care organizations are invited to join and appoint their own peer support individual within their organization to provide emotional support to peers, to foster resiliency and to raise awareness within organizations about mental health issues. In November of 2019 we organized training through the Canadian Mental Health Association for peer support individuals within our organization and other animal care organizations. In 2020 our goal is to springboard from this training and build our mental health community further. A network of organizations provides an additional level of support and allows for larger conversations and support within collaborative animal care spaces.

RESEARCH

We are quite excited to be collaborating in a research project with the Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative and the University of Saskatchewan in which we provide data for their study on the prevalence of rabies and cat attacks on bats. In 2019 we received 47 bats and we anticipate receiving more in 2020 as we create a specialized bat enclosure. Other research projects we were involved with are a hare and rabbit study looking at viral infections within the city limits with the University of Calgary Faculty of Veterinary Medicine as well as a raptor sensory study that the University of Lethbridge is running looking at sensory adaptations in birds of prey.



CMSRT

This year we were one of the founding members of the Calgary Migratory Species Response Team (CMSRT), a pilot project started by Melanie Whalen, Kathleen Johnson, and Dr. Scott Lovell (St. Mary's University) to help determine the extent to which migratory birds and bats are affected by city buildings and lighting. Though only 7 buildings were included in the pilot, throughout the autumn migratory window 93 individuals were found, 17 of which ended up at Calgary Wildlife for treatment. All animals except one that came from this project to our clinic were successfully released to continue on their migratory routes. We are excited by this partnership and look forward to collaborating next year.



ADDITIONS TO EDUCATION

As part of our continuing commitment to public education we are pleased to be adding two new educational educational animals to our roster: Echo, a Silver-haired bat and Oliver, a Stripe skunk. Echo came to us in 2019 with an injury in his wing. Despite surgery and our best attempt to rehabilitate him, his wing did not heal properly and he was not suitable for release. He is a mild tempered bat and will make an interesting addition to our educational program! Oliver was found as a baby by a member of the public and raised in their home before coming to us. We tried hard to wild him up, but he was too habituated to be released. He will be an excellent advocate for why wildlife should remain wild!



OUR IMPACT

2,411

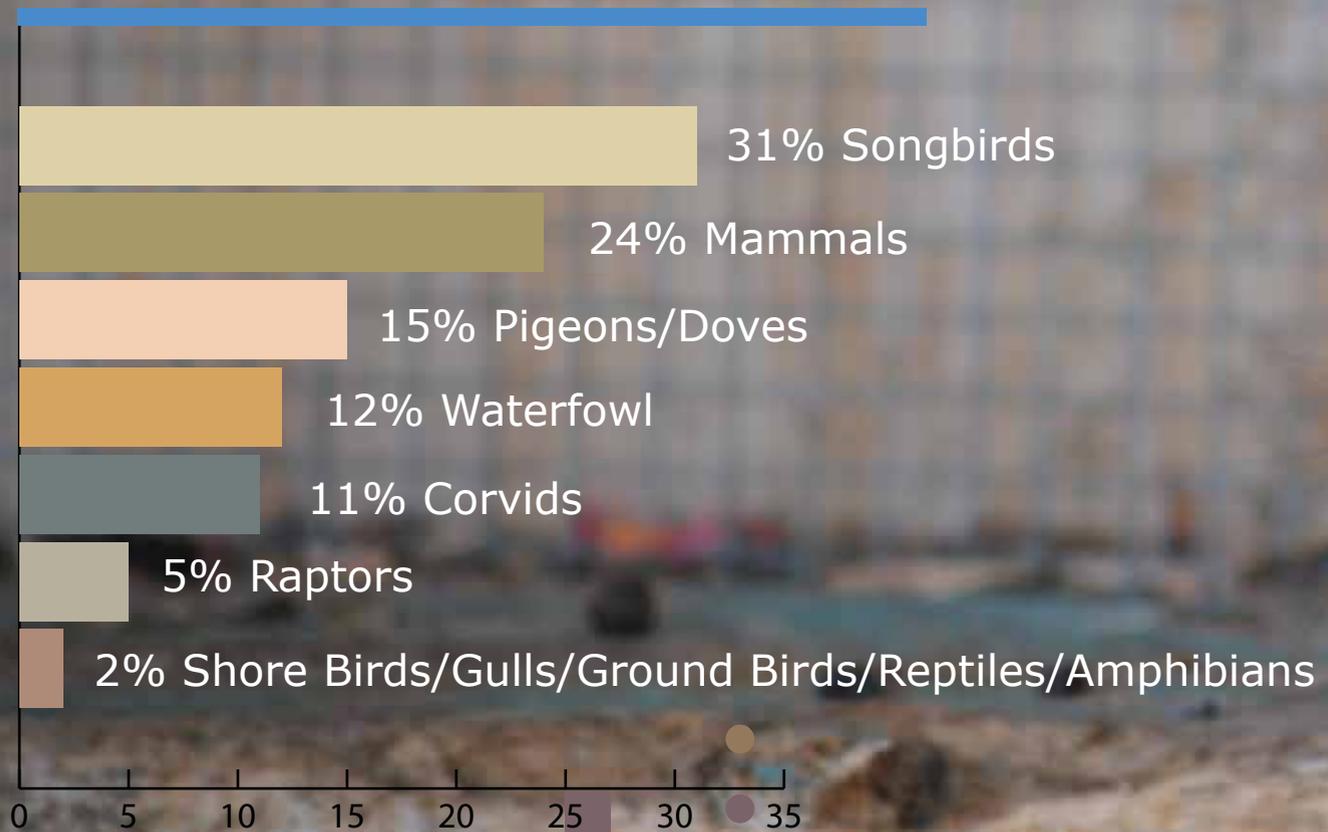
PATIENTS SEEN
IN HOSPITAL

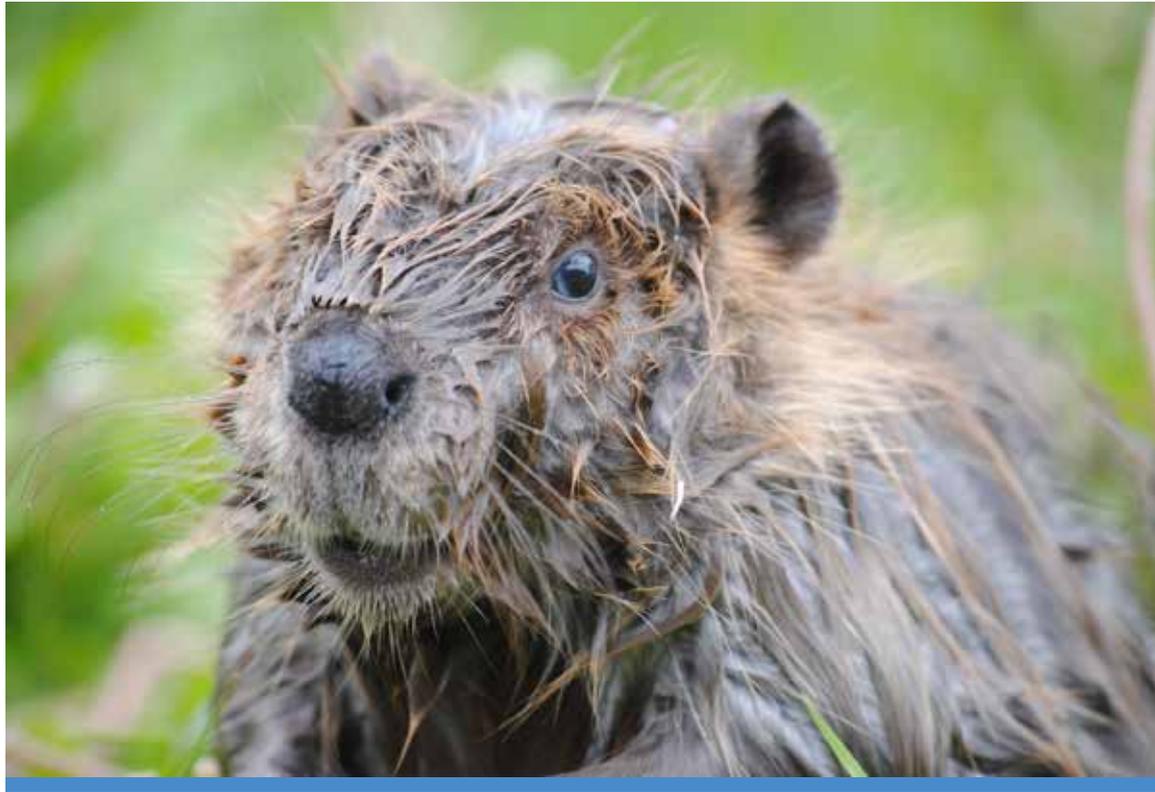
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EDUCATION
PROGRAMS

820

PATIENTS
RELEASED





BEAVER ALERT

One of the long-term patients we received this year is a beaver kit who was found at only a week old, alone and crying on the banks of the Elbow river in May. Beaver kits are never left alone by their parents: this coupled with the damaged lodge discovered nearby led us to believe that something had happened to his parents. Beavers form strong familial bonds and require intense care in their first months of life which meant a lot of focused care and interrupted sleep for our staff! As the summer and autumn progressed he continued to grow and exhibit normal beaver behaviors creating a lodge

for himself in his winter enclosure. Beaver kits have a long rehabilitative arch, needing to stay in care for 2 years to mirror their development in the wild. This means fresh boughs, fresh pools of water and fresh greens and rodent chow provided daily, all expensive and time-consuming. We anticipate investing \$10,000 into his care over the next year and a half. He is a delightful patient, full of charm and interesting behaviours. Still, we can't wait to see him released in 2021!



A PELICAN STORY

One of our more dramatic wildlife stories this year has been around an American white pelican that came to our clinic in April after being found beneath a power line amidst other deceased individuals. After a thorough examination it was determined that he had fractures on both of his legs. Our team mobilized quickly to provide him with the needed surgery to heal his legs; the legs were pinned, stabilizing him so he could stand while the bones healed. During this time he couldn't have access to water lest there be a risk of infection. After 3 weeks the pins were removed but this wasn't the

end of his rehabilitation! He remained in care as we continued with the rehabilitative process of strengthening his feet and legs. 44 days and a whole lot of fish later, we were thrilled to successfully release him at Badger lake, close to where he was found. He circled around once and then went off to find his brethren. We are grateful to Dr. Brookfield, Dr. Duerr, and Dr. Miller for their expertise and specialized skills during his surgery. Thank-you to Altalink for donating to his care!

Photo courtesy of Altalink

FINANCIALS

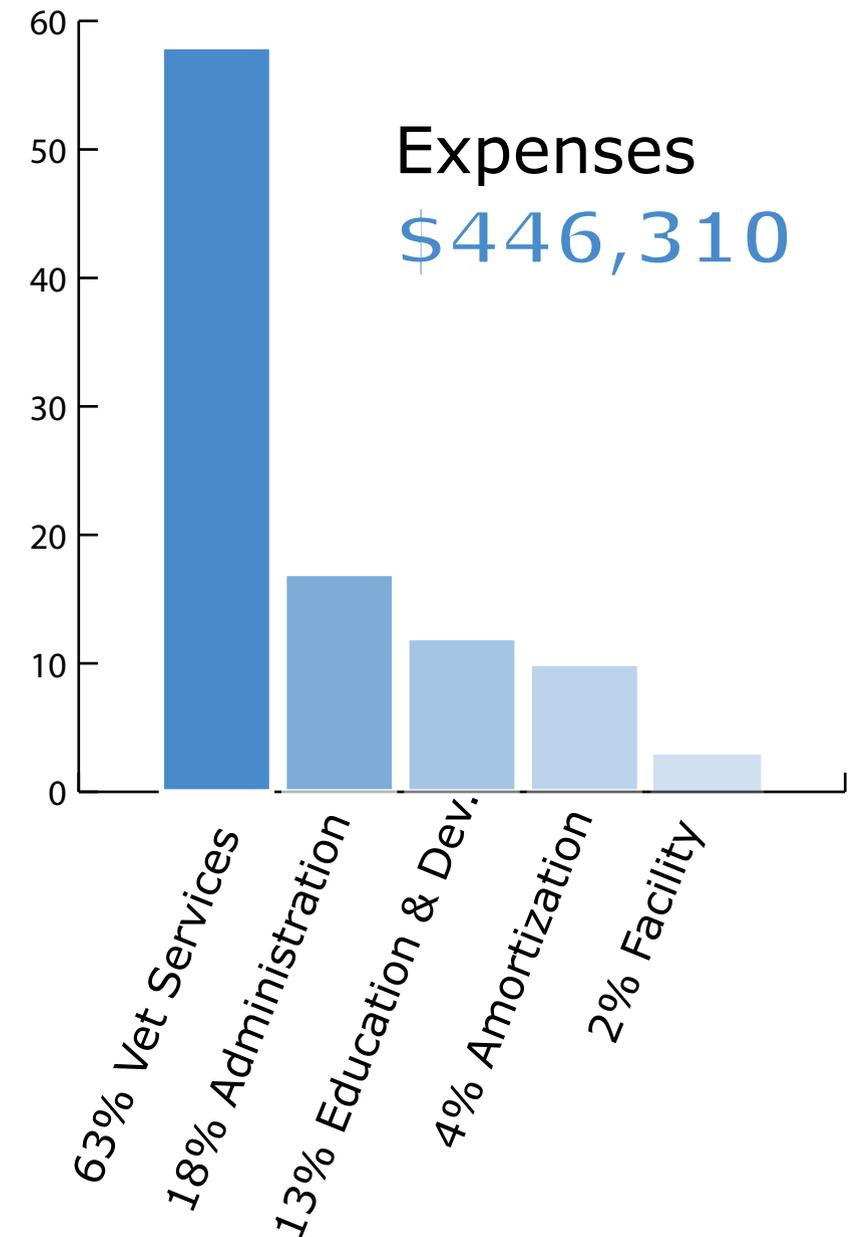
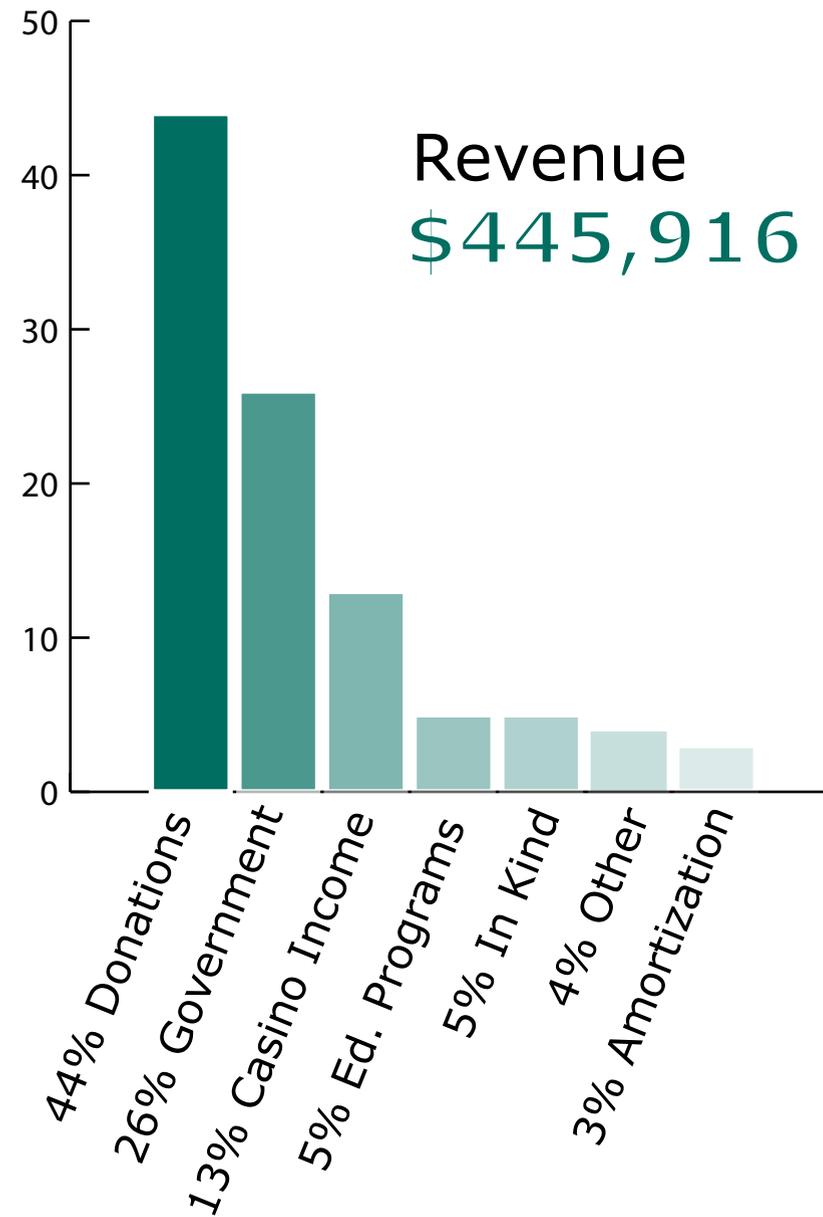


10,936 staff hours
from 19 employees

\$185
per patient



80 Volunteers donating 3190+ hours annually



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Thank-you to our staff, our board of directors, our volunteers, our members, our funders, and our donors for a great year!

**some employees are seasonal*



HOW TO HELP

DONATE. Save wild lives by donating money or wish list items today.

LIKE. Stay connected by following us on our social media channels.
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calgarywildlife.org