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## Thousands of Crows Arrive Here Soon at Kleinstueck Bird Reserve

By MARGARET D. TRAVIS

Thousands of crows, winging southward ahead of the advancing line of cold weather and autumn storms in the Far North, will soon be arriving at their winter roost in the Kleinstueck reserve here—a strange place for a concentration of birds as untamed and scornful of man as the crow, since it lies within the city limits of Kalamazoo.

The raucous black army has occupied this area every winter for at least 50 years within the memory of residents, and probably back to Indian times. The fact that the sheltered hollow of their ancient wintering ground is now ringed about with residential districts disturbs the crows not at all.

### Wildlife Paradise

About October 15 each year they come lumbering in, some 3,000 strong, to stay until early March, roosting in the reserve at night and spreading out to forage the countryside for 50 miles around by day. Persons living near the reserve say the flocks leaving at daybreak and returning at nightfall fly over their houses for an hour at a time.

The reserve was deeded to the state department of education by Mrs. Caroline Kleinstueck in 1925 for a natural history research area. It is a wildlife paradise. About 50 acres in extent, it comprises a large, deep pond fringed with marshes and a considerable area of wooded, rolling uplands. Only paths worn by the feet of nature lovers traverse the thicket. This may account for the persistent return of the big crow flock to a winter roost in a populated area.

Winter crow roosts are not year-round colonies. The congregation of thousands or even hundreds of thousands is seasonal. Crows are clannish birds, even in the nesting season, but the problem of a food supply would make a concentration in such numbers impossible during the period when the young birds must be fed almost constantly. So the birds indulge their sociable instincts in the winter months and then scatter to less-crowded feeding grounds for nesting, collecting into bands once more when families are grown.

### Not Local Birds

By midwinter the bulk of the crow population of North America is concentrated into relatively small areas. Millions gather in roosts in a belt extending from Chesapeake Bay westward to Missouri and Kansas. Oklahoma and Texas have some of the largest roosts in the country.

The crows which winter in the local reserve are undoubtedly birds on winter migration from country much farther north.

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