

New Caledonian crows' use of tools innovative, clever

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Corvus moneduloides, New Caledonian Crow. Image: Wikipedia.

In a new study, scientists have recorded a breed of crow using tools, such as sticks, in multiple ways.

The New Caledonian [crow](#), (*Corvus moneduloides*), named after the islands they are found, are widely known for their [intelligence](#) and clever prowess in using tools, such as twigs, as an extension of their beaks, to pull insects from hard to reach spaces. As members of the corvid family, which includes, magpies, rooks and ravens, studies have shown, The New Caledonians are the more innovative of the family, bending,

shaping and molding the twigs to suit their needs at any given time.

To better understand how the large-brained corvid's mind works, a research team from the University of Oxford presented a group with unfamiliar objects inside the aviaries. What was found was that, with sight of something potentially dangerous, the [birds](#) would make first contact with a tool (i.e. a stick), to ensure the object's safety, before reaching out with the beak.

Though not highly social, New Caledonian crows stem from small, tightly-knit units whose parents teach the offspring to use the tools. With this new evidence of a bird using a tool for more than one function, it's now thought avian brains could be more complex than originally thought, joining a higher-level of cognitive thinkers who use tools to achieve multiple functions, such as chimpanzees, elephants and even humans.

More information: Citation: New Caledonian crows use tools for non-foraging activities, Joanna H. Wimpenny, Alexander A. S. Weir and Alex Kacelnik, *Animal Cognition*, [DOI:10.1007/s10071-010-0366-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10071-010-0366-1)

See also:

[Crows demonstrate their cleverness with tools \(w/ Video\)](#)

[Foraging for fat: Crafty crows use tools to fish for nutritious morsels](#)

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