



## Wildlife Book Club: Gifts of the Crow By John Marzluff and Tony Angell

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Tuesday, February 2, 2016

### Comment From BarbG

Ready for Book Club



Amanda Nicholson, WCV:

It's a Jaz fest.

### Comment From rejoyce

I'm ready!!

### Comment From Lydia, PA ໒໒໑໑?

Here---might be able to type much, but I can Lurk. And I did type a few things ahead of time. go Bela!



Raina Krasner, WCV:

Glad you're here, Lydia! Who is Bela?

### Comment From rejoyce

I love the avatars!

### Comment From Kathy in NM ♥

I'm ready for Book Club, and praying that my internet doesn't cut off as it did for the last book club...



Amanda Nicholson, WCV:

Welcome, everyone! This is our bi-monthly book club discussion. Tonight we'll discuss Gifts of the Crow!

### Comment From Lacy

Great avatars, guys!



**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

Hi, Lacy!!!

**Comment From rejoyce**

Very interesting book!

**Comment From CK in PA**

I'm here and ready for Book Club.



**Raina Krasner, WCV:**

Hey Lacy!



**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

Any first-timers here?

**Comment From Seahawk Nadine-U.P., WA**

I am here for hopefully most of the book meeting

**Comment From Pat, NJ**

Will be lurking here with Lydia.

**Comment From Lacy**

Hi! I'm excited to chat about the book :)



**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

We typically open up the discussion ... and we start categorizing some common themes so we can attempt to organize a big book club discussion. :)

**Comment From Cathy in NV**

I'm lurking. Now that I am on west coast time, I can attend!



**Chapin Hardy, WCV:**

Well shall we get started?



**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

Did anyone have any favorite corvid anecdotes, or favorite sections of the book?

**Comment From CarolinaGirl**

Here. Darn, my family would not eat fast!!

**Chapin Hardy, WCV:**

I really liked the stories of the crows pulling the turkey tails and using the shoelace to play with the cat.

**Comment From Lacy**

I really liked the first part of the chapter on Play. Crows and ravens surfing and rolling down hills of snow... Sounded like they were having a great time!

**Comment From BarbG**

I loved the stories when they brought or left gifts

**Comment From rejoyce**

I loved the story about the windshields! That happened to me once at a drive thru zoo -- with monkeys!

**Raina Krasner, WCV:**

I really liked the early discussions about Poe and Dickens, and their fascinations with crows and Ravens.

**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

I think my favorite was the photographer who helped a raven in British Columbia – and the ravens remembered him and never bothered his lunch, even when he left it out. He later named his son Raven, since that interaction left such a mark on him.

**Comment From CarolinaGirl**

Loved the story of the man who chased the crows with a garbage bag on a broom and then the crow stalked him.

**Comment From rejoyce**

I laughed out loud at the man who moved his car but the birds still pooped on his car because they like his wife and not him. They never touched her car! LOL

**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

Ha, I enjoyed that too!

**Comment From BarbG**

and the crow that whitewashed the man;s car and not his wife's car



**Chapin Hardy, WCV:**

Reminded me about Jaz and how she is picky on who she likes



**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

Yes. I think the thing that impressed me there was not distinguishing between people -- but distinguishing between the objects that belonged to the people!



**Raina Krasner, WCV:**

Right, that seems to be a definite theme in several of the stories in the book - and in our own experiences with Jaz!

**Comment From rejoyce**

And the ones who rang the doorbell for treats!!

**Comment From Kathy in NM ♥**

Lol Rejoyce, I was going to mention that one, too!



**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

I'm impressed that a lot of the research/experiments discussed in the book are already fairly well-known – I think many of us have probably seen some of these highlighted in articles passed around social media and the internet. Some of us have probably read about the mask experiment ... or the crows using multiple tools to get their food reward. What was something new that you learned from reading the book?



**Chapin Hardy, WCV:**

How they are able to possibly speak!



**Chapin Hardy, WCV:**

The four lobes in their throats were fascinating!



**Chapin Hardy, WCV:**

And how they were able to mimic the voices of people was so cool. I've always been curious about that.



**Raina Krasner, WCV:**

Oh and how the crow called out to the dogs!



**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

The talking reminded me of Westley, a former education crow at the Center!



**Raina Krasner, WCV:**

And the dogs followed the crow across campus, but they never really figured out how that got started ...



**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

Westley didn't enunciate very well, but he mimicked the inflections of our voices, so he would "say" "Hi!" and "what are you doing?"

**Comment From Jersey Shore Amy**

And crows learn to speak differently than other birds.

**Comment From Regina, IL**

Sorry, Hi Raina

**Comment From Lacy**

Westley was at the Center before my time there. That is so cool!



**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

He was such a dreamboat.

**Comment From Regina, IL**

Hi Amanda & Chapin and CN, excuse me for being late. I was reading the book. Just got it from the library last night so I won't be able to add much to the conversation but happy to spend time with you all.

**Comment From rejoyce**

I didn't realize that their vocal system is so complex.

**Comment From rejoyce**

I didn't realize that their vocal system is so complex.



**Raina Krasner, WCV:**

The authors talked about how the crows have different dialects, which I thought was interesting.



**Raina Krasner, WCV:**

And if a crow uses the wrong calls in the group, they may be attacked.



**Chapin Hardy, WCV:**

Better watch what ones says!

**Comment From Regina, IL**

Kinda like "wolf calls" lol

**Comment From Jersey Shore Amy**

Just now joining. I didn't finish the book yet, but was absolutely amazed by what I did get through. Changed my opinion on crows!



**Chapin Hardy, WCV:**

How so?

**Comment From Jersey Shore Amy**

I never liked crows! Always thought of them as bullies in the neighborhood.

**Comment From Jersey Shore Amy**

Now I know that they are so intelligent and practically sophisticated!



**Raina Krasner, WCV:**

Interesting! Yes, they are definitely thought of as a nuisance at times. But in some cultures, they were thought of very highly.



**Chapin Hardy, WCV:**

I'm glad the book helped change your opinion of them.

**Comment From rejoyce**

There is definitely more to them than most people realize!



**Raina Krasner, WCV:**

The authors brought up crows and Ravens in Pacific Northwest cultures.

**Comment From BarbG**

Some of the legends were fascinating

**Comment From Lacy**

And I think it was in India where when someone dies, you offer rice balls to the crows?



**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

Right. Very interesting.

**Comment From Regina, IL**

How many are joining in the book club tonight?



**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

35 right now.

**Comment From rejoyce**

I saw the ravens at the Tower of London when I was there. So interesting!

**Comment From BarbG**

I saw ravens at Tower of London years ago and didn't really understand until this book



**Chapin Hardy, WCV:**

Long live the Queen!

**Comment From rejoyce**

The legend is that the empire will not fall as long as the ravens are there. Our tour guide told us that there was a time when the wings were clipped to make sure that they didn't leave!!

**Comment From CarolinaGirl**

I did not realize how they grieve and hold "funerals".

**Comment From Lacy**

I thought the observations of crows visiting deceased crows was interesting. It kind of reminded me of how elephants behave when one of them dies.

**Comment From rejoyce**

I was touched by their respect for their dead. I did not know about that.



**Chapin Hardy, WCV:**

I thought the same thing, Lacy!

**Comment From BarbG**

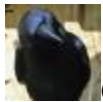
Funeral ravens

**Comment From Lydia, PA ☺☺☺?**

Barb G I saw the ravens at the Tower Of London last year. Belief is that if they are not there the empire will fall

**Comment From Jersey Shore Amy**

My dad is a big birder, I'm going to pass the book along to him. Got my love of "feathers" from him. :)



**Chapin Hardy, WCV:**

And how they possibly were learning about consequences and the cause of death.

**Comment From BarbG**

the communication between them was amazing to learn about then their memory

**Comment From Jersey Shore Amy**

I am wondering how many other birds replay memories and dream!



**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

Yes, interesting to read about that and learn how memories are formed.

**Comment From Regina, IL**

The fact that they can remember where they cached their seeds for months really amazed me.

**Comment From Lydia, PA ☺☺☺?**

Come on Raina!!!! You have to remember Bella! First bird that really grabbed my interest in this book. The very first thing in the book captured mu attention was the story of Bela, the male crow. He hourly delivered food to his mate and nest, yet regularly visited a woman named Lijana, who offered him breakfast each am. And he also recognized students who had banded him years ago, And when that happened he called his friends to mob that person. The ability for corvids to apply facial recognition, even after years, amazes me

**Comment From Lydia, PA ☺☺☺?**

I Loved that Bela called on his friend corvids to mob that guys that banded him





**Raina Krasner, WCV:**

oh I somehow forgot Bella's name!



**Chapin Hardy, WCV:**

There were so many named crows ... hard to keep track!



**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

I remember learning about the mask experiment and facial recognition when that came out -- I was impressed! But after thinking about it more ... many animals recognize and differentiate between people. So cool that crows can do it too, but we do see this at the Center every day -- Maggie, Ruby, Grayson, Buddy ... a lot of those birds can tell the difference between individuals.

**Comment From Jersey Shore Amy**

And it doesn't take long for them to learn to differentiate either...

**Comment From Lydia, PA ☺☺☺?**

Oh, there it is. Glad it cam through. What is most amazing about those stories is their facial recognition



**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

Just a side note -- remember we are starting to categorize some comments by subject, so if you don't see your comment posted right away, it's probably in the cue !



**Chapin Hardy, WCV:**

Didn't you all do a little experiment with Jaz before I joined the Center to see if she recognized a blonde extern? You had the student hide her hair and then another time put on a brunette wig.



**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

I don't recall that ... I must not have been around. But yes, Jaz is one of our many bird that can differentiate!



**Chapin Hardy, WCV:**

Jaz knew exactly who the extern was.

**Comment From rejoyce**

I laughed out loud that they used a mask of Dick Cheney for one of their experiments!

**Comment From GN**

I sometimes have problems telling the people at the Center apart.



**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

There he is ...



**Raina Krasner, WCV:**

And speaking of memory ... I loved the diagrams of the corvid brains throughout. I remember hearing of a researcher who studied crows, and she said she didn't like calling crows "smart" because all animals are smart in their own ways. But crows have a brain and ways of functioning that are easier for us to understand and relate to.



**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

Ah, that leads us into an interesting subject area ...

**Comment From rejoyce**

Ya'll should try a facial recognition test with GN wearing his monkey mask!

**Comment From Jersey Shore Amy**

And crows brains are huge (comparatively)!

**Comment From rejoyce**

I know we are not supposed to "humanize", but the more I learn about wildlife, the more I realize that they do share so many of our traits. Grief, intelligence, motherly instinct, etc.



**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

Right ... OR ... do we share so many of their traits? :)

**Comment From rejoyce**

:)

**Comment From Jersey Shore Amy**

We have a lot of traits in common, don't we?



**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

I do think Raina's point is very interesting -- we value the shared traits and identify them as "smart" since they remind us of ourselves.

**Comment From Lydia, PA ☺☺☺?**

I Love calling the corvids feathered apes---they are so smart. GN should like that one too

**Comment From Jersey Shore Amy**

Smarter than some 5th graders! :)

**Comment From Lacy**

Perhaps we evolved side by side and crows and humans have been helping each other out for a very long time!



**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

Right!

**Comment From rejoyce**

The experiments with learned behavior patterns are just like the ones that behaviorists like Skinner have done on humans.

**Comment From BarbG**

al the illustrations were so informative



**Raina Krasner, WCV:**

Oh Lacy, yes! And the authors do mention a few times how humans and Ravens developed this strongly intertwined relationship.



**Raina Krasner, WCV:**

Like when he talks about feeding the crow at their hotel, and he imagines how easy it must have been for humans early on to develop relationships with corvids ... With food tid bits!

**Comment From rejoyce**

Critters of all kinds are motivated by food :)

**Comment From Jersey Shore Amy**

Was there mention of crows in ancient cave paintings (or am I thinking of a different book)?



**Raina Krasner, WCV:**

I don't remember that in this book, but maybe?

**Comment From Regina, IL**

You all that get to work, volunteer at WCV are so lucky.



**Raina Krasner, WCV:**

But the relationship between humans and crows does leave open the discussion about keeping crows as pets.

**Comment From CarolinaGirl**

Would not want to keep one as a pet but would love to have some as backyard friends.



**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

Also I'm not quite sure the authors understand wildlife rehabilitation centers having an "unfortunate surplus". At the Wildlife Center, non-releasable corvids that are able to be placed at educational facilities are. I'm sad the book ended on that note.

**Comment From Lacy**

I thought it was interesting that "wild" crows that form relationships with humans tended to be loners. Maybe it is part of a corvid's makeup to have some sort of social connections.



**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

Yes, that was an interesting point.

**Comment From rejoyce**

I think unless they are non-releasable, they should be left in the wild.

**Comment From Regina, IL**

I did have a pair of parakeets & loved them but I would not do it again. I have them to someone that raised them.

**Comment From Mrs. Matheson**

I am trying very hard to impress on the students at my school about NOT keeping wild animals as pets!

**Comment From Jersey Shore Amy**

I wasn't keen on the subtitle "...to behave like humans", but understand that it is an attention grabber. All those traits that animals have, they exist whether humans are around or not.

**Comment From Regina, IL**

I put peanuts out for the squi.... & saw a crow come get one so have hoped they would remember & come back but have seen another one in my yard although, they are in the neighborhood.

**Comment From Lacy**

Good point, Amy! the subtitle is kind of projecting our ideas onto their behavior and interpreting it into "human" terms that we understand... a crow might see it another way!

**Comment From rejoyce**

I did not know that they would play and "torment" so many kinds of animals!

**Comment From Lacy**

Yes - I didn't realize that crows would play with other species and actually seem to not fear dogs and cats like they do other wild predators.



**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

Fun video!

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gt28tX\\_2Pi0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gt28tX_2Pi0)

**Comment From rejoyce**

Cute!!



**Chapin Hardy, WCV:**

It's pretty cute how it walks up behind and crouches down.

**Comment From Lacy**

Like the crow is sneaking up on the dog. Cute!



**Chapin Hardy, WCV:**

Almost as if it was another dog :)

**Comment From Lydia, PA ☺☺☺?**

I love the vids

**Comment From GN**

Debi has been trying to make friends with our neighborhood crows for over a year' ever since she met Jaz. She read the book, I bought her a crow call and at times the front yard looks like a grocery store blew up. They just sit across the street and laugh at her.



**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

Awww! Where is Debi? She didn't want to come to book club?? I think she has to find a weird loner.



**Raina Krasner, WCV:**

Awww Debi.

**Comment From rejoyce**

I knew they could be mischievous, but I didn't know they were so playful!

**Comment From Lydia, PA ☺☺☺?**

Well GN I expect Debi would want to make friends with nthe feathered ape!

**Comment From Regina, IL**

So funny how they like to have a little fun.

**Comment From Jersey Shore Amy**

Isn't there a video of a crow or raven that distracted the cat from the pigeons?

**Comment From rejoyce**

LOL

**Comment From Regina, IL**

What is that cat doing outside. Good for the crow to antagonize it.

**Comment From Lacy**

Good point, Regina!

**Comment From rejoyce**

Right, Regina!

**Comment From Regina, IL**

Don't get me wrong, I love cats even though I'm allergic.

**Comment From Seahawk Nadine-U.P., WA**

Crows are very smart around golf courses. They wait for you to leave your golf cart to hit your golf ball and they jump in the cart looking for food and snacks

**Comment From Lydia, PA ☺☺☺?**

Let me try again----last one was very RAK Laden...GN I would expect Debi would want to be friends with feathered apes :)

**Comment From Mrs. Matheson**

I agree, Regina!

**Comment From Mrs. Matheson**

Back in December, I read a picture book aloud to the kindergartners and first graders called "Merry Christmas, Merry Crow" where a crow flies around town collecting things (ends up decorating a tree for all his bird friends). I would then show them the 'crow-boarding' video. They learned that crows like to collect things and are very smart!

**Comment From Lydia, PA 🦉🦉?**

I particularly loved this excerpt: Except from "Gifts of the Crow" Some birds, particularly those in the corvid family, which we generally call "crows" are exceptionally smart. Not only do they make tools, but they understand cause and effect. They use their wisdom to infer, discriminate, test, learn, remember, recognize people, seek revenge, lure or stampede other birds to their death, quaff coffee and beer, turn on lights to stay warm, or expose danger, speak, steal, deceive, gift, windsurf, play with cats, ...You can think of these birds as having mental tool kits on par with our closest relatives, the monkeys and apes. In fact, they are called "feathered apes"

**Comment From Kathy in NM ♥**

I checked out this book from the library when it first came out, and loved it so much that I bought my own copy. I loved each and every story, and the fact that the authors backed up the amazing human/crow interactions with scientific facts about the crow's brain, throat etc., showing how it's entirely possible for crows to do and say what they did. I am most grateful that this book showed how self aware they are. I hope that reading this book opens the minds and makes more people aware of the fact that animal/birds don't act like us, it's more that we act alike.



**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

I certainly found myself looking out the window as I read the book, watching the neighborhood crows and wondering what they were doing and enjoying.

**Comment From Lydia, PA 🦉🦉?**

There is so much more I would love to type, but I have broken bones in my clavicle right now, so I cannot type much longer, I will Just say I give this book a 5. Mainly for all the new knowledge I gained from it and the excellent stories



**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

Right ... the rating!



**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

What do you all rate this book ... out of 5 stars?

**Comment From CarolinaGirl**

4



**Raina Krasner, WCV:**

I'd give it 4.

**Comment From Kathy in NM ♥**

Definitely a 5!



**Chapin Hardy, WCV:**

I agree with the 4

**Comment From rejoyce**

4

**Comment From BarbG**

4

**Comment From Jersey Shore Amy**

4, and I wish the stories were first, and all the anatomical data second. I had to be patient and plow through it.

**Comment From Lacy**

I think a 4.

**Comment From sek in co**

4

**Comment From CK in PA**

4



**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

Sounds like the fours have it!

**Comment From Jersey Shore Amy**

Yep, I'm on the lookout for crows now.

**Comment From Regina, IL**

I'd say a 4-5 since I haven't read it all yet. You all make it sound like a great book.



**Chapin Hardy, WCV:**

So that leads us to our next order of business ...



**Comment From rejoyce**

So..... What's our next book???

**Comment From CarolinaGirl**

Next book???



**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

Next book club date ... we have to pick. :P But it's in April! First week of April.

**Comment From GN**

Swimming monkeys.



**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

Hmmm ... maybe for the one after that ...

**Comment From Jersey Shore Amy**

I'm curious how many people have known others who had crows for pets?

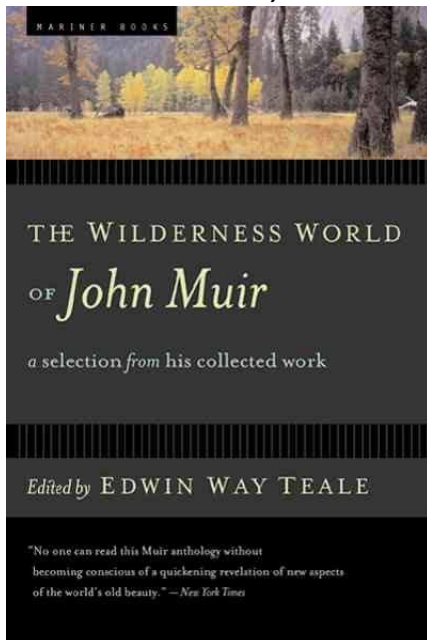


**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

Next book is ...



**Raina Krasner, WCV**





**Raina Krasner, WCV:**

The Wilderness World of John Muir



**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

Seemed appropriate for Earth Day Month!

**Comment From GN**

Great choice.

**Comment From BarbG**

sounds interesting

**Comment From rejoyce**

Ooooooooooooo



**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

Have you read it, GN?



**Raina Krasner, WCV:**

[http://www.amazon.com/The-Wilderness-World-John-Muir/dp/0618127518/ref=redir\\_mobile\\_desktop?ie=UTF8&dpID=416%2BTmS6LOL&dpPI=1&keywords=wilderness%20world%20of%20john%20muir&pi=SY200\\_QL40&pldnSite=1&qid=1454462000&ref=plSrc h&ref =mp\\_s\\_a\\_1\\_1&sr=8-1](http://www.amazon.com/The-Wilderness-World-John-Muir/dp/0618127518/ref=redir_mobile_desktop?ie=UTF8&dpID=416%2BTmS6LOL&dpPI=1&keywords=wilderness%20world%20of%20john%20muir&pi=SY200_QL40&pldnSite=1&qid=1454462000&ref=plSrc h&ref =mp_s_a_1_1&sr=8-1)

**Comment From Kathy in NM ♥**

John Muir led a very interesting life. This should be good!

**Comment From Jersey Shore Amy**

COOL!!

**Comment From Regina, IL**

Thanks so much for the book club meeting. WOW tht looks like another good book. I'm enjoying being a member of my local library.

**Comment From rejoyce**

Another great book club! Thanks everyone!

**Comment From BarbG**

thanks for another great Book Club-loving them

**Comment From GN**

I don't think so, but I am a big fan of Muir.

**Comment From Lacy**

I'm looking forward to reading it!



**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

He's quoted quite a bit -- and in one of my favorite comics --



**Amanda Nicholson, WCV**



**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

Someone sent that to us at the Center after the 2013 bear release. It just seemed really fitting!

**Comment From CarolinaGirl**

Great book club! Thanks ladies!

**Comment From Kathy in NM ♥**

Another great Book Club ~ Thanks everyone!

**Comment From CK in PA**

I'm looking forward to this book. He had such an impact on enviromental awareness.

**Comment From Jersey Shore Amy**

Just bought mine. :) Don't forget the Amazon Smile part!

**Comment From SAH**

Wow! I might have to read that one!! :)

**Comment From CK in PA**

Thanks for another great book club discussion.

**Comment From Regina, IL**

I so hope it's not on a Wednesday. I do use Amazon Smile. Ordered a birthday gift for my son.

**Comment From CK in PA**

I have a new interest in the crows in our neighborhood and have become aware of their different calls. I never noticed that before reading this book.



**Amanda Nicholson, WCV:**

Thanks so much, everyone!



**Chapin Hardy, WCV:**

Have a great night!

**Comment From Lacy**

Goodnight, everyone!

**Comment From Jersey Shore Amy**

Good night, book club!

**Comment From Regina, IL**

Night all. Thanks again. So you & the bears in the morning.

**Comment From GN**

Goodnight, Lacy.



**Raina Krasner, WCV:**

Night! Thanks for joining us.