



How to draw the
RAVEN

How to draw the **RAVEN**

By Kirsty "Crow Artist" Yeomans

INTRODUCTION

The Raven's body language and non-vocal signals have been observed a lot in wild birds. They use their wings in elaborate gestures and their beaks to point, along with vocal cues.

This book teaches basic body structures, positions and placements of feathers and muscles of the Raven. It will help you implement necessary information into your art to help create more realistic drawings. When sketching from a variety of angles, you might struggle with the shapes, so refer to this book to find the solution.

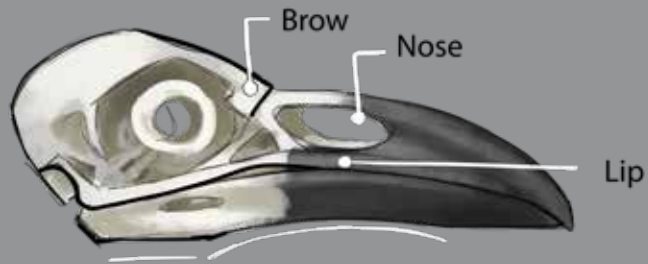
This booklet will be helpful and valuable to anyone who loves drawing Ravens or have a keen interest in them.



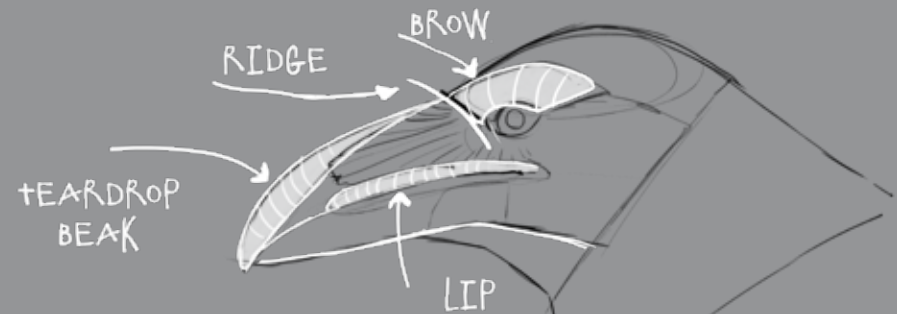
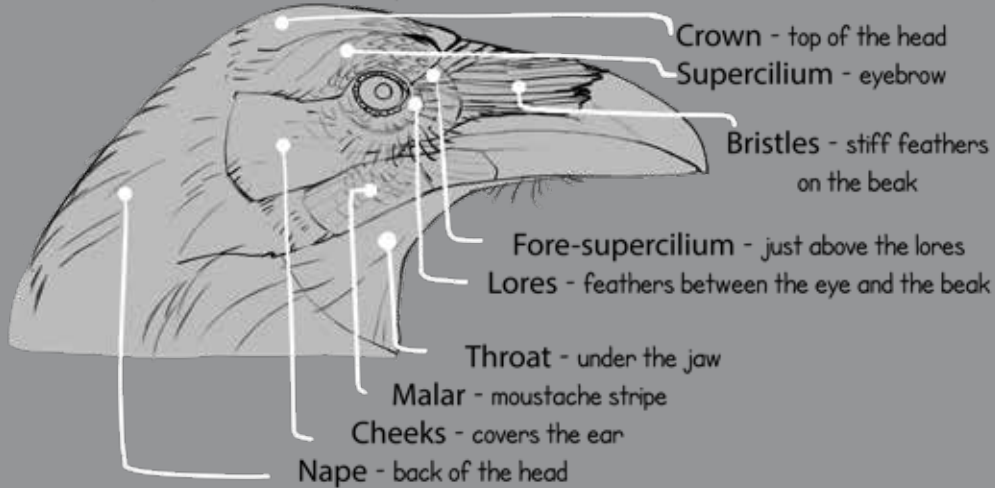
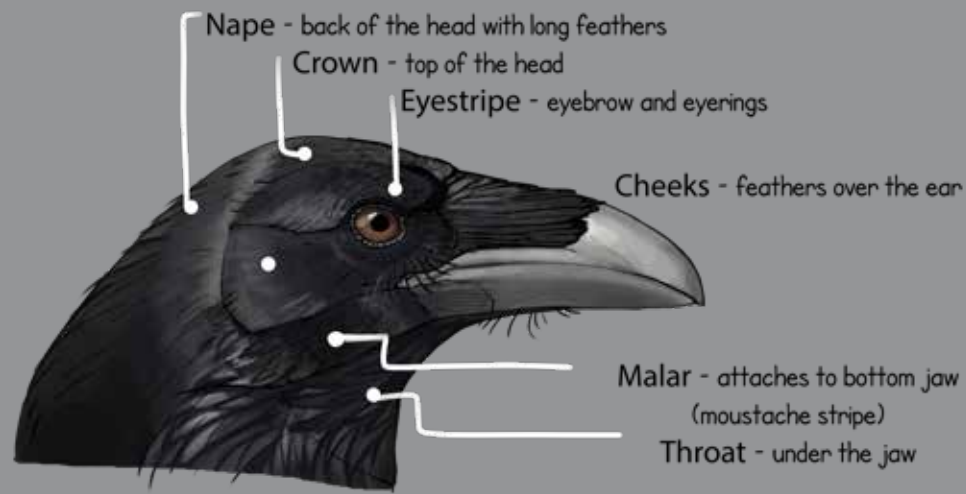
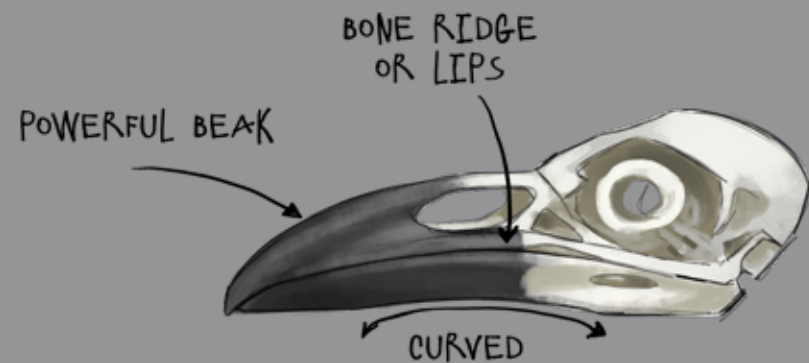
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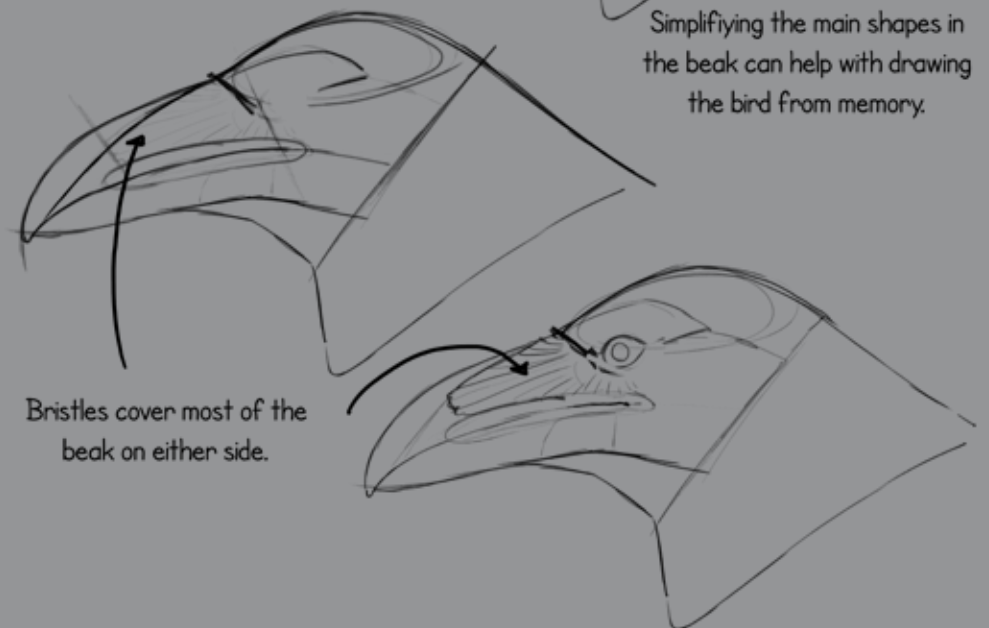
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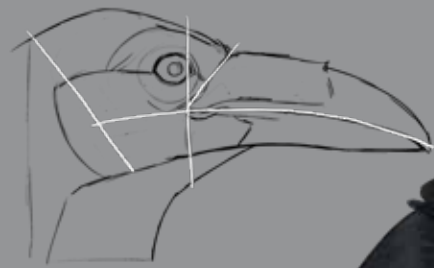


The bottom jaw is curved not straight

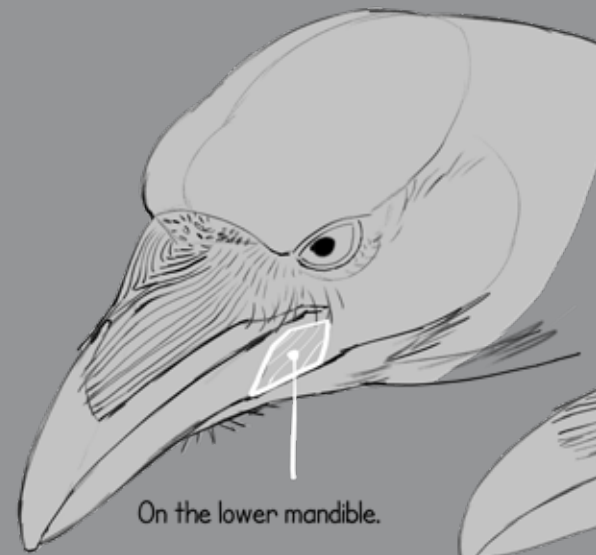
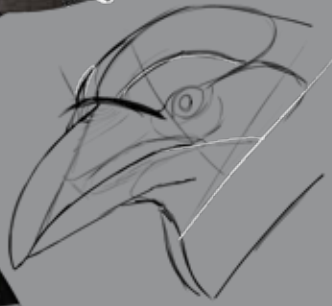


Simplifying the main shapes in the beak can help with drawing the bird from memory.

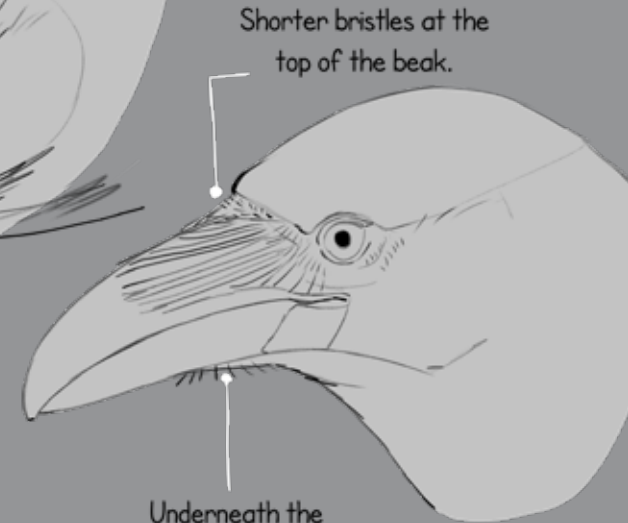




Finding the centre line of the head can make it easier to add the familiar shapes that forms the beak.



On the lower mandible.



Shorter bristles at the top of the beak.

Underneath the beak.



Teardrop for the tip of the beak.



CENTRE LINE

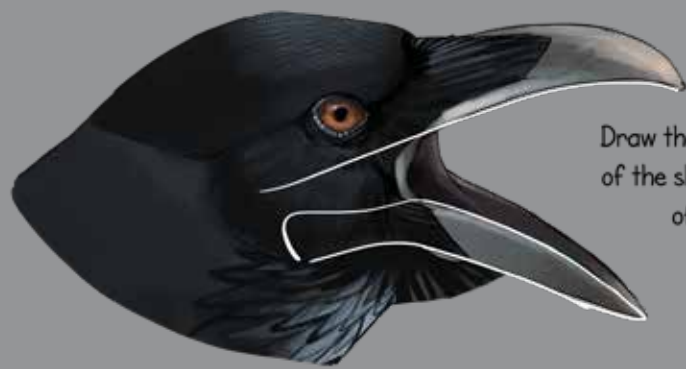
LIP



The bristles grow around the beak and nostril.



Very short stiff bristles.



Draw the beak at the hinge of the skull, not the corner of the mouth.



The feathers on the eyebrow can lift for body language or expression.



The bristles cover the corner of the mouth with long whiskers.



The lower mandible is not straight, it curves at the bottom and top (see skull).



Practice drawing the skull from the front first, it will make it easier to position the beak in the front view.

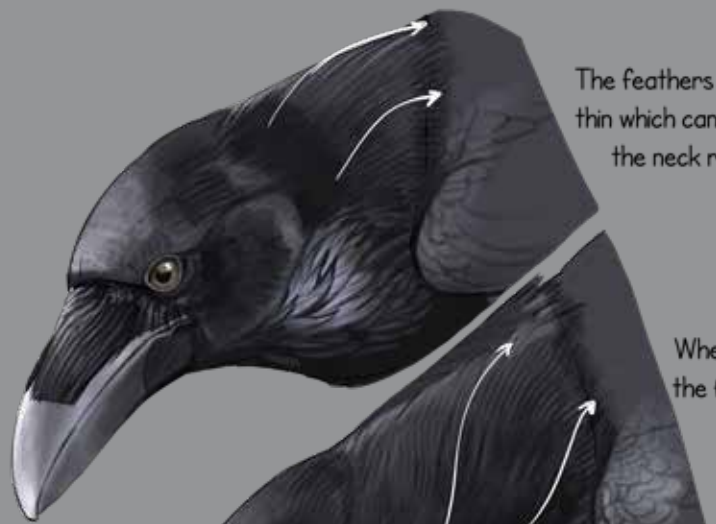


GAPE

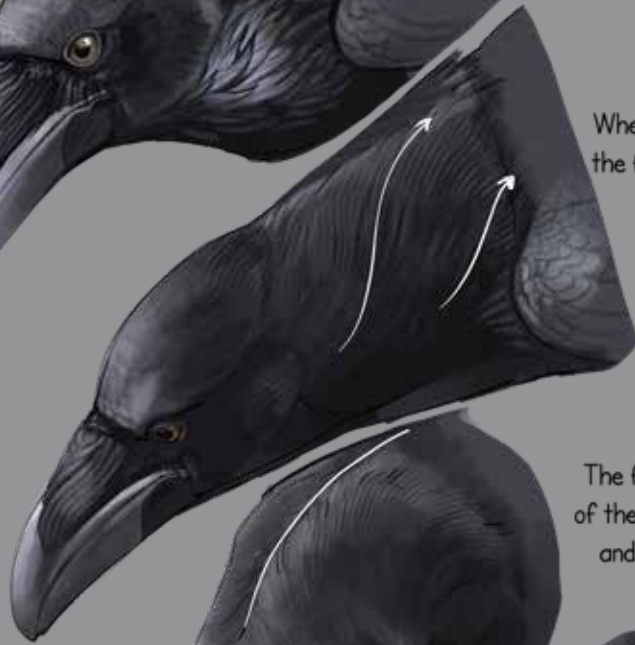
GAPE FLANGE

They can also lift the feathers on the whole of their head to appear completely fluffed up when strutting or showing dominant behaviour.





The feathers on the neck are long and thin which can look like thick hair: When the neck retracts it looks bulky.



When the neck is fully stretched the feathers wrap around to the back from each side.

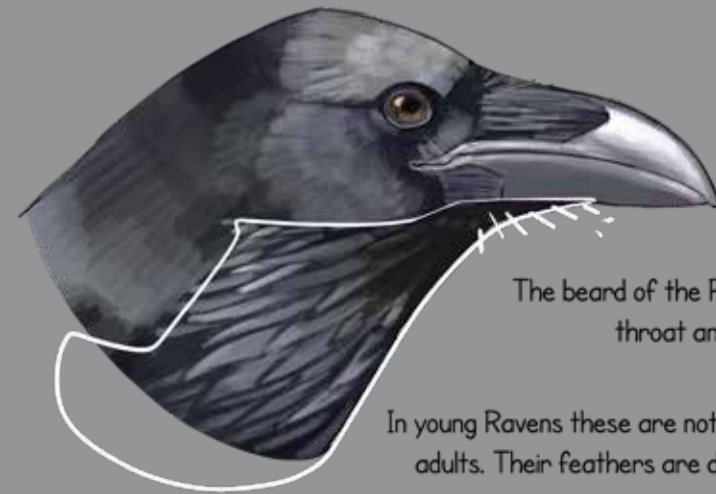


The feathers meet in the middle of the neck starting at the crown and resting on the shoulders.

The brows are very prominent on the Raven from any angle, the feathers will catch the light on them.



The crown feathers gather around the skull to the back of the head.



The beard of the Raven sits tight under the throat and ear feathers.

In young Ravens these are not as long or shiny as the adults. Their feathers are dull with a brown tint.



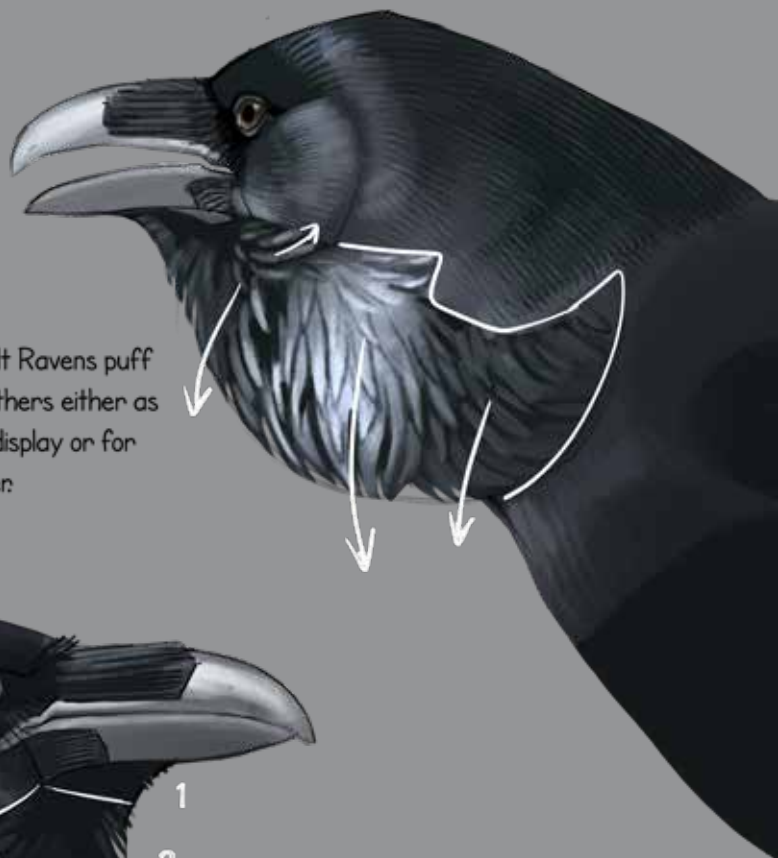
The feathers are split down the middle and spread out to the sides.



The beard feathers overlap each other and are very pointed. They are short under the throat and then become long in the middle.



When displaying, the adult Ravens puff out the beard as the feathers either as aggression, territorial display or for their partner:



From the front, the feathers can be sectioned into four layers to help with drawing the feathers.



The mantle overlays the scapulars in two sections.



Mantle

Scapular

The scapulars are feathers on the shoulders of the bird that cover the base of the wing when the bird is at rest. There is a group for each side of the wing.

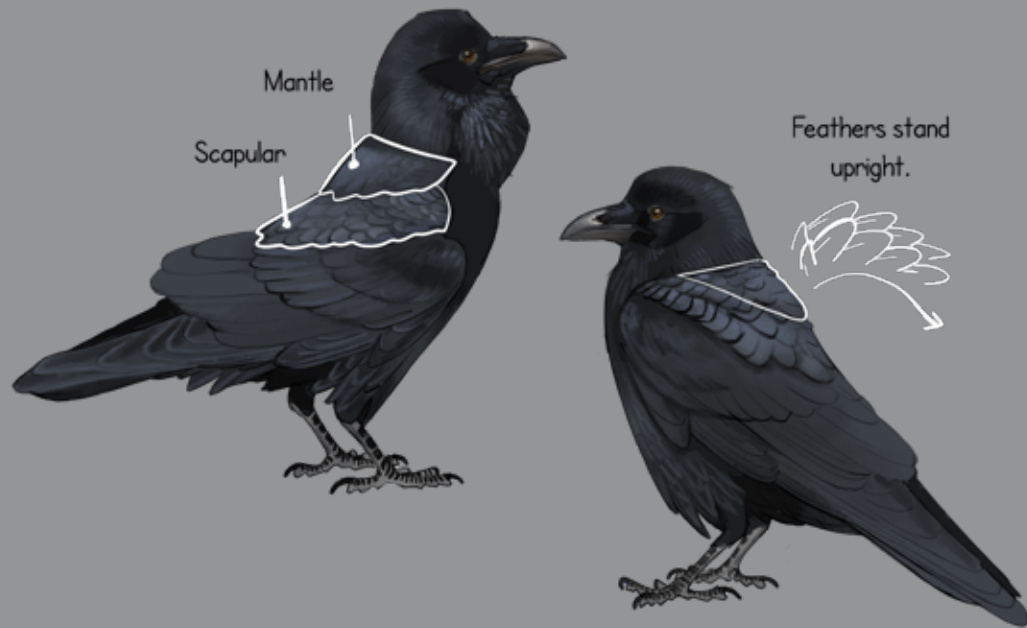
The long strands of feathers that look like hair rest over the mantle and scapulars.



Mantle

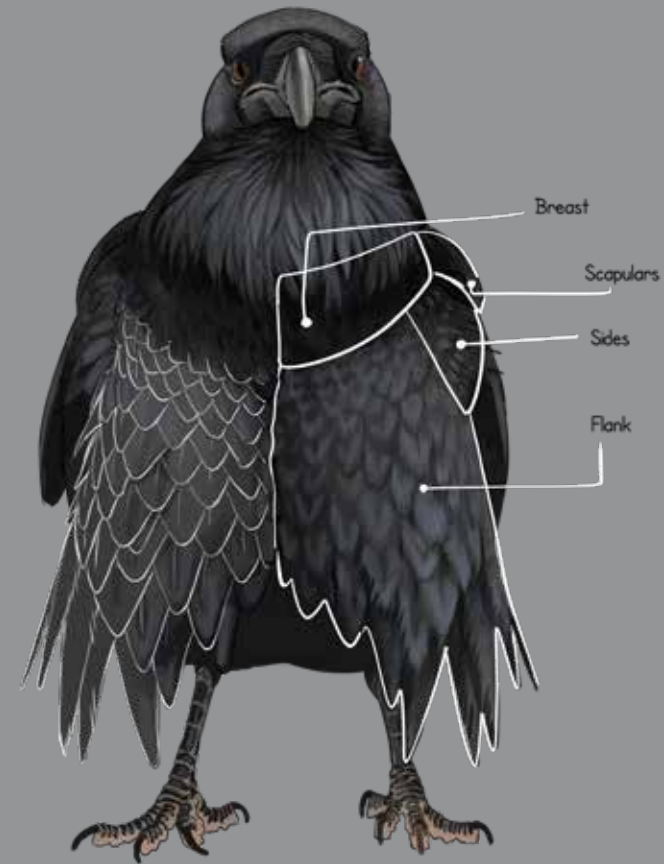
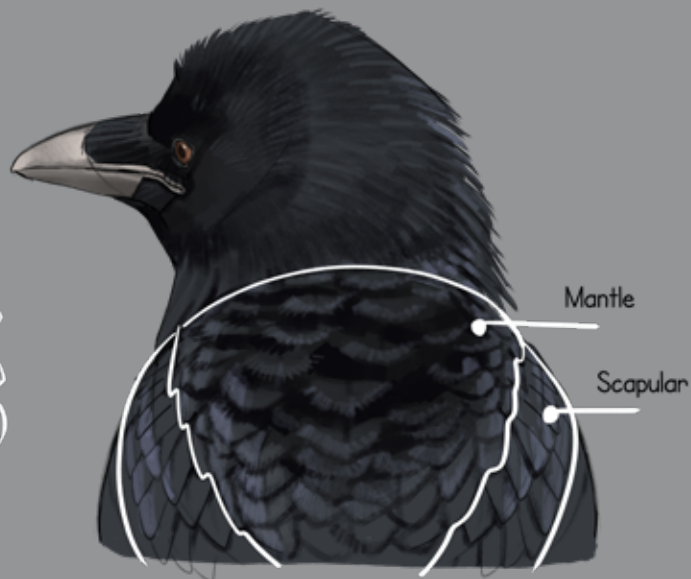
Scapular

The mantle and scapular feathers can move independently.



Feathers can lift upright to give a fluffy appearance and follow a pattern from where they grow.

Feathers from the front when they lift.



Ravens can lift and elevate feathers to let air flow through. Not just for flight, but also for displaying, showing aggression or to appear bigger.

The breast feathers are part of the beard feathers and are thin and long compared to the shape of others on Passerines.

The flank feathers wrap around the body when not puffed out to keep the Raven streamlined during flight. Think of them like scales on a fish.



The tail is separate to the flanks.



Ravens are very expressive with their wings, holding them low or high. They also hold them in a heart shaped way when displaying.

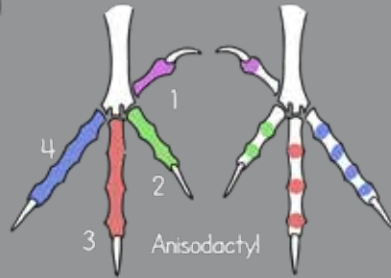


Use the guide lines to draw the wings when foreshortening the feathers.



Left

Right



All Corvids have this arrangement of 3 front toes and 1 rear toe. They are part of the songbird family (passerines).



The rear toe sits on the inside of the foot, facing inwards. Similar to our hands with the thumb towards the inside. The rear toe does not bend so will always be straight.

The foot has thick pads with a rough, bobble pattern for extra grip on branches.



Left

Left



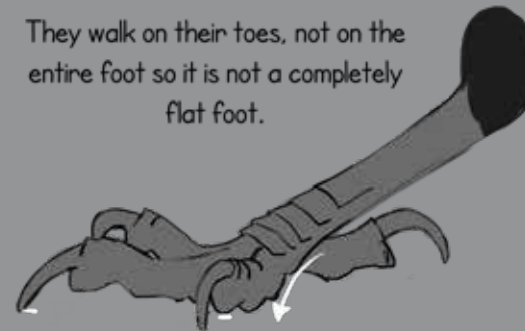
Right

Left

When drawing the angled foot, the rear digit is thicker on the inside and more profound.



They walk on their toes, not on the entire foot so it is not a completely flat foot.

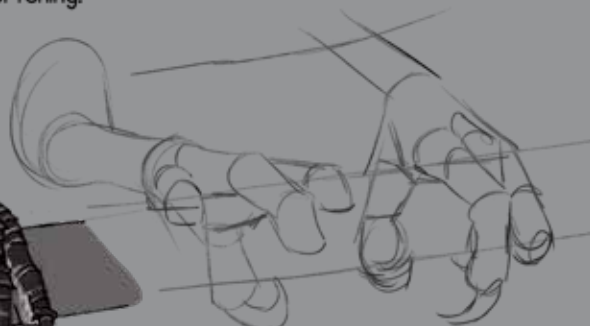


The term for walking and running on the toes is called digitigrade locomotion.

They are faster in running and jumping as they have extra leverage from their ankle.



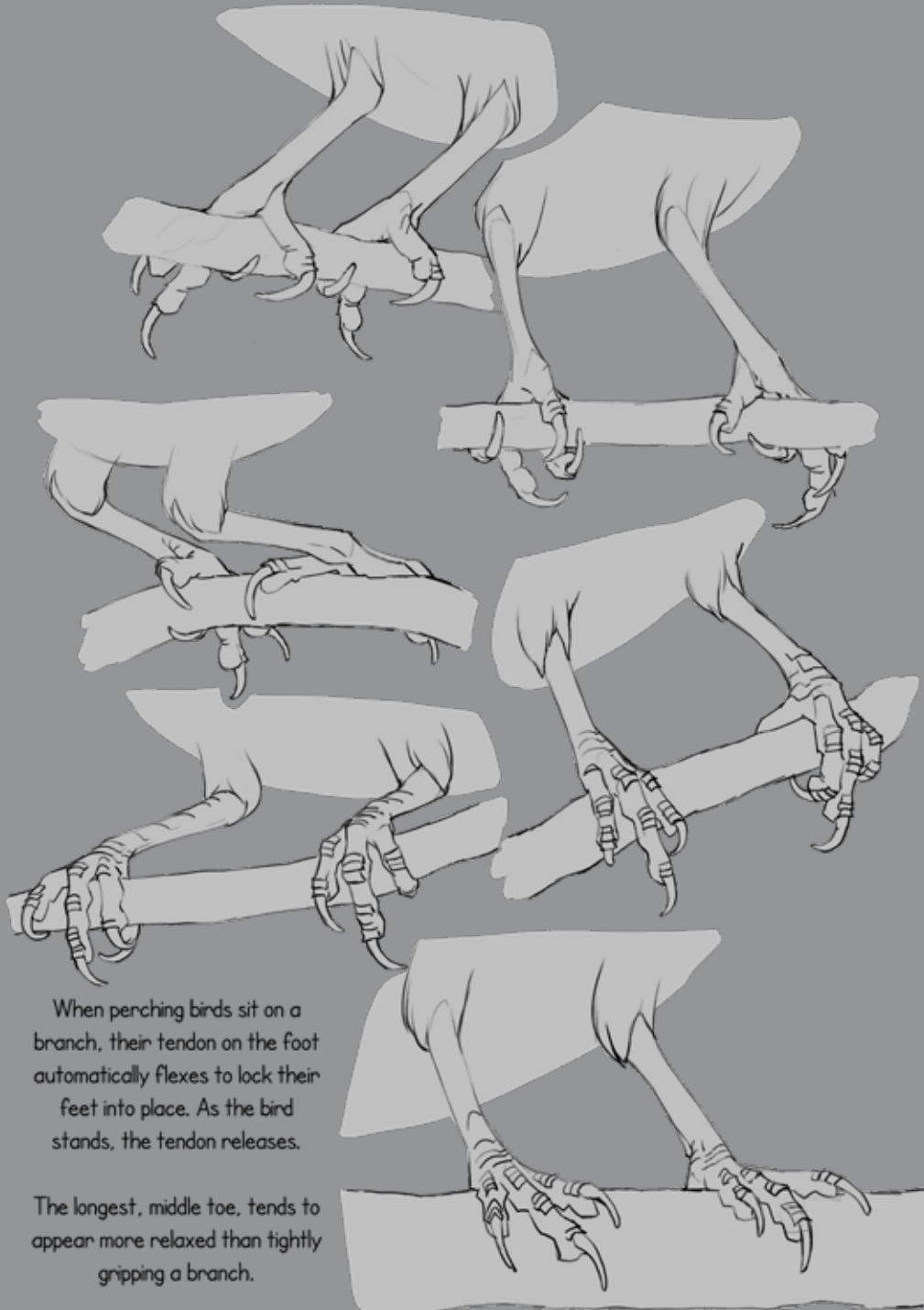
Use shapes to help with foreshortening.



Draw the hidden rear toe and erase after.



The back toe remains straight, even in flight.



When perching birds sit on a branch, their tendon on the foot automatically flexes to lock their feet into place. As the bird stands, the tendon releases.

The longest, middle toe, tends to appear more relaxed than tightly gripping a branch.

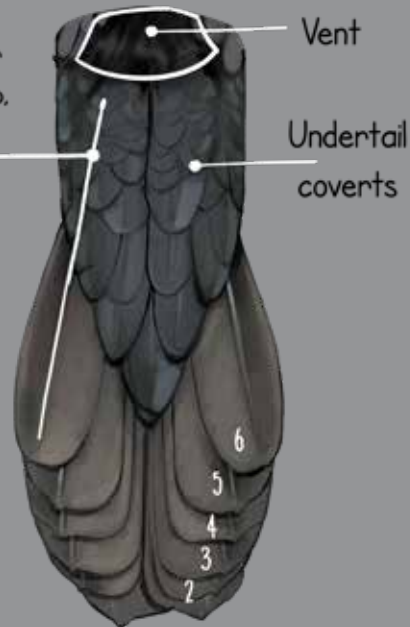


The tail feather begins up the top, hidden by the coverts.

The coverts protect and cover the tail feathers and give that familiar diamond shape.

Deck feathers

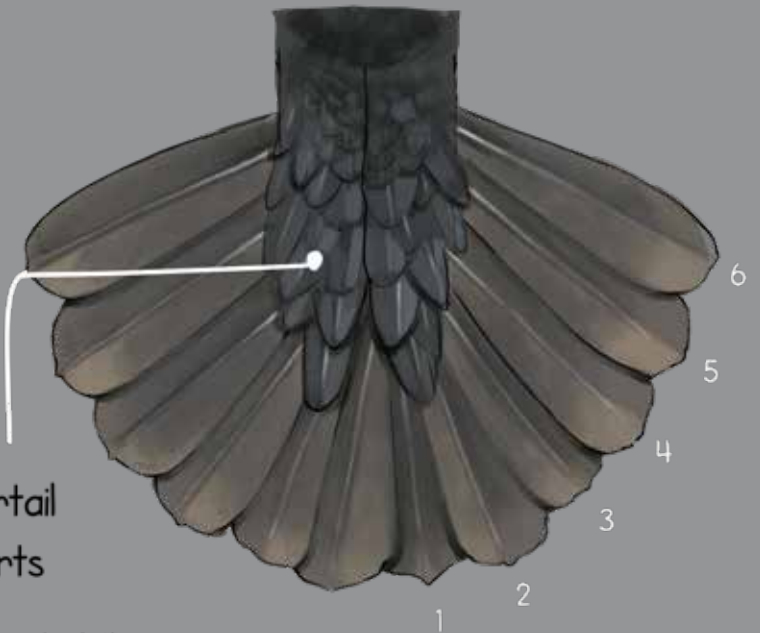
Stiff feathers that sit on the top of the other tail feathers.



Vent

Undertail coverts

There are 6 feathers each side and stack on top of each other.



Undertail coverts

The coverts sandwich the tail feathers.

The tail spreads out like a large fan, still with the familiar diamond shape.

Uppertail coverts



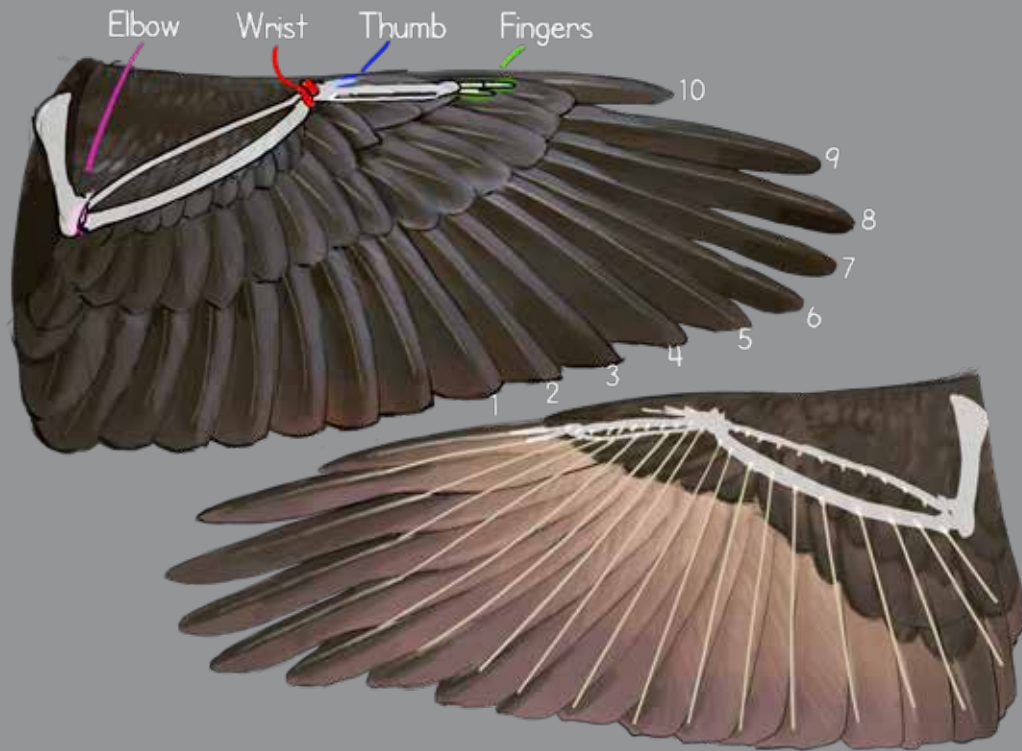
Deck feathers



Uppertail coverts

The undertail coverts can open up for displaying or retract for smooth flight.

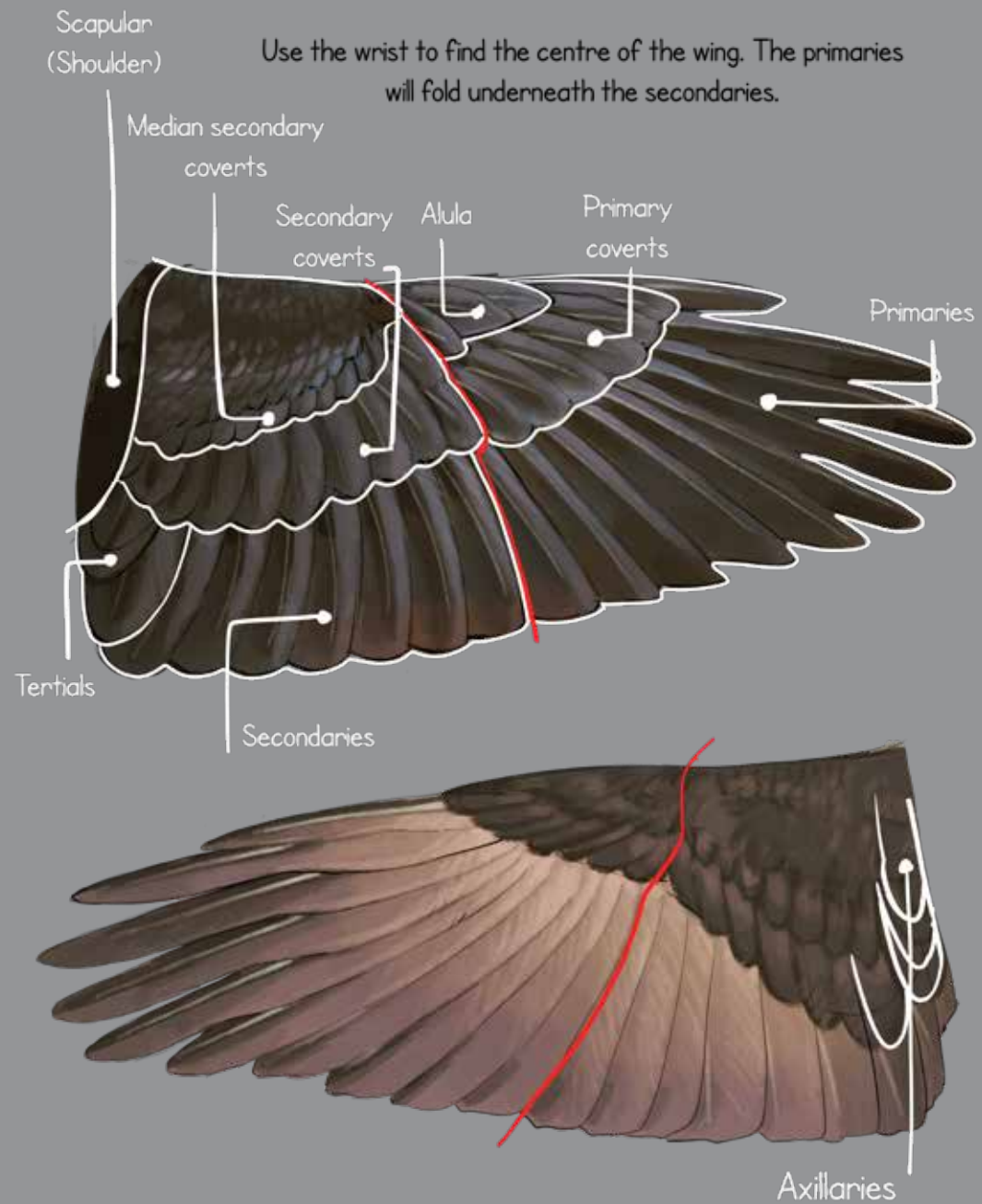




The primaries and secondaries are attached to the bone while the coverts are attached to the flesh. Ravens can moult and replace these feathers.

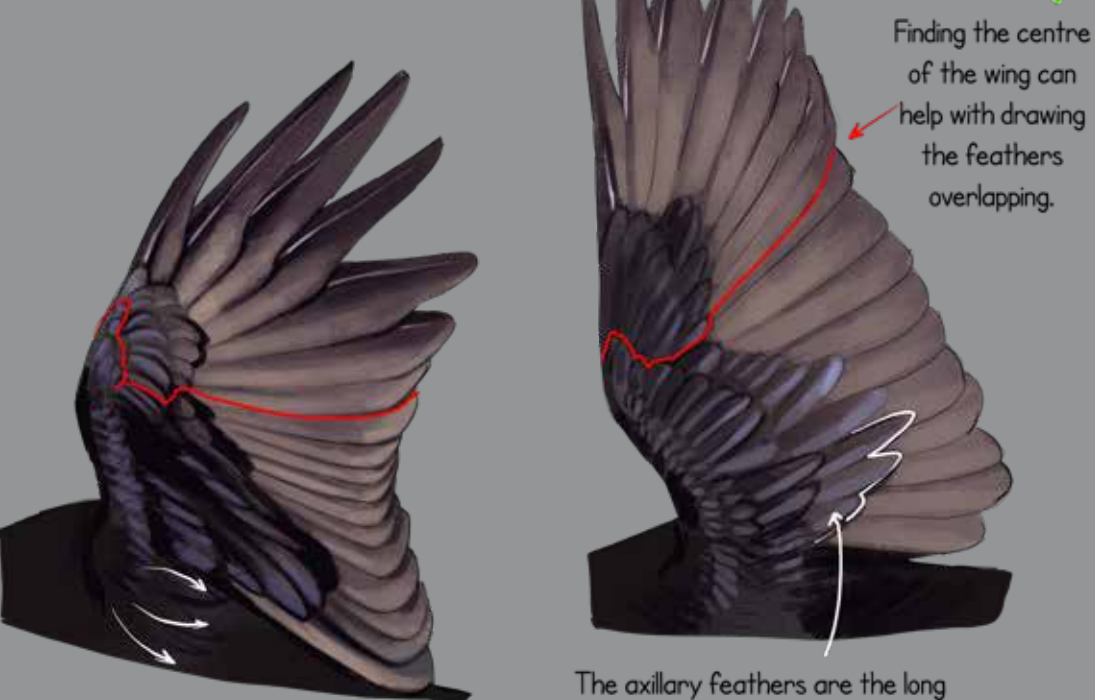
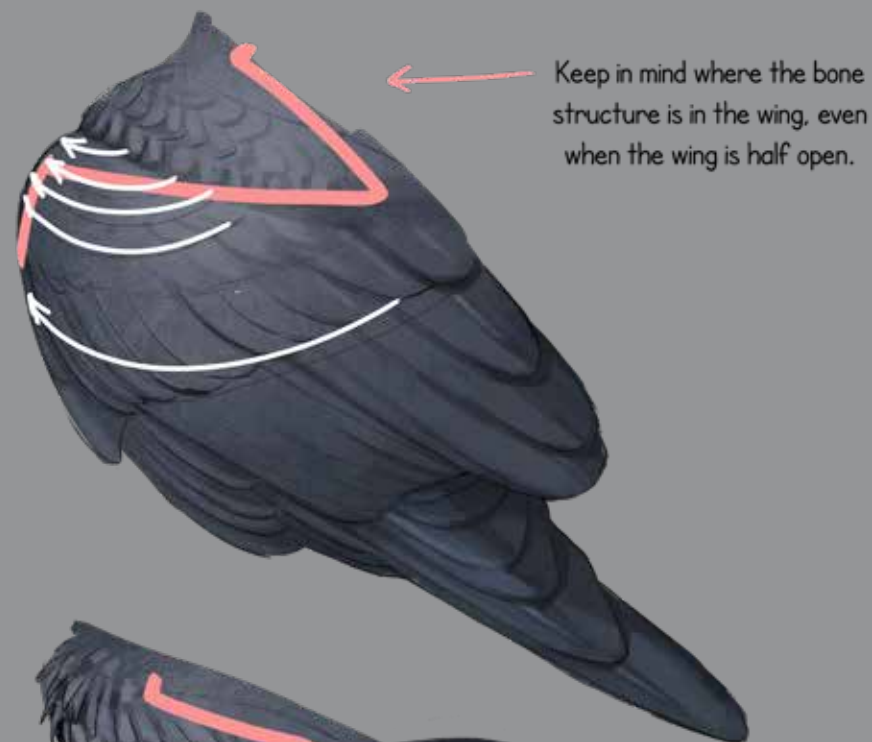
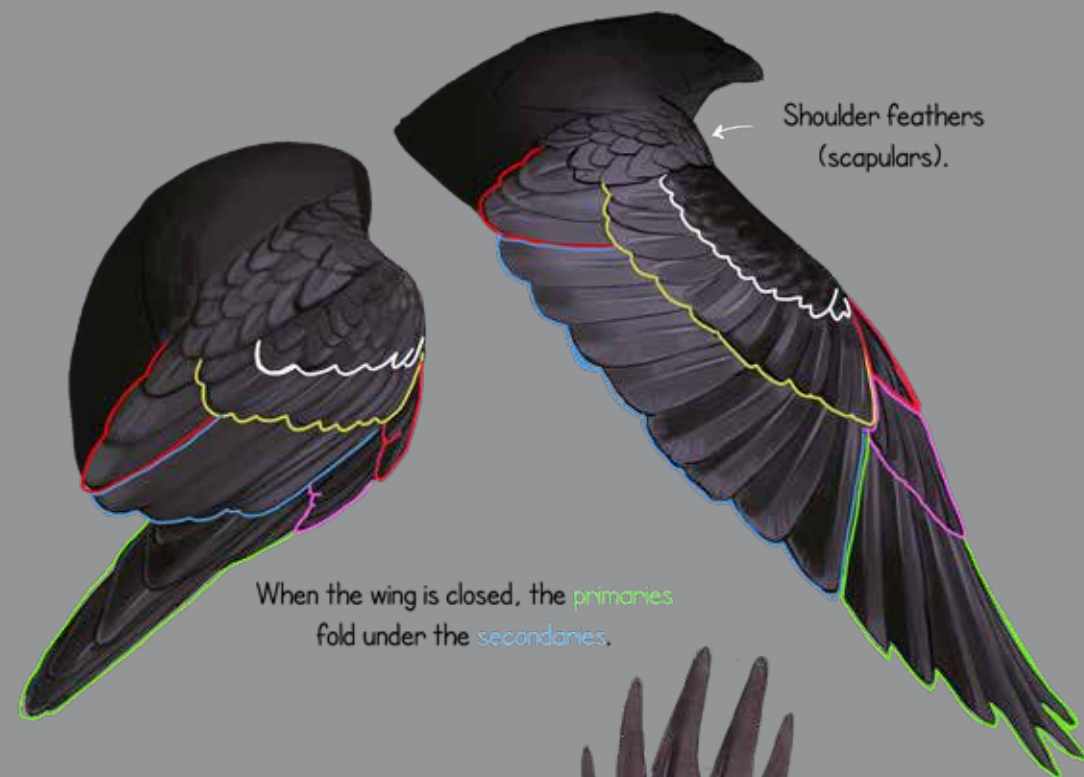


These five primaries are the most recognised when drawing Raven wings. They are long and stiff to help the air flow between them more freely for less resistance.



Use the wrist to find the centre of the wing. The primaries will fold underneath the secondaries.

These long, stiff and light coloured feathers are found in the "armpit" (axillar region) of the bird.





Examples of Ravens in flight. Use the bone structure to guide the feather placement.



The tips of the wings slightly bend in the wind.



The tail is very large and prominent in flight.



The diamond shape is shown when the tail is slightly open and fully closed.





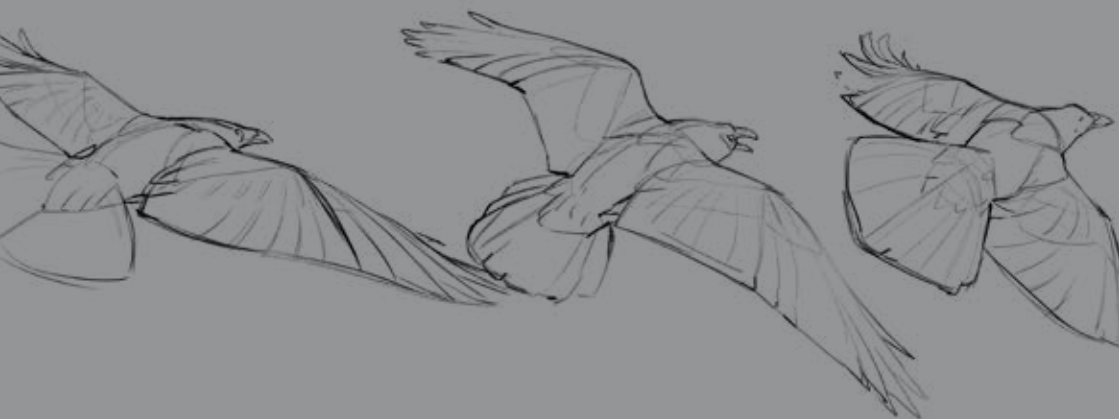
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About the Raven

Ravens are intelligent and emotional birds. They know how to mimic calls and words. Hide food for later in their cache and steal food from people (and other Ravens). In captivity, they solve puzzles to gain food rewards whether solo or in a team with other Ravens. They love to play and taunt other creatures by tricking them out of food, pulling tails or stealing. They love playing in the snow by rolling in it or rolling down hills.

The Raven is the biggest passerine bird and appears in many myths and cultures. It can symbolize wisdom, mystery, and guidance, but it can also be a symbol of death, wickedness or the great void. The Ravens that live at The Tower of London are there to protect the crown and if they left, England would fall. In France, the Ravens are the reincarnation of wicked priests. In Germany, their eerie calls are the souls of murdered people.

How to use this book

This book is for those who wish to improve their Raven drawing skills. This book follows on from "How to draw birds: Of the Passerine order".