



# YYC Young Citizen Scientists

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**(Insert photo of BF here)**

**Common Name:** American Crow

**Scientific Name:** *Corvus brachyrhynchos*

The American crow is one of the most intelligent birds and it part of the corvid bird family. This species prefers to inhabit open woody areas, forests, parking lots, inner city parks, and garbage dumps. Crows are known for their ability to adapt to a variety of urban settings and industrialized landscapes and are found across North America and beyond. These birds are opportunistic, meaning they will eat just about anything they can find! They're omnivores, eating a mixture of seeds, fruits, plants, small animals like mice or earthworms, decaying carcasses, and even eggs from other birds. As we can see form their diet, these species play a large role in population control and waste management. When acting as consumers, they are controlling the population numbers of other species which may get out of hand otherwise (i.e. field mice). Additionally, crows are unique in how they can digest carcasses, this effectively limits the spread of disease and odour. Lastly



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crows also act as seed dispersers! By eating the seeds of plants and fruits, they disperse the seeds across the land through their feces allowing the plants to grow elsewhere.

### Unique qualities:

- Although ravens and crows may sound similar, you can tell the difference because crows have a higher pitched caw compared to the croaking sound of a raven. Listen to the distinct CAW [HERE](#).
- Crows are very smart birds; they often make and use tools to find food and protect themselves. Sometimes they will break off pieces of pinecones to drop on tree climbers if they come too close to their nest and young.
- Crows are creative in their hunt for food. They will sometimes steal food from other animals using distraction.
- A group of crows is called "A Murder"
- Crows come together in large groups in the winter to sleep in communal roosts

### Human actions that enhance or threaten their existence:

These species are not currently endangered. These species have learned to adapt to urban settings and living within cities across North America. Their intelligence allows them to use human activities to their advantage. For example, crows will often use dumpsters or parking lots to find food. They will often create nests on or near buildings. They have also been recorded purposely dropping hard shelled nuts on the road for cars to run over, so they can eat the insides.



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