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# Sanbornton Conservation Commission

*Committed to the Stewardship of Sanbornton's Natural Resources*

## Fall 2021 Newsletter

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### Sanbornton Land Conservation Fund

The Lakes Region Conservation Trust along with the Grappone Automotive Group (which gives 5% of annual earnings to non-profit organizations) have established the Sanbornton Land Conservation Fund to support land conservation in our community. The Commission thanks Amanda Osmer for leading the effort to establish this fund. For more information or to contribute to the fund, visit [LRCT.org](http://LRCT.org). To ensure your donation is used for projects in Sanbornton, include "Sanbornton" in the memo line of your check or in any online form. As this effort moves forward, regular updates will be published in the future editions of this Newsletter.

### Mapping Sanbornton's Wildlife Travel Corridors

Wildlife crossings also referred to as wildlife travel corridors are locations across the landscape that animals routinely use to move within their home range. These can be seasonal corridors that animals use to find a particular food source, seek out a mate or seek shelter to survive harsh winter conditions. Many times the location of these travel routes are passed on from the females of the species to her offspring. Motorist and recreationist make mental notes to slow down near these wildlife crossings because of their experience or wildlife sightings. Your Conservation Commission (CC) would like to tap into your local knowledge of these wildlife crossings and have the town residents mark/pin them on a map to be used in local planning initiatives and land protection efforts.

The Conservation Commission has for the past two winters traveled and pinned locations of where wildlife crosses the roads. The winter is a seasonal snapshot of where wildlife crosses our roads, and the animal tracks detected consisted of deer, turkey, coyote. The CC would like to know where the wildlife crossings are during the other times of the year and add to the map (working document) of winter wildlife crossings to show habitats that are linked by wildlife corridors.

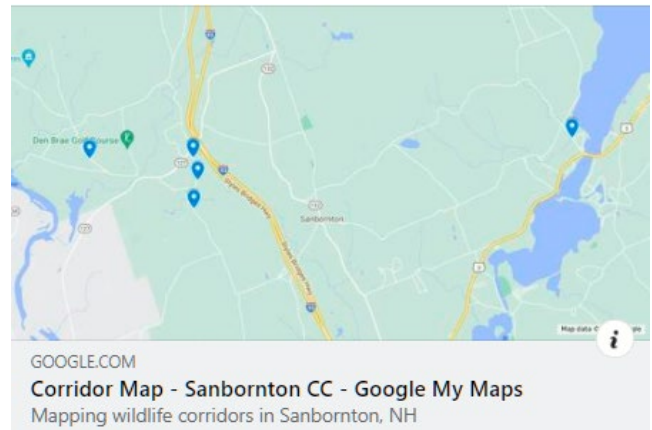
The goal is to produce a map that helps the local planning board guide their decisions where the best place would be to conserve when a development project

is proposed or a transportation project will impact our town. This map could be a planning tool to reduce impacts to wildlife and the habitats linked to these corridors. This would be a dynamic map not static and likely be updated as information is available as land use changes are seen in our town.

Instructions on accessing and using the map may be found on the homepage of the Conservation Commission's website.

([sanborntonnh.org/conservation-commission](http://sanborntonnh.org/conservation-commission))

-- By Karen Bordeau



Is it a crow or is it a raven? Sanbornton has both. They are difficult to tell apart but knowing a few things will improve your chance of making a good identification. Whenever I see large black birds, I go through a list of features to see if I can make an identity. When I can be sure it is a Raven, I feel that I am in the presence of something special.

The Common Raven (I'll just call it a Raven here) is a large all black bird, just like the American Crow (I'll just call it a Crow here). From a distance both birds look the same and it is very difficult to tell them apart. The Raven belongs to the family Corvidae which in North America also includes crows, magpies, nutcrackers and jays. Although not the most numerous, the raven is the most widely distributed of all the corvids. It can be found throughout the Northern Hemisphere as well as the mountains of Africa and South America. In North America they live in the Northeast and Western United

States as well as throughout Canada and Alaska. They prefer woodlands, mountains and rocky coast lands but can adapt to many other environments. They get along well with people but they prefer rural environments or the outskirts of cities, particularly in landfills. If you see a very large crow in a city, it is probably just that, a very large crow.

**Size** – The Raven is a little over 2 feet long with a wingspan 3.5 to 4 feet. Its weight is about 2.5 pounds. This is just a little larger than a red-tailed hawk. By contrast the Crow is 1.3 feet long and weighs about a pound with a wingspan of about 2.5 to 3 feet. This is a little larger than a pigeon.

**Beak** – The Raven's Beak is larger and more curved, on top there are bristles half-way down the length, below the bill the raven has shaggy throat feathers. The Raven's beak gives it the ability to tear open carcasses while the Crow has to wait around for another predator to do it for them.

**In Flight** – In straight flight the Crow has a constant deep flapping motion, while the Raven punctuates slow graceful wing flaps with glides. The Raven will also soar on thermals like a hawk for long periods of time. Its wings appear longer and thinner than a Crow's. If you are close enough to see the tail clearly, the Crow will have a squared off tail while the Raven's tail, which has longer feathers in the middle, is wedge shaped. Playful Ravens can do aerial summersaults and rolls as well as fly upside down.

**Feeding** – The raven is an omnivore. It will happily raid garbage cans and devour roadkill, but it will eat eggs and hunt nestlings, frogs, small reptiles, and small mammals as well as insects. It will also eat grains, acorns and fruits. The intelligent Raven is known to come to the sound of a gunshot, hoping to find a meal but it will ignore other loud noises.

**Calls** – The most common crow call is a caw sound while the Raven is more of a lower croaking sound. Both birds however have a large repertoire of screams, pops, whistles and strange sounds you might question even coming from a bird. It can make over 100 different vocalizations and can copy some human speech.

**Companions** – A Raven is less common than a crow and is most often seen by itself or with another Raven. Crows commonly occur in larger groups.

**Migration** – Only the Ravens living in the highest Arctic migrate. The Crow, while seen to migrate in great

numbers is found year-round in New Hampshire so both can be found here in the winter.

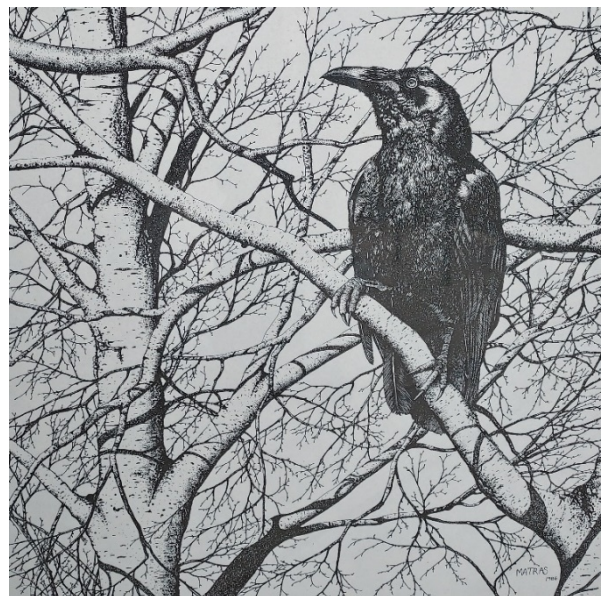
**Longevity** – Birds in the wild are notoriously difficult to age; once they get adult plumage there is no telling how old they are. The oldest proven age for Ravens in the wild is around 22 years, however captive ravens have lived over 69 years with rumors of much older birds.

This large, intelligent and sometimes mischievous bird, thought to be as intelligent as the great apes, has been connected to human culture for thousands of years. In Norse mythology ravens kept Odin informed of what was happening in the world. In Great Britain they are deep in Welsh, Celtic and Scottish legends. Over 300 years ago the English king decreed that an unkindness (flock) of Ravens be kept in the Tower of London when he was told that if they left Great Britain would fall. They remain today. In Northwest Native American culture, the raven is part of the creation story and it is said to have stolen fire from the sun to bring it to people. The Raven figures strongly into their artwork. Perhaps because it is a scavenger that was often seen on ancient battlefields it was also seen as a sign of bad luck and a harbinger of doom. In Edgar Allen Poe's *The Raven* this large black bird rapped on his chamber door at midnight and perched on a bust of the Greek Titan god of war muttering nevermore. Certainly not something a bluebird of Happiness would do.

Whatever Common Raven's presence means; it shares the woods with us and it is an awesome bird. I hope this helps you to tell it from the American Crow.

-- By Dave Perry

### Common Raven



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