
Getting to Know Crows



Crows are considered to be among the most adaptable and intelligent birds in the world.

- ✦ Crows have a varied and evolved language. They can mimic the sounds made by other animals and they learn to associate noises with events, especially with the distribution of food.
- ✦ Well adapted to diverse habitats, crows are found across North America. They thrive in cities and suburban areas where they live in close association with humans.
- ✦ Crows roost at night in large flocks of up to several thousand during the winter. During the day, smaller groups may fly up to fifty miles in pursuit of food.
- ✦ Crows are omnivorous, which means they eat whatever is available to them in their habitat including insects, small amphibians and snakes, earthworms, eggs and nestling birds, and clams, mussels, and other salt-water invertebrates. They also scavenge carrion and garbage and eat wild and cultivated fruit and vegetables.

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Give wildlife a helping hand.

The goal of the Mercer County Wildlife Center is to protect the future of native wildlife species through education, rehabilitation, and release.

You can help the Center meet this goal by donating your time or resources.

Volunteer opportunities:

- ✦ Animal technicians - Dependable, compassionate people to help feed and administer medications to the animals in our care.
- ✦ Community outreach volunteers - Enthusiastic people to greet the public at community events, raise funds by selling merchandise, and educate others about wildlife by distributing literature.
- ✦ Publications - Writers, copy editors, and layout people to help develop our newsletters, brochures, and handouts.
- ✦ Publicity - Volunteers to write press releases that help spread the word about the Center.
- ✦ Flea market - People to help run our flea market fund raisers. We also gratefully accept certain donated items.

For more information about these volunteer positions, call the Volunteer Coordinator at (609) 397-8435.

Wish list items:

Caring for the injured, ill, or displaced animals that come through our door involves various supplies, many of which you probably use in your own home. Visit our web site to see our wish list.

Mercer County Wildlife Center



Coexisting with Crows



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www.mercercounty.org/mcwc/mcwc.htm



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- ✦ With a preference for coniferous trees, crows build their nests in woods or isolated trees at least sixty feet above ground. Nests are solidly built of branches and twigs and are lined with bark, plant fibers, mosses, twine, and other found materials.
- ✦ Paired male and female crows share in the incubation of four to six eggs, which hatch in eighteen days. Young crows first fly when they are about one month old. Frequently, at least one young bird will remain with its parents through the next nesting season to help care for new nestlings by bringing them food and guarding the nest.
- ✦ Within recent years, crow populations have expanded in urban and suburban areas. Wildlife biologists suggest that the increase will soon level off because although crows can find unlimited sources of food, they have begun to run out of potential nesting sites in the area.

Coexisting with Crows

Crows have long endured persecution by humans because of their taste for corn and other agricultural crops, because they occasionally raid the nests of other birds, and because they are often suspected of damage that has actually been caused by other animals. They have been shot, poisoned, and bombed while roosting, but they persist by adapting to new circumstances and expanding their range.

Crows actually have proven themselves to be beneficial by eating insects and larvae that damage crops.

Here are some ideas for coexisting with crows:

- ✦ **Dispose of trash** – Crows are attracted to food scraps in garbage and compost piles. Dispose of trash in secure cans and make sure the lid fits tightly. Do not put food of any kind in compost piles; instead, bury food in an underground composter or use a lidded worm box.
- ✦ **Avoid leaving pet food outdoors** – If you cannot avoid feeding dogs or cats outdoors, pick up food and water bowls,

as well as leftovers and spilled food, as soon as your pets have finished eating.

- ✦ **Avoid nesting territories** – While crows have young in the nest and on the ground learning to fly, they may defend adjoining territory by dive-bombing other animals and people. If possible, stay away from nesting territories until the young have fledged and the parents are no longer as protective.

You can protect vegetable gardens and fruit trees until crops are ready for harvest by trying the following:

- ✦ **Use bird netting** – Protect trees and shrubs with bird netting, which you can purchase in a variety of lengths and widths at garden and hardware stores. Tie the netting securely at the base of the plant or on the trunk of the tree to prevent birds from gaining access from below. Harvest crops immediately as they ripen.
- ✦ **Cover corn rows** – Crows are particularly fond of young corn plants. As soon as corn has been planted, protect germinating plants with row cover until they are about 8" tall.

Thanks to the HOWL Wildlife Rehabilitation Center in Washington state for providing the information in this pamphlet.