



CROWTOWN PROJECT DESCRIPTION phase I

One of the great animal phenomena of the world is the congregation of large numbers of birds into a single group to sleep together. Such communal sleeping groups are known as "roosts." These roosts can be a destructive force. The Pomerene Center for the Arts is interested in building an understanding of Coshocton's winter crow roost.

Coshocton has carried the nickname Crowtown for some time. No one seems to know exactly where the nickname came from but it is somehow linked to motorcycles. In 2008, when crows began to congregate for the winter in significant enough numbers, Annin Flag Co. purchased a propane cannon to scare them away from their parking lot. In 2011, when thousands of crows settled for the night on the court square, the city purchased pyrotechnics to chase them away. The name begins to fit like a glove. Coshocton. Crow resort town, Crowtown.

January 30, the Pomerene Center will start mapping crow flight paths and roosting locations centered around the RockTenn paper mill. Consulting with two crow researchers at Cornell University's Lab of Ornithology we will collect data on the intensity of light at roosting locations, the direction of wind, the temperature and humidity. We will estimate the size of the roost and the numbers of trees involved. We'll do this on a nightly basis from 5:30-7pm through February.

At the end of this first major stage of our project we hope to have developed an understanding of our crows' roosting preferences.

We are inviting four high school students to join our Winter Crow Observation Team. Interested students should fill out the attached form by January 25th. Questions? Call or text Anne Cornell 740-502-5109.



WINTER CROW OBSERVATION TEAM APPLICATION FORM

January 30, the Pomerene Center will start mapping crow flight paths and roosting locations centered around the RockTenn paper mill. Working with two crow researchers at Cornell University's Lab of Ornithology and Kenyon College's Gund Gallery, we will collect crow data. We'll do this on a nightly basis from 5:30-7pm through February. At the end of this first major stage of our project we hope to have developed an understanding of our crows' roosting preferences.

I am interested in being 1 of 4 high school student researchers on the Pomerene Winter Crow Observation Team. I understand the application is a competitive process. (form should be returned to your teacher by Wed. Jan. 25)

name _____ school _____

age _____ best way to reach you _____

signature _____ parent/guardian signature _____

I'm curious

about animal science (in this case ornithology)

4 (tops)	3	2 (somewhat)	1	0 (not at all)
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about the connection between art and science

4	3	2	1	0
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I think it will help me as I go into the future

to have worked with two of the most knowledgeable crow scientists in the nation

4	3	2	1	0
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to have built a link with Cornell University, Ithaca, NY and Kenyon College, Gambier, OH

4	3	2	1	0
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to have contributed to the community by building scientific understanding

4	3	2	1	0
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I have time

to volunteer 1 and 1/2 hours per day Jan. 30-Feb.29. 5:30-7pm

4	3	2	1	0
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I have transportation

daily (Jan.30-Feb.29, 5:30-7pm) to and from Lake Park

4	3	2	1	0
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Some crow facts from Dr. Kevin McGowan, Cornell

University Lab of Ornithology

<http://www.birds.cornell.edu/crows/crowfaq.htm>

For crows, roosts are primarily a fall and winter thing.

Before heading to roost, crows will congregate in some area away from the final roosting site, usually an hour or two before complete darkness. Here the crows spend a lot of time calling, chasing, and fighting. Right at dark the main body of the group will move toward the final roosting spot.

The birds are not making drastic shifts in behavior; crows have been gathering into winter roosts for as long as there have been crows. The big difference is that they were roosting [outside] town[s] then and are roosting smack in the middle of downtown[s] today."

Why crows might like roosting in towns:

1. Cities are warmer than rural areas. In most places a difference of 5-10 degrees F exists, sometimes referred to as a "heat bubble" over cities. Because roosting is a winter phenomenon, warmer spots could be important.
2. Great Horned Owl populations should be lower in urban areas. Next to people with guns, Great Horned Owls pose the largest danger to an adult crow.
3. Artificial light assist crows in watching for owls.
4. Urban areas provide large trees for roosts. In many places some of the largest trees to be found are in urban areas.