



California Wildlife Center

Patient of the Week

October 17, 2025

Unmasking Ravens

From ancient poetic texts to popular television shows, Common Ravens have long been cultural symbols of wisdom, foreboding, uncertainty, and even death. The raven's stark black feathers and confident presence have long inspired storytellers, shaping meaningful plot lines. While popular culture likes to cast a more somber light on this species, we at CWC have seen firsthand how bright, intelligent, resilient and adaptable they truly are.



Former Raven Patient

The Common Raven is regularly misidentified as an American Crow and, although they have many similarities, both species differ quite dramatically. Physically, ravens are larger than crows, have a more curved beak, and possess shaggier throat feathers. Additionally, ravens have larger, talonlike feet while crows have smaller and more flexible ones. Both species are exceptionally smart, with ravens ranking as just slightly more intelligent. Soon after leaving the nest, young ravens explore everything around them to discover what may be useful (much like young humans!). Crows and ravens are both known to fashion tools with sticks, play games, and join with others of their kind to outsmart other birds in the pursuit of their next meal. Ravens are more solitary than crows and are usually seen alone or in pairs.



Two former patients in outdoor aviary.

CWC rehabilitates both young and mature Common Ravens. This year we have admitted 102 ravens into care. While at CWC, staff will often place shiny or sparkling hanging objects with various natural ornaments in their enclosures for them to explore and admire. They are also given boxes to root through and puzzle-based enrichment activities designed to encourage problem-solving. These experiences offer opportunities to dig, discover, and satisfy their curiosity.