

Crows Caught on Camera Fashioning Special Hook Tools

By Jolyon Troscianko & Christian Rutz | [Science Daily](#)



Scientists have been given an extraordinary glimpse into how wild New Caledonian crows make and use 'hooked stick tools' to hunt for insect prey.

Dr Jolyon Troscianko, from the University of Exeter, and Dr Christian Rutz, from the University of St Andrews, have captured first video recordings documenting how these tropical corvids fashion these particularly complex tools in the wild.

The pair developed tiny video 'spy-cameras' which were attached to the crows, to observe their natural foraging behaviour.

They discovered two instances of hooked stick tool making on the footage they recorded, with one crow spending a minute making the tool, before using it to probe for food in tree crevices and even in leaf litter on the ground.

The findings are reported in the Royal Society's journal *Biology Letters* on Wednesday, December 23.

Dr Troscianko is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Exeter's Biosciences Department based at the Penryn Campus in Cornwall, who worked on the project while at the University of Birmingham.

He said: "While fieldworkers had previously obtained brief glimpses of hooked stick tool manufacture, the only video footage to date came from baited feeding sites, where tool raw materials and probing tasks had been provided to crows by scientists. We were keen to get close-up video of birds making these tools under completely natural conditions."

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Story Source:

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Journal Reference:

1. Jolyon Troscianko, Christian Rutz. **Activity profiles and hook-tool use of New Caledonian crows recorded by bird-borne video cameras.** *Biology Letters*, 2015; 11 (12): 20150777 DOI: [10.1098/rsbl.2015.0777](https://doi.org/10.1098/rsbl.2015.0777)