

## Who are you calling bird-brained? Crows and other corvids display self-awareness and consciousness

The corvid family of birds, which includes crows, ravens, jays and magpies, had been observed previously to [use tools](#), as well as remember the faces of people they like or don't like, or drop nuts on the road so that passing cars will crack them open. At a train station once, I watched a pair of crows team up at a water fountain. While one pushed the button with its beak, the other drank from the water that started to flow.

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[Other studies](#) support the notion that the bird brain can, in principle, support the development of higher intelligence. This idea had been dismissed in the past due to the small size of birds' brains. But [recent research has shown](#) that in birds, the neurons are smaller and more tightly packed, which makes sense to reduce weight and make it easier to fly.

The total number of neurons in crows (about 1.5 billion) is about the same as in some monkey species. But because they are more tightly packed, communication between the neurons seems to be better, and the overall intelligence of crows may be closer to that of Great Apes such as the gorilla.

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[H]igher intelligence on other planets may not necessarily be mammal or human-like, but could very well be birdlike.

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