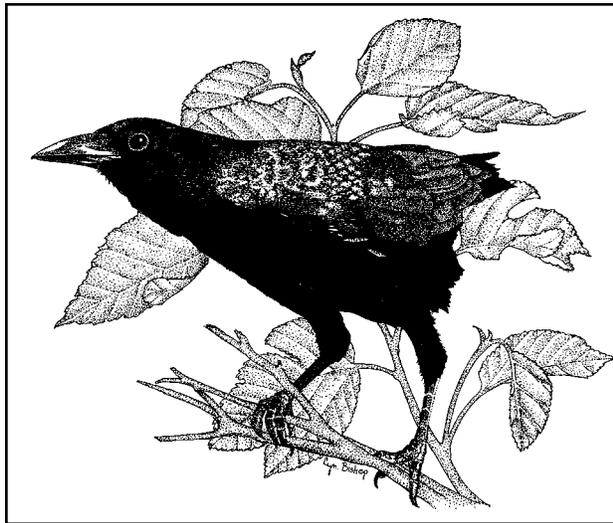
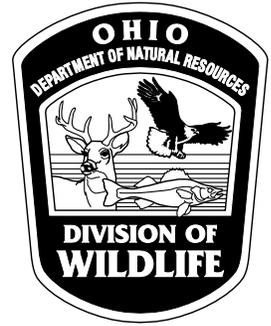


American Crow

Scientific Name: *Corvus brachyrhynchos*



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Introduction

The American crow is a bird that, depending on who you talk to, is nothing more than a flying pest. Not a favorite among farmers, the crow will pull up corn sprouts and eat soft corn, eggs, fruit, and young poultry. Thus the development of the "Scare-" crow. But because of its apparent intelligence and wariness, few crows actually fall for the dummy in the field that is supposed to keep them at bay. Crows are adaptable and this ability has allowed them to establish themselves throughout the state from rural farmlands to central cities.

Description

The American crow is an all-black relative of the blue jay, magpie, and raven. Chunky and heavy-billed, it is nearly as large as the familiar red-tailed hawk, but can easily be distinguished from a hawk at a distance by its frequent, steady wingbeats.

You usually don't even need to see a crow to know one is in the vicinity. Its "Caw-caw-caw" call is familiar to many Ohioans.

Habitat and Habits

Crows are more abundant in Ohio today than they were when unbroken forests covered the state at the time of European settlement. They thrive in habitats with open fields (where they feed) and trees (where they nest and roost). Crows are found in all 88 Ohio counties, but are most numerous in the more heavily forested farmland of southeastern region of the state.

Crows begin to flock in late summer, roosting together at night and dispersing over a large area to feed during the day. Flight lanes to and from the roost tend to remain the same, day after day. As cold weather approaches, the birds may begin to move southward. Crow migration is not as orderly as in many other bird species; it may occur over a period of several months. Most Ohio nesters probably move south in winter, replaced within the state by immigrants from farther north as the season wears on. Mansfield is the site of a longtime winter roost that is usually inhabited by several thousand crows.

Reproduction and Care of the Young

Crows mate the second spring after they have hatched. As with other birds that mate for life, they exhibit limited courtship behavior. They will nest in a wide variety of trees, including large, mature conifers, although oaks are most often used. The nest is built about 30 feet above the ground, and typically close to the trunk of the tree. Nests are about a foot in diameter, constructed of branches and twigs, and lined with strips of bark, grasses, mosses, and fine roots. Both sexes work on nest construction which is usually complete in two days.

The female is almost entirely responsible for incubating the eggs. The male spends most of the day nearby, occasionally bringing food to his mate. Both adults will care for the young; they regurgitate food to the begging nestlings.



A few days before the young leave the nest, they can be seen standing on the edge, exercising their wings. Later, they hop awkwardly about the tree before trying a few short flights. Once out of the nest tree, the young quickly scatter. Parents continue to feed them until they are strong enough to make extended flights and feed themselves.

Management Plans

The Ohio Division of Wildlife doesn't manage habitat specifically for crows. However, crows can be found throughout the state and at many wildlife areas where suitable habitat exists. The management activities that occur on these areas and elsewhere around the state are designed to benefit crows and a host of other wildlife species. Each year wildlife biologists evaluate data and establish a limited hunting season for crows.

Viewing Opportunities

Crows are found throughout Ohio. You may not need to go any further than your own backyard to see crows. They can be found in areas where open fields and trees intersect. A drive along rural roads provides an opportunity to see crows.

Do Something Wild!

The Division of Wildlife manages for wildlife diversity in the state. We attempt to create and/or conserve the habitat that will support as wide a variety of wildlife as possible. Many species like the crow can be hunted in the state, but many more are not. The Division has a special program to manage and research nongame species that is supported by the generous citizens of the state of Ohio. With money either donated through the state income tax checkoff, by the purchase of wildlife license plates, or direct contributions to the Endangered Species Special Account, the Division is able to purchase critical habitat that is essential to sustaining many species of wildlife and to implement special efforts like the reintroduction of the osprey and the trumpeter swan to the state.

Contributions to our Wildlife Diversity program are accepted throughout the year. To make a donation, please send a check to: Endangered Species Special Account, Ohio Division of Wildlife, 2045 Morse Road, Bldg. G, Columbus, Ohio 43229-6693. All contributions, whether made on your income tax return or directly, are tax deductible.

At a Glance

Mating: Monogamous; birds form a pair and work together to rear the young.

Peak Breeding Activity: Mid-April; crows nest mid-March to mid-June.

Incubation: 18 days

Young are Hatched: Most hatch May 1-15

Clutch Size: 3-7 eggs; 5 is average

Young Fledge: 30 days after hatching

Number of Broods per Year: 1; if first nest is disrupted they may re-nest

Adult Weight: 16-20 ounces

Adult Body Length: 17-21 inches including the tail

Adult Wingspan: 33-39 inches

Life Expectancy: 15 months average; maximum known 9 years

Migration Patterns: Most winter in southern Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee. Crows begin to migrate to Ohio in January and February; they depart to the south for the winter gradually between September and January.

Typical Foods: Waste grain (mostly corn), insects, carrion, bird eggs, young birds, small mammals, and the fruits of mulberry, blackberry, and poison ivy.

Native to Ohio: Yes

