



## Jadzia's Crow

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*Martok*

Monday, February 15, 2010

When my daughter, Jadzia, was a little, bitty kid, she had a crow for a friend.

He'd land near Jadzia, so she'd walk toward him and then he hopped away. Jadzia walked faster and the crow hopped faster, and faster and faster and faster until she was running. Then the crow flapped away, up into a tree, where he bobbed his head and cawed. Then he flew back down and they'd do it again.

Jadzia and Curzon moved in with Meegosh and Hutch last week, and her crow is keeping her company again. He brings his friends and they steal the kids' corn. But Mom likes crows and she puts out extra feed. She says crows are really neat birds.

Last night Uzzi and I Googled crows to see if Mom is right. She is! They're smart—almost as smart as us goats.

A man named Joshua Klein made a video called *The Amazing Intelligence of Crows* that shows how smart they are.

American Crows like Jadzia's friend live throughout the United States and parts of Canada. They're big birds with shiny, coal black feathers; their legs, feet and bills are coal black too.

Birdlife International says there are 31 million American Crows in North America. (How do you suppose they counted all those birds?)

Poets call a group of crows a "murder of crows"; most people say it's a flock. Smaller flocks gather to roost together in the winter, sometimes in humongous groups. More than 60,000 roost together in Auburn, New York and millions gather near Fort Cobb, Okla. That's a lot of birds!

Crows do some really neat things. We learned about them at a FAQ written by a scientist who studies crows. Did you know?

Crows mate for life. Young, grownup crows stay in their family groups for several years and help their parents raise their younger siblings.

Crows have a complex language all their own but they also mimic the sounds of other birds.

West Nile Virus kills a lot of crows. North America's crow population has fallen by 45 percent since 1999.

Crows eat everything from fruit to road kill. (They aren't at all picky like us goats.)

In the wild, crows seldom live more than eight or nine years but a tame crow named Tata lived 59 years.

Crows sometimes hold a grudge against humans. They remember injustices for a long, long time. Even years. So be like Jadzia and treat them like friends, don't make an enemy of a crow!

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