

Crows by Rebecca Lexa

Sunrise and sunset can be surprisingly noisy times as flocks of crows begin and end their days. You may have heard their raucous calls as they fly overhead or gather in the branches of shore pine and Sitka spruce trees.

These omnivorous birds will eat all sorts of local foods, from shellfish and crabs to bugs and berries. They've been known to open mussels by carrying them into the sky and dropping them on rocks. Similarly to gulls, they're not above getting into garbage, but can be bit more cautious about it.

Crows are social, and larger flocks may include several dozen individuals. This helps them to look for more opportunities for food, and to have more eyes looking out for predators like marsh hawks, ravens and coyotes. If a predator is sighted the crows may mob it and chase it away, and are especially aggressive during nesting season.

Crows are highly intelligent and enjoy play as much as work, and can be found using sticks, crab legs and other objects as toys. They will also play games with each other like tag, and seem to enjoy rejoining their flock in the evening when it's time to roost, sometimes circling around together in the air and cawing loudly before heading for the trees. They're very good parents, and next spring you may see this year's young helping to care for the new brood. Crows may be everyday occurrences in the area, but spend a little time watching them and you'll see just how remarkable they are!