

Family Corvidae



A cat learns not to mess with a corvid

Taxonomic family Corvidae, which includes crows, ravens, jays, magpies and some other birds, is renowned for the intelligence and adaptability of its members. Unless you live at the very southern tip of South America or on the polar ice caps, you have members of family Corvidae close by.

In Corvallis (Corvidallis?), if you have any trees in or near your yard then you have either California Scrub Jays or Steller's Jays visiting on a regular basis. If you have mostly deciduous trees then you have Scrub Jays, if you have mostly conifers then you have Steller's Jays. Whichever you have, they will eat almost anything they can catch or steal. They will visit any bird feeder they can get into, and chase away other birds to do it. And they are seldom alone – both usually travel in family groups.

Corvids, in particular crows, are one of the few types of wildlife to actually benefit from the spread of humans. Their intelligence has allowed them to exploit all manner of opportunities given to them by humans, from stealing their food to tormenting their pets.

Quoted from Wikipedia:

There are also specific examples of corvid cleverness. One carrion crow was documented to crack nuts by placing them on a crosswalk, letting the passing cars crack the shell, waiting for the light to turn red, and then safely retrieving the contents. A group of crows in England took turns lifting garbage bin lids while their companions collected food.

My favorite is a bird called the "New Caledonian Crow". If you want to feel inferior and inadequate, look for youtube.com videos of these birds solving complex puzzles in order to get food.

If we humans ever wipe ourselves out in a nuclear war, either crows or cockroaches will take our place as the dominant creatures on the planet.