



# Crows

*(American Turba)*

Understanding the habits and habitats of wildlife, and taking appropriate measures to prevent unwanted encounters, will help everyone to continue to enjoy the wonderful wild resources that still exist in New Jersey.

## Coexisting with 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, clams, mussels, and other salt-water invertebrates. They also scavenge carrion and garbage and eat wild and cultivated fruit and vegetables.

### Getting to Know 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 lids fit 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.

### Protecting vegetable gardens and fruit trees

**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.

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## About Mercer County Wildlife Center

The Mercer County Wildlife Center is a state and federally licensed facility that cares for injured, ill and displaced wildlife. The Center provides these animals with the medical treatment and a temporary refuge before releasing them back into an appropriate wild habitat.

For more information regarding the work we do and the animals who share our environment, including a series of printable brochures that provide tips for coexisting peacefully with those animals, visit us online at:

[www.mercercountyparks.org/facilities/wildlife-center](http://www.mercercountyparks.org/facilities/wildlife-center)

For information on protecting bee hives and livestock, contact the Division of Fish and Wildlife Wildlife Control Unit at (908) 735-8793.

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Wildlife Center Friends is a 501(C)(3) non-profit organization formed to support the activities of the Mercer County Wildlife Center. • [www.wildlifecenterfriends.org](http://www.wildlifecenterfriends.org)