

## CORVIDS - AN IDENTIFICATION COMPARISON TABLE

Characteristic	Torresian Crow ( <i>Corvus orru</i> )	Little Crow ( <i>Corvus bennetti</i> )	Australian Raven ( <i>Corvus coronoides</i> )	Little Raven ( <i>Corvus mellori</i> )	Forest Raven ( <i>Corvus tasmanicus</i> )
Size	48-53 cm	45-48 cm = smallest corvid	48-52 cm	48-50 cm	52-54 cm
Shape – general	Bulky, plump compared to all except Forest Raven	Slight, short legged. Crown slightly domed.	Head slightly higher towards rear of crown	Slimline shape compared to others	Big and heavy (more than Little Raven), shortest tail
Plumage	Very glossy, blue or violet black	Plumage often dull black	'Frosted' grey caste	Black with green and purple gloss	Same as Little Raven
Bill – length and shape	Same or longer than head. Large. Similar to Aust Raven	Shorter than head length. Slender	Longer than head Large	Bill length = head length or longer More curved than Australian Raven	Bill length = head length or longer Most massive bill
Feathers (neck)	Adults – White bases Juveniles – Grey Bases	Adults – White bases Juveniles – Grey Bases	Dark Grey bases	Adults - Grey bases. (Body feathers-ashy-brown base)	Adults - Grey bases
Throat bulge.	Slight (when calling). No particularly noticeable throat hackles.	None	Very obvious. Balloons out when calling	Throat doesn't bulge when calling. Care with gular pouch which makes small bulge.	Has indistinct hackles, but don't bulge into large bag like Australian Raven
Chin / Gape			Bare, pinkish (Juvenile only)	Adult: loose bare skin on chin. Juvenile: skin pinkish under bill.	
Eye 1 <sup>st</sup> year 2 <sup>nd</sup> year 3 <sup>rd</sup> year (adult)	Brown. Hazel (mottled brown & white). White (blue ring around pupil).	Brown. Hazel (mottled brown / white). White.	Same as Torresian Crow	Duller black to brown Brown, Hazel White	Brown Hazel, mottled White
Tail	Square cut. Slightly broader than Australian Raven	Relatively short	Long, slender. Round tipped	Relatively short	Narrowing to tip rather than square cut
Call	' <b>uk-uk-uk-uk-uk</b> ' last note slower. Also harsh, aggressive ' <b>arrk-arrk-arrk-arrk,arrrrgk</b> ' (evenly spaced until last gurgle)	' <b>nark-nark-nark</b> ' & slow creaking calls	' <b>aairk-aark-aarh-aargargh</b> ' Strong first note. Final note often a complaining drawn out mournful wail	' <b>kar – kar – kar</b> ' Rapid tempo, short, clipped. Last note may die away a little, but no drawn out wailing like Australian Raven	' <b>kaarr-kaarr-kaarr</b> ' or ' <b>korr-korr-korr</b> ' Powerful and slow. Last note may be longer, but no drawn out wailing like Australian Raven
Call - (Pitch)	Tenor, staccato nasal honking	Rapid, deep. Baritone, nasal	High pitched	Harsh, level / flat. Not as powerful as Forest Raven	Deep. Baritone. Gravelly.
Call - (Flying)	Single call " <b>ok</b> " or " <b>owk</b> ". Misses a wing beat with each call ("currawong" style)	Utters double call ( <b>quark-quark</b> ) whilst missing a wing beat, but calls less in flight	Utters wailing cries with continuous wing-beat	Does not miss wingbeat in flight when calling	Does not miss wingbeat in flight when calling
Flight - (Flying)	Wings relatively blunter than Australian Raven. Broad tipped, blunt wings. Broader tail than Little Crow & Australian Raven. More compact	Wings relatively blunter, tail rounded. Agile in flight, looks compact, wingbeats quick and shallow. Spectacular aerial displays. Fly high.	Appears rakish. Backswept tapered wings that have a slow downstroke and a quick upward flick. Wings longer than the Crows	High-flying (70-100 metres) flocks to 100 birds, with aerial displays and chases. Wings longer than the Crows due to more tapering	Wings rounded, tail broad

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Flight - (Gliding)	On drooped wings. Compact & blunt winged	Soars with wings turned back at carpal joint. Tail long, slender	Glides with wings flat and tips widely fingered and upturned	Relatively narrower wing tips	Tail and wings flattened out
When landing	Often shuffles and resettles folded wings exaggeratedly. Wing-quivering greeting.	Gives slight shuffle of wings	No particularly consistent behaviour.	Neck-extending greeting ceremony.	No particularly consistent behaviour.
Calling posture-when perched	Upright. Nil to only slight flicking of wing-tips	Upright. No wing flicking	Horizontal, with head down. No wing flicking	Quick upward flip with both wings with each note. Sometimes extends neck. Otherwise no consistent posture	Tail points downward
Perching - location	Usually on high perch but sometimes on ground	Low perch or ground	Usually high perch	Lower branches, up to 10m metres	Lower branches, or higher
Habitat (Always see reference material for distribution)	Widespread – more tropical northern Australia. Hence large variety of habitats including coastal regions, arid area sites with trees (along rivers, gorges), stubble and grain crops. Not in extreme desert areas.	West of Great Dividing Range. Open arid & semi-arid country, usually mulga, mallee, spinifex. Prefers drier, arid areas. Common corvid of outback towns and cattle stations.	Relatively widespread distribution. Hence large variety of habitats including open country, natural and cleared. Less in settled areas.	Mainly large south / south-western area of Australia. Open country, wide variety of woodland, open farming country, treeless plains, suburbs.	Restricted distribution in NSW, Vic, SA, Tasmania. Denser forest, including alpine and wet eucalypt forest. Beaches, heath, coastal scrub, pine plantations.
Feeding	In trees and on the ground, mainly insects	Feeds mainly on the ground; mainly insects	Feeds on the ground	More insectivorous than others. Less scavenging / carrion	Omnivorous. Feeds in both open areas & under canopy.
Flocking	Adults – sedentary, Juveniles – nomadic. Non-breeders form small flocks. Pairs strongly territorial	Sociable at all times. Flocks often very large (hundreds), particularly outside breeding season.	Non-breeders form small flocks. Pairs strongly territorial.	Nomadic outside breeding season.	Non-breeders form locally nomadic flocks of 30-40. Pairs strongly territorial.

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Also be aware of the House Crow (*Corvus splendens*) (brown nape, brown sides of neck, brown breast; adult eye brown, not white. Care: see eyes of immature native birds above).

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**SOME SOURCES OF IDENTIFICATION:** The above information has been sourced from some of the Field Guides, Monographs and Papers listed below.

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Notes on the Australian Corvids. Author Stephen Debus. Publication ABW vol 7, no 6 June 1980

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The Genus *Corvus* (Aves: *Corvidae*) in Australia. Author Ian Rowley. Publication: CSIRO Wildlife Research vol 15, 1970

The comparative ecology of Australian corvids. Author Ian Rowley. Publication: CSIRO Wildlife Research vol 18, no. 1, October 1973

Directory of Australian Birds, Author Schodde & Mason 1998

Crows in Suburbia. Author Darryl Jones and Susie Everding. Publication: Newsletter CBOC (Cumberland Bird Observers Club Inc.) vol 14, no. 4, Mar-April 1993

Difficult Birds - Ravens and Crows. Author Graham Pizzey and George Thomas. Publication: Newsletter RAOU Atlas, September 1977

Bird Identification - Crows and Ravens. Author Stephen Debus. Publication: Wingspan (Birds Australia, Royal Australian Ornithologists Union) vol 5, no. 4, December 1995

Derek Goodwin, Crows of the World, UQP, 1977, ISBN 0 7022 1015 3 (monograph)

Steve Madge & Hilary Burn, Crows and Jays, Christopher Helm (UK) or Princeton University Press (USA), 1999, ISBN:0-691-08883-7, p165 – 173 and plate 29 (monograph)

