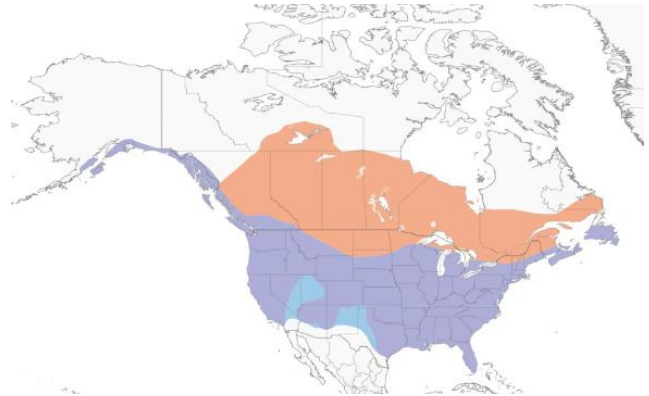


American Crow



Classification

Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Aves
Order: Passeriformes
Family: Corvidae
Genus: *Corvus*
Species: *brachyrhynchos*



Range, Habitat, Conservation Status

- **Range:** Native to North America and can be found in the lower part of Canada and through the continental United States.
- **Habitat:** Common in any open habitats, including fields, open woodlands, marshes, and cities, thriving around humans.
- **Conservation Status:** Least Concern

Physical Characteristics

- **Body Length:** 15.8 to 20.9 inches (40-53 cm)
- **Wingspan:** 33.5 to 39.4 inches (85-100 cm)
- **Weight:** 11.2 to 21.9 ounces (316-620 g)
- **Lifespan:** The oldest recorded bird was 17 years old in the wild. In human care an individual was recorded to live 59 years.
- **Identifying Traits:** Adults are completely black birds with glossy and slightly iridescent looking feathers. They have long legs, thick necks, and heavy, straight beaks. The young differ as they have blue eyes and pink inside their mouths. This fades as the bird becomes an adult. They are commonly confused with ravens; however, they are smaller, and their wings and tails do not come to a point.

Behaviors

- **Feeding:** Eat a vast array of foods, including grains, seeds, nuts, fruits, berries, and many kinds of small animals such as earthworms and mice. They eat many insects, including some crop pests, and eat aquatic animals such as fish, young turtles, crayfish, mussels, and clams. They also predate nests and eat the eggs and nestlings of many species including sparrows, robins, jays, terns, loons, and eiders. Also eat carrion and garbage although this makes up a very small part of the diet.

- **Breeding:** March through August
- **Nesting:** Typically hide their nests in a crotch near the trunk of a tree or on a horizontal branch, generally towards the top third or quarter of the tree. Both the male and female help build the nest using medium sized twigs and lining it with pine needles, weeds, soft bark, and/or animal hair. They lay 3 to 9 eggs.
- **Migration:** Permanent resident in many areas; withdraws in fall from northern regions, and flocks spend the winter in some areas a short distance south of the breeding range.
- **Call:** A series of loud caws. You may also hear crows making a “subsong”: a mixture of hoarse or grating coos, caws, rattles, and clicks.

Fun Facts!

- American Crows have an unusual social system - they are cooperative breeders. This means that they may stay close to the place where they were born to help raise young and defend the area against predators.
- American Crows are nearly twice the size of a Blue Jay and about two-thirds the size of a Common Raven.
- American Crows are highly social birds, more often seen in groups than alone. Winter roosts of American Crows sometimes number in the hundreds of thousands.
- Crows have been known to make and use tools. For example, a crow in human care used a cup to carry water over to a bowl of dry mash and shaped a piece of wood to stick into a hole in a fence post in search of food.
- Crows are songbirds and part of the Corvidae family. This family of songbird also includes Jays, Magpies, and Ravens.

Importance

- Crows serve as seed dispersers as they eat fruit and cache nuts. They also scavenge on carcasses, which speeds up decomposition. They eat insect pests, which may prevent damage to crops in agricultural areas.

Sources

- <https://abcbirds.org/bird/american-crow/>
- https://animaldiversity.org/accounts/Corvus_brachyrhynchos/
- <https://ebird.org/species/amecro>
- <https://www.audubon.org/field-guide/bird/american-crow>
- https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/American_Crow/lifehistory