

# Smart Stuff

with Twig Walkingstick

**Q. Dear Twig: What's the difference between a crow and a raven?**

A. Basically this: Their **voice, size and flight**. The shapes of their **bills, wings and tails**. Plus also where they live.

In most of North America, the common crow is the American Crow, while the common raven is the Common Raven. I'll use them here as examples.

- **American Crow:** Typically says "caw." About 17 inches long. Flaps almost all the time; rarely soars. Squared-off tail. Lives pretty much all over the United States and Canada (but not in the far north), including in my home state, Ohio.

- **Common Raven:** Typically says "gronk-gronk," "tok" or "rok." Bigger: about 21 inches long. Flaps, glides, soars, may even do a somersault! Bigger bill, with more of a curve to the top part of it. Wings have longer, spaced-out "fingers" (primary feathers) at the end.

Wedge-shaped tail. Lives in Alaska, the American West, most of Canada and Mexico. Lives in the eastern United States, too, but mostly just the northeast part and the Appalachian Mountains.

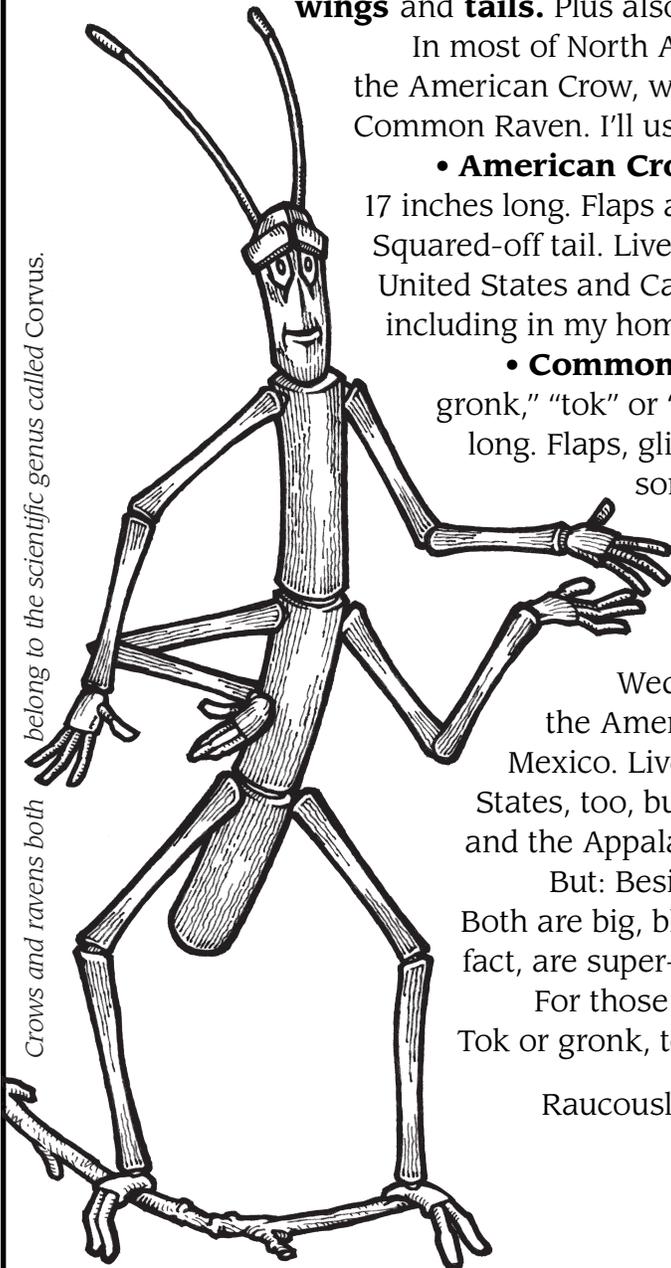
But: Besides that they're a lot alike.

Both are big, black and smart. And both, in fact, are super-close cousins.

For those about to rok, we salute you!  
Tok or gronk, too. Caw, as well. HEE-la!

Raucously,

Twig



From your scientific friends at The Ohio State University — specifically, the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center ([www.oardc.ohio-state.edu](http://www.oardc.ohio-state.edu)) and OSU Extension ([extension.osu.edu](http://extension.osu.edu)).

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**Notes:** Scientifically speaking, the American Crow is *Corvus brachyrhynchos*, the Common Raven, *Corvus corax*. Other North American species include the Fish Crow, Northwestern Crow and Chihuahuan Raven. Crows and ravens belong to the Corvidae family, which also includes jays, magpies and nutcrackers. Try these sources, both online, for excellent, more-detailed details about how to tell crows and ravens apart: <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/crows/crowfaq.htm#raven> (Cornell University) and <http://www.pgc.state.pa.us/pgc/cwp/view.asp?a=458&q=150475> (Pennsylvania Game Commission). And try, too, this Twig book fave: Bernd Heinrich's *The Mind of the Raven*.

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