

The Hooded Crow



Image courtesy of Robbie Murphy

Scientific Name: *Corvus cornix*
Irish Name: Caróg liath

Hooded Crows are medium-sized birds. The typical image of a crow is of a completely black bird but the crow that is found in Ireland is the Hooded Crow and it is black and grey. It has a distinctive black head and throat, which looks like a hood, along with black wings and tail. Its body is a light grey. Hooded Crows are very closely related to the Carrion Crows (which are all black) and until recently they were considered to be the same species. However only the grey and black Hooded Crow is found in Ireland and north and west Scotland, while only the all black Carrion Crow is found in England, Wales and south and east Scotland. Other species of crow include the Rook, Jackdaw, Chough, Raven, Magpie and Jay.

Hooded Crows are common throughout Ireland and can be found in most habitats. They make loud, harsh calls, one of which includes 'kraa, kraa', which may be the reason they are known as crows. They are not a protected species as they are not considered to be at risk.

Like other crows, they are very clever birds.



Food

Hooded Crows, like other crows, are scavengers. They usually eat dead and decaying animals (known as carrion) rather than hunt live prey. They also eat insects, young birds and eggs and plant materials, such as seeds. Eating meat and plants makes them omnivorous.



FACT FILE

Wingspan: Approximately 1 m.

Colour: Grey and black. A black head, throat, tail and wings, with grey body.

Food: Insects, seeds, carrion (dead and decaying animals), young birds and eggs. Along the coast they feed on crabs and shellfish from the shore.

Eggs: 4 or 5 per clutch.

Guarding the Garden

Crows can be very troublesome for farmers and gardeners, especially in the spring when seeds have just been planted. To deter them, many farmers and gardeners put up scarecrows (can you see where the name came from?) to scare them away. They are usually made from old clothes stuffed with hay or straw and mounted on a pole. Crows think there are humans in the field so they are more cautious about entering the field.

