



Magnuson Nature Programs

Crows



Crows are black birds known for their intelligence and adaptability, and for their loud harsh “caw.” There are about 40 species of crow, coming in different sizes. The American Crows that are seen in Magnuson Park are about 17 inches in length, with a 36-inch wingspan. The American crow is completely black with a stout bill and a short, square, fan-shaped tail. Crows often forage on the ground and have a distinctive hopping gait. The Northwestern Crow is similar in appearance but smaller, has a rounder tail, and a lower, huskier “caw”.

Crows sometimes make and use tools.

Examples include a captive crow using a cup to carry water over to a bowl of dry mash; shaping a piece of wood and then sticking it into a hole in a fence post in search of food; and breaking off pieces of pine cone to drop on tree climbers near a nest.

Did you know?

Crows are known for their problem-solving skills. Even when presented with challenges they haven't seen before, crows will experiment to solve a problem.

What do Crows eat?

Crows eat just about anything! Crows are omnivorous, feeding on whatever is available. Crows eat earthworms, small animals, seeds, fruit, but also garbage, carrion and chicks that they rob from other birds' nests. Crows will follow other predators or hunters to take advantage of an easy meal.

A crow will carry food to a hiding place and return later when it's needed. If another animal is watching, they'll wait and hide the food when it's safe from prying eyes. Now





Hey, Nature Detectives!

Crows nest in Magnuson Park. If you look up high in the trees, you may spot a crow's nest or two.

Crows work together in large groups to protect their young nestlings from predators, in a behavior called mobbing. If you keep your eyes and ears open, you may see the crows mob an eagle or other predator that is hunting for a crow-baby snack.

Did you know?

Crows recognize human faces and remember how individuals treated them. If you mistreat a crow, or a member of its family, the crow will not only remember you, but will tell his friends about you as well.



Crows are cooperative breeders, which means they often stay close to the place where they were born and help raise and defend the area's young chicks. When it's time to have offspring, a mating pair will build a nest 15 to 60 feet above the ground using branches, twigs, hair, twine, bark, plant fibers, mosses, and other materials.

Habitat

American Crows are common birds of fields, open woodlands, and forests. They thrive around people, and you'll often find them in agricultural fields, lawns, parking lots, athletic fields, roadsides, towns, and city garbage dumps.



More interesting facts:

Crows have the biggest brain to body ratio among all bird species.

American crows often forage in large groups. A group of crows is called a murder.