

Bird Brains – Smarter than You Think

Books, Links, and Research

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Feedback, comments and questions are welcome! Sandra_milligan@telus.net

Books

The Genius of Birds, by Jennifer Ackerman; c2017

The Bird Way: A New Look at How Birds Talk, Work, Play, Parent and Think. Jennifer Ackerman, c2020

Bird Brain: An Exploration of Avian Intelligence, by Nathan Emery, c2016

Are We Smart Enough to know how Smart Animals Are? Frans de Waal. c2017

Animal Wise: The Thoughts and Emotions of our Fellow Creatures. Virginia Morell. c2010

Mind of the Raven: Investigations and Adventures with Wolf Birds. Bernd Heinrich. c2007

Gifts of the Crow: How Perception, Emotion and Thought Allow Smart Birds to Behave Like Humans by John Marzluff and Tony Angell, c2012

In the Company of Crows and Ravens; by John Marzluff and Tony Angell, c2005

Ways of Being Animals, Plants, Machines: the Search for a Planetary Intelligence. James Bridle. c2023.

The Invention of Nature: Alexander von Humboldt's New World. Andrea Wulf. c2016

The Spell of the Sensuous: Language and Perception in a More-Than-Human World. David Abram. c1997.

Bird Cottage. Eva Meijer, c2018; biography of Len Howard

Birds as Individuals. Len Howard, c1952, reprinted c2024

Living with Birds. Len Howard, c1956, reprinted c2025

Woman Watching: Louise de Kiriline Lawrence and the Songbirds of Pimisi Bay. Marilyn Simonds, c2022

Mozart's Starling. Lyanda Lynn Haupt. c2014

Videos and Websites

[Why Crows are as smart as a 7-year old;](#)

[Rare crow shows a talent for tool use;](#)

[Crows can distinguish faces in a crowd;](#)

[A Yellowstone life: Raven Language](#)

[How Honeyguide birds talk to people;](#)

[The-backyard-bird-alarm-call-network](#)

[Lesley the Bird Nerd videos on bird vocalizations;](#)

[Desert Ravens: A 'Major Relative' to Indigenous Traditions;](#)

[Lyrebird mimicry](#)

[Xeno-canto](#) Bird recordings that include notes on behaviour during the vocalization

[The Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness;](#)

[How Nature Creates Genius;](#)

[Irene Pepperberg and Alex the Parrot;](#)

[20 Bowerbirds Build BETTER Love Nests Than You!](#) About mating behaviour.

[Bowerbird bowers, dances and songs;](#) Mating art (not part of presentation)

[Bird Brain Evolution in American Scientist](#)

[Cornell Lab of Ornithology](#) Comprehensive source of all things “bird”

[BirdsandBeans.ca Certified Bird Friendly Coffee](#)

Peer-reviewed Research Papers

Bugnyar, T. Knower-guesser differentiation in ravens: others' viewpoints matter. 2010. *Proc. Biol. Sci.* 278(1705): 634-640. <http://doi.org/10.1098/rspb.2010.1514>

Edinger, L. (Translation from German) *Investigations on the Comparative Anatomy of the Brain* Volumes 1–5 (Moritz Diesterweg, Frankfurt/Main, 1888–1903).

Fraser, O.N., Bugnyar, T. Do Ravens Show Consolation? Responses to Distressed Others. 2010. *PLOS ONE* <http://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0010605>

Heinrich, B. and Bugnyar, T. 2005. Testing problem solving in Ravens: string-pulling to reach food. *Ethology*. 111(10): 962-976.

Hogan, B., Stoddard, M.C. Synchronization of speed, sound and iridescent colour in a hummingbird aerial courtship dive. 2018. *Nature Communications*. 9: 5260. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-018-07562-7>

Jarvis ED, Güntürkün O, Bruce L, Csillag A, et al. Avian Brain Nomenclature Consortium. Avian brains and a new understanding of vertebrate brain evolution. 2005. *Nat Rev Neurosci.* 6(2):151-9. <https://doi.org/10.1038/nrn1606>

Jelbert, S.A., Taylor, A.H., Cheke, L.G., Clayton, N.S. and Gray, R. D. 2014. Using the Aesop's Fable paradigm to investigate causal understanding of water displacement by New Caledonian Crows. *PLOS One*. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0092895>

Olkowicz, S. Kocourek, M., Lučan, M. Porteš, M.K., W.T. Fitch, W.T., Herculano-Houzel, S., & Němec, P. Birds have primate-like numbers of neurons in the forebrain. 2016. *PNAS*. 113 (26) 7255-7260, <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1517131113>

Ward, B.J., Day, L.B., Wilkening, S.R., Wylie, D.R., Saucier, D.M. and Iwaniuk, A.N. Hummingbirds have greatly enlarged hippocampal formation. 2012. *Biol. Lett.* 8(4): 657-659. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rsbl.2011.1180>

Zaremba, B. *et al.* Developmental origins and evolution of pallial cell types and structures in birds. 2025. *Science*. 387, 5182. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.adp5182>