



California Wildlife Center

Patient of the Week

June 6, 2025

Caws for Care: Raising Crows in Crowtopia

Crowtopia is bustling with young American Crows this time of year. We currently have 30 crows in care. Crowtopia is an extension of our NICU (Neonatal Intensive Care Unit) and houses young corvids, American Crows, Common Ravens and California Scrub-Jays, who are not yet mature enough to be independent from their families. CWC established Crowtopia for a myriad of reasons, one the main ones being the need to keep corvids separate from songbird patients, who are typically housed in the main area of the NICU department.

Crowtopia was born out of the necessity to ensure that all species have the best chance at successful rehabilitation. Corvids are predators of songbirds, so raising them separately is critical for their proper development. Hearing and seeing corvids can cause undue stress for songbird patients. Additionally, if the two species were to be kept together, the songbirds may lose their natural fear of corvids, thus putting them at a disadvantage once released. The corvid-specific unit is temperature controlled and ensures the birds are raised with others of their kind.

The American Crow is very social and is often spotted in groups of thousands. They roost in large numbers and sleep communally. Many crows have been known to stay in family groups year-round, with offspring from previous years assisting their parents in the child-rearing responsibilities.

Crows are extremely resourceful and can be seen eating just about anything. You may notice crows hovering around your trash bin at collection time, competing for carrion, stealing eggs or foraging for grains and berries. Crows have also been known to make and use tools to find food, fashioning sticks as probes to get insects in hard-to-reach places. While they can find food independently, crows will often work in pairs or family groups to acquire food. Some have even observed them teaming up to distract and steal food from other animals!

Due to their exceptional intelligence, CWC works hard to provide an engaging and stimulating environment for corvids in care. Staff hang flowers and shiny mobiles in enclosures for crows to admire and investigate. They also provide boxes with hidden treats for them to root through and explore. Once crows have graduated from Crowtopia, they are moved to a larger aviary with others of their species and are typically released as a flock.

If you find an injured crow, contact your local wildlife rehabilitation center for guidance. Do not approach or handle the animal unless instructed by a trained professional.



Young crows gape for food.



Young crow admitted with wing and foot injuries.