

Crows

Crows are a federally protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. In North Carolina, there are two species of crow: the American crow and the fish crow.

What kind of damage is caused by crows? Crows will cause damage to agricultural fields when it is newly planted, starting to sprout and a mature crop.

Can a WCA write a depredation permit? A federal permit must be obtained for any migratory bird, unless there is a federal depredation order specifying otherwise (see lethal options). The USDA Wildlife Services facilitates the procurement of federal depredation permits through the US Fish and Wildlife Service in Atlanta, Georgia. A state depredation permit is always required regardless of whether a federal permit is needed, a WCA can write the state permit.

Can crows be relocated? No, under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act it is illegal to take, possess, import, export, transport, sell, purchase, barter, or offer for sale, purchase, or barter, any migratory bird without a federal permit.

What can I do with sick or injured crows? There are licensed wildlife [rehabilitators](#) across the state that can take in sick or injured birds. Advise the individual to leave the bird alone for 24 hours to see if the bird can recover on its own before contacting a rehabilitator.

Are there any safety concerns? No, however it is good practice to wear gloves when handling any animal.

Non-lethal Options:

- See the [General Considerations for Handling Wildlife](#) document for general ways to prevent damage from wildlife.
- Crows that are inside a structure can be caught but must be released on site.
- Exclusion
 - Netting can be placed over gardens that prevent crows from having access.
- Harassment
 - Crows can recognize when one of their own is dead and will consequently mark the area as unsafe and avoid it. Crows can be dispersed by hanging a [crow effigy](#) (fake, dead looking crow) in the area where the birds are roosting.
 - Mylar strips or old CDs will create a bright glare in the sun and work as a visual deterrent for birds.
 - Loud noises such as clapping, yelling, or banging pots and pans can deter birds if they have just started coming into the area and is persistent every time the birds land.
 - There are products advertised to deter birds from agricultural fields such as bird bangers or propane cannons.

Lethal Options:

- Crows can be taken during the established hunting season with the proper licenses.
- Federal permits are required unless acting under the circumstances described in depredation order 50 CFR 21.43.
 - Under depredation order 50 CFR 21.43, no federal permit is required to take crows¹ under any of the following circumstances (must attempt non-lethal methods of control first):
 - Where they are causing serious damage to agricultural or horticultural crops or to livestock feed.
 - When they cause a health hazard or structural property damage.
 - To protect a species that is recognized by the Federal or State Government as endangered, threatened or a species of special concern.
 - USDA Wildlife Services facilitates the procurement of federal depredation permits through the US Fish and Wildlife Service in Atlanta, Georgia.
 - Active nests (nests with eggs or nestlings) are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and cannot be removed without a federal permit. Inactive or empty nests can be removed without any permits.
- Outside of the hunting season, a state depredation permit is always required to take crows.

¹The following crows included under the 50 CFR 21.43 depredation order: American crow, fish crow, northwestern crow.