

Nature: A Murder of Crows

You can always count on the PBS Nature series to be interesting and have beautiful videography. But I was especially captivated when I recently watched A Murder of Crows. It didn't sound that interesting- a documentary about crows, but when I read the description of crows as "apes with feathers" I was intrigued. I had no idea how intelligent these birds are.

In some cultures crows are seen as a bad omen, in others they are simply dismissed as a nuisance. But these smart birds live in blood-related family groups just like we do. They spend years teaching their young the things they will need to know to survive. And they use tools. Their cognitive abilities are amazingly complex and they can actually use several tools to form a three-part plan to problem solve. They learn trash pick-up times so they can scavenge through our garbage before it is picked up. Crows have an amazing number of distinct calls- at least 250- and use one "voice" in public and another with their family. They are also able to recognize human faces and communicate those they know as dangerous to other birds. I enjoyed this program very much and learned facts about crows which has made me view them in a whole new light.

Posted by Elizabeth G. on October 22, 2011

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