

Indian house crow

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Species Description

Scientific name: *Corvus splendens*

AKA: House crow

Native to: Indian subcontinent

Habitat: Generally confined to man-made habitats and conurbations

A medium-sized, slender crow, with long legs, large bill and grey neck and breast.

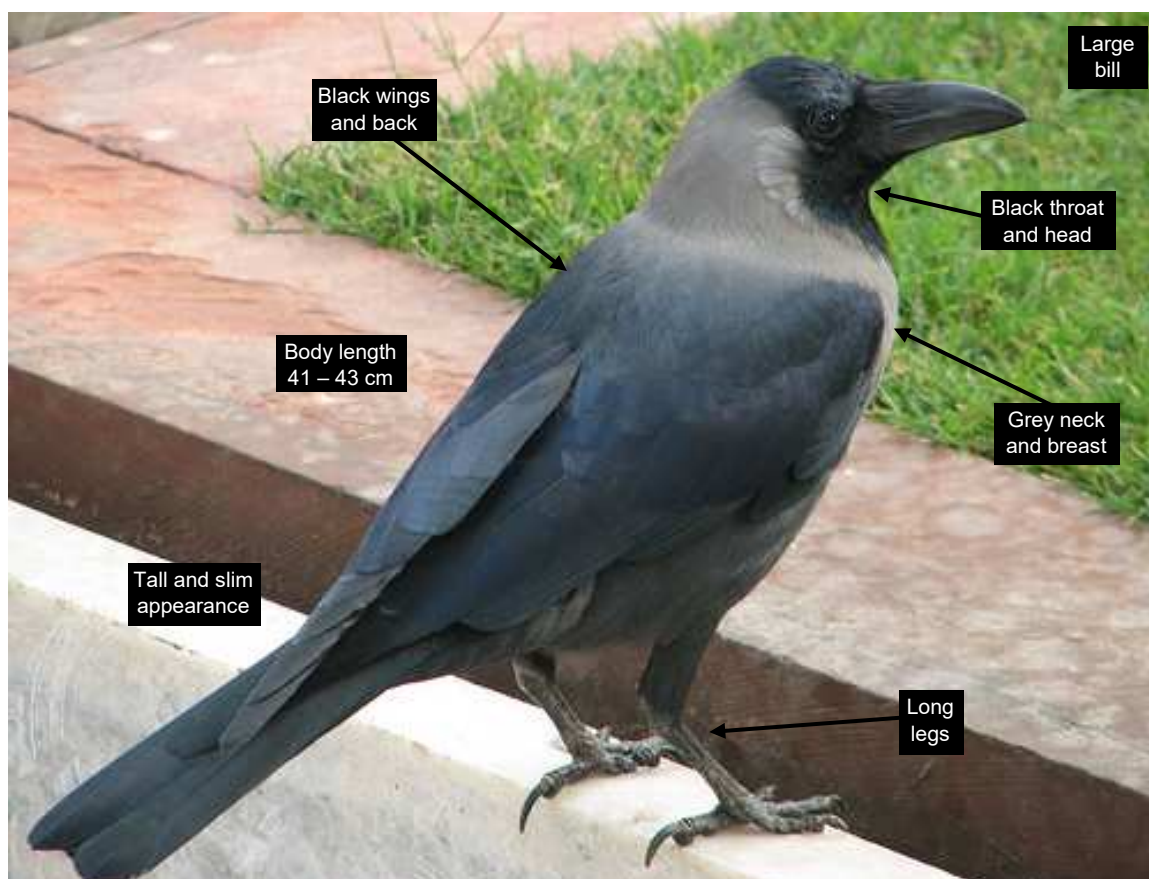
Males and females have the same plumage. To date, there has been 1 unconfirmed report in Northern Ireland, numerous reports in the rest of the UK and 1 confirmed record in Ireland. However, a self-sustaining population exists around the docks in Hoek van Holland, the Netherlands. The spread of the Indian house crow is ship-assisted (hitches a ride on passing ships) worldwide and most new sightings are from ports or coastal regions. A port is the most likely place for the species to arrive in the UK.

As a versatile species it feeds on discarded food, crops, invertebrates, small native birds and their chicks. In its native range it has been noted as an agricultural pest, destroying fruit, wheat, grapes and maize crops. If present in Northern Ireland it may also aggressively compete with native birds.

Under the Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019 it is offence to intentionally keep; breed; transport to, from or within Northern Ireland, use or exchange Indian house crow; or to release it into the environment.



Key ID Features



Report any sightings via; CEDaR Online Recording - <https://www2.habitas.org.uk/records/ISI>, iRecord app or Invasive Species Northern Ireland website - <http://invasivespeciesni.co.uk/report-sighting>

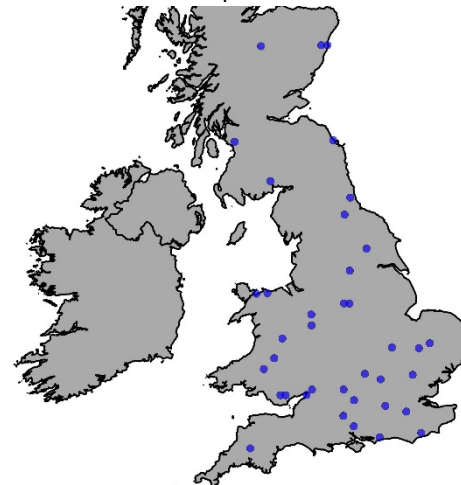
Field signs

The following field signs are shared by many species of the crow family and cannot be used for the purpose of specific identification as house crow.

- Call – similar to carrion crow: 'kwar kwar'
- Nest - Untidy mess of both natural and man-made items, positioned in either trees or man-made structures. Always close to human habitations.
- Eggs - 3-5 in clutch, very variable in shape and colour with egg laying generally from mid-April to late-May, with the breeding season extending to July in its native range.

Distribution

Numerous unconfirmed reports in UK



Source: NBN Atlas – available at <https://species.nbnatlas.org/species/NHMSYS0021109654>
Check website for current distribution

Similar Species

House crow is likely to be confused with a number of crow species

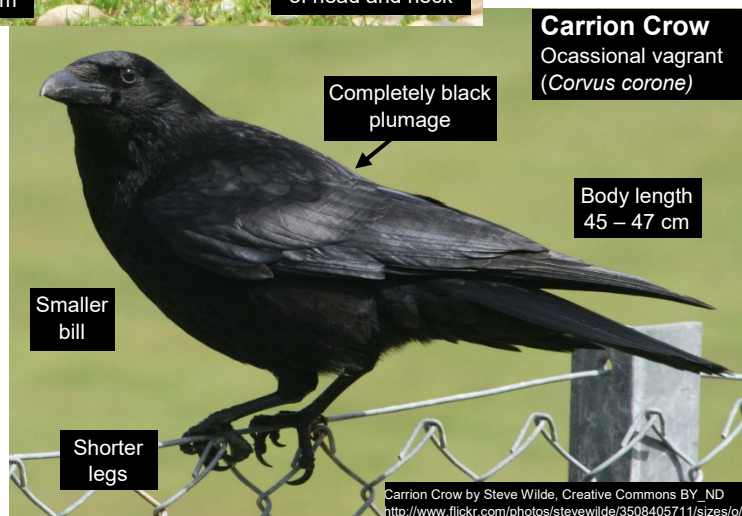
Rook (*Corvus frugilegus*)



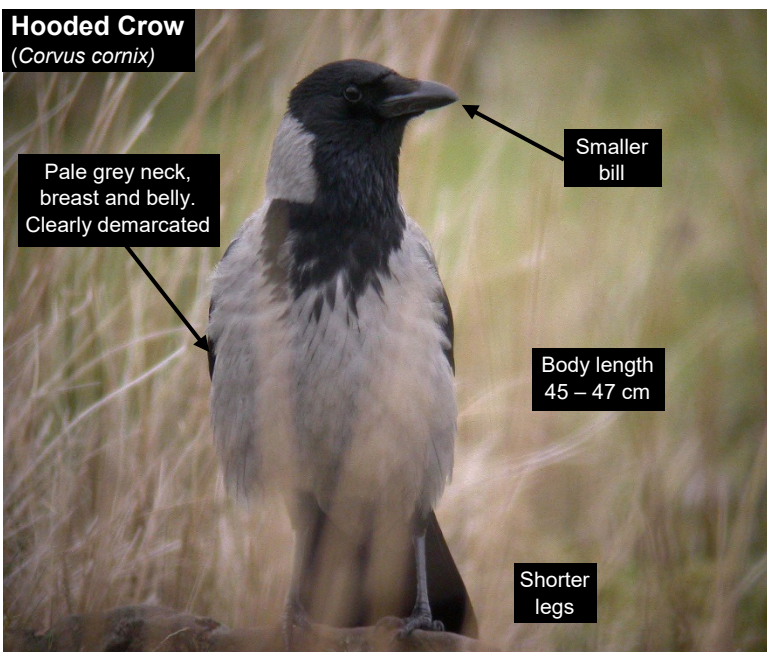
Jackdaw (*Corvus monedula*)



Carrion Crow Occasional vagrant (*Corvus corone*)



Hooded Crow (*Corvus cornix*)



References and further reading:

Lever, C (2005) "Naturalised Birds of the World". T & A D Poyser
Madge, S and Burn, H (1999) "Crows and Jays: A Guide to the Crows, Jays and Magpies of the World". Christopher Helm, London
Mullarney, K, Svensson, L, Zetterstrom, D & Grant, PJ (2001) "Bird Guide". HarperCollins
Rynall C. 2016, Further records and updates of range expansion in House Crow *Corvus splendens*. Bull. B.O.C. 2016 136(1). Available <https://boc-online.org/bulletins/downloads/BBOC1361-Ryall.pdf>
Snow, DW and Perrins, CM (1998) "The Birds of the Western Palearctic." Oxford University Press
Photos from: Danial Winchester, Steve Wilde, Sue Bryan

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**Adapted for Northern Ireland
Environment Agency 2020**