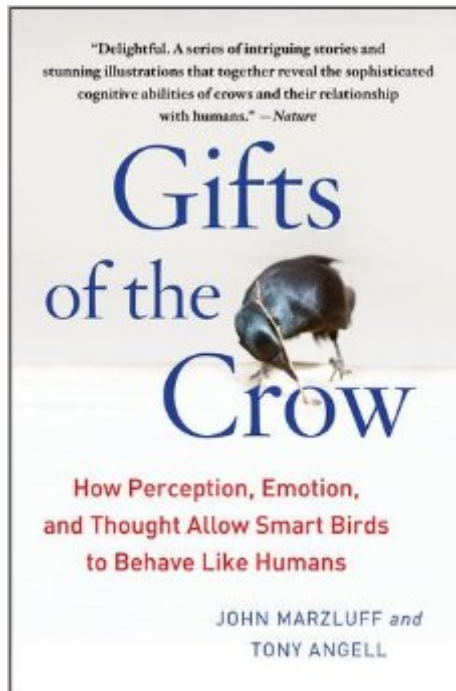


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Gifts Of The Crow: How Perception, Emotion, And Thought Allow Smart Birds To Behave Like Humans



Synopsis

Stan Coren's groundbreaking *The Intelligence of Dogs* meets Bernd Heinrich's classic *Mind of the Raven* in this astonishing, beautifully illustrated look at the uncanny intelligence and emotions of crows. Playful, social, and passionate, crows have brains that are huge for their body size, which allows them to think, plan, and reconsider their actions. They also exhibit an avian kind of eloquence, mate for life, and associate with relatives and neighbors for years. And to people who care for them and feed them, they often give oddly touching gifts in return. The ongoing connection between humans and crows "a cultural coevolution" has shaped both species for millions of years. Scientist John Marzluff teams up with artist-naturalist Tony Angell to tell amazing stories of these brilliant birds. With Marzluff's extraordinary original research on the intelligence and startling abilities of corvids "crows, ravens, and jays" Angell's gorgeous line drawings, and a lively joint narrative, the authors offer an in-depth look at these complex creatures and the traits and behaviors we share, including language, delinquency, frolic, passion, wrath, risk taking, and awareness. Crows gather around their dead, warn of impending doom, recognize people, commit murder of other crows, lure animals to their death, swill coffee and drink beer, design and use tools "including cars as nutcrackers" and windsurf and sled to play. With its abundance of funny, awe-inspiring, and poignant stories, *Gifts of the Crow* portrays creatures who are nothing short of amazing.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

With one significant reservation I really enjoyed this book. I love watching birds visiting the feeders in my garden, especially the magpies, and knew that the crow family included some of the most intelligent birds. I am also, as you will know if you have read my blog, very interested in animal intelligence, and what it can tell us about human intelligence. This book contains some wonderful accounts of, for example, the ability of crows to recognise individual people, and the account of ravens surfing the Colorado winds makes one wonder what other things they can get up to which have not yet been documented. Details are brought together of many accounts of apparently intelligent behaviour, together with descriptions of well planned experiments, which combine to make you realize how smart some birds really are. For those who want to explore further there are extra notes and an extensive bibliography. If you are interested in animal intelligence or bird behaviour this book is a "must read". The problem is that really it is not one book but two. The part I have described is concerned with the behavioural evidence which demonstrates the intelligent behaviour in the crow family. It is written in an easy to read style - and the description on the dust cover confines itself to this part of the book, suggesting that the publishers were also aware of the problem and avoided mentioning something which could put some readers off. There is no doubt that if the book stopped at the point I described above I would be very happy to give a copy to an intelligent 12 year old bird watching enthusiast and suggest that they start looking for, and recording, the behaviour of the crows and magpies they see.

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