

American crow *Corvus brachyrhynchos*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Passeriformes

Family: Corvidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The American crow is a large bird (17 to 21 inches) with a large, strong bill. Its nostrils are covered by bristles. Both the male and the female are entirely black in color.

BEHAVIORS

The American crow is a common, statewide, permanent resident of Illinois. Some crows do migrate, and those that migrate start spring migration in February or March. Nesting season occurs during the period March through May with one brood raised per year. The nest is built of sticks, bark and vines and lined with bark, mosses, grasses, feathers and other materials. It is placed in the crotch of a tree or near the tree trunk on a horizontal branch, from 10 to 70 feet above the ground. Both the male and the female construct the nest in a process that takes nearly two weeks. The female lays two to seven green-blue to pale-blue eggs that are marked with darker colors. The incubation period lasts for 18 days, and both male and female share incubation duties. Fall migration includes mainly crows moving into Illinois from more northerly states and northern Illinois crows moving into central Illinois. The American crow makes a “caw” noise. It eats corn, sumac berries, poison ivy berries, insects, dead animals, eggs and nestlings of other birds and most anything edible. It lives in open or semi-open areas, woodland edges, woodlands, shores, river groves and farm fields.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; coniferous forests; southern Illinois lowlands; upland deciduous forests

Prairie Habitats

none

© Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 2017. Biodiversity of Illinois.