



Tabatha Miller  
City Manager  
City of Fort Bragg  
[TMiller@FortBragg.com](mailto:TMiller@FortBragg.com)

RE: Feeding Ravens On the Fort Bragg Coast Trails and City Parks

Dear Ms. Miller,

This e-mail comes to request help and action by the City of Fort Bragg to stop people from feeding Common Ravens and ground squirrels on our city coastal trails and in our city parks.

The number of Ravens attracted to our parks, especially the coastal trails, has escalated to the point where they are a threat to other bird populations. The Black Oystercatcher in particular, our iconic bird of the rocky shoreline, is vulnerable to predation by Ravens during nesting season.

It's time to listen to what biologists are telling us about our interaction with wildlife. When people feed birds and ground squirrels on city trails, it's not good for humans or wildlife. We support the California Fish & Wildlife *Keep Me Wild* program that educates us about deeply serious health issues related to feeding wildlife. The California Code of Regulations (Title 14, section 251.1) is a basis for creating a city ordinance to help protect people and animals. This is nothing new and not a trivial matter. We request that it be put on the agenda for the upcoming March meeting of the City Public Safety Committee for a problem-solving discussion and consideration of a city ordinance to prohibit feeding wildlife in public parks and on the Fort Bragg Coastal Trails.

We advocate for all wild birds. Our concern when we see people on public beaches feeding Common Ravens is for the effects on many other birds, as well as the Ravens themselves. Ravens are so intelligent, they recognize and remember cars and people who bring them food, forming large flocks to take advantage of the concentrated food source. This is abnormal behavior for Ravens, which are naturally territorial. When large numbers of such birds congregate, as we are seeing at both ends of the Coastal Trail, it raises the possibility of disease transmission.

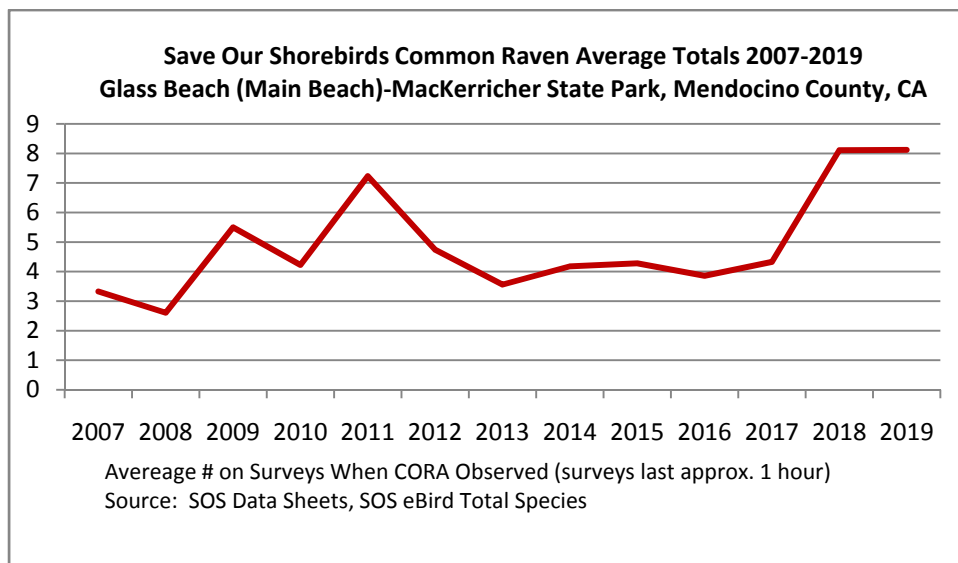
They are well-adapted to search for and obtain food from a variety of sources, and they continue doing this even when given food by humans. It's heartbreaking to watch Common Ravens eat their hand-outs, then fly directly to nearby bluffs where they rob nests of Black Oystercatchers and prey on oystercatcher chicks. We've seen this happen over and over, especially at Glass Beach (part of MacKerricher State Park). Now, we hear from fellow hikers and out-of-town visitors, that the same thing is happening along the Fort Bragg Coastal Trail.

It may be helpful to get input from California Fish & Wildlife, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, wildlife feeding ordinances in other cities (like the city of Davis, CA), and people from our local scientific community.

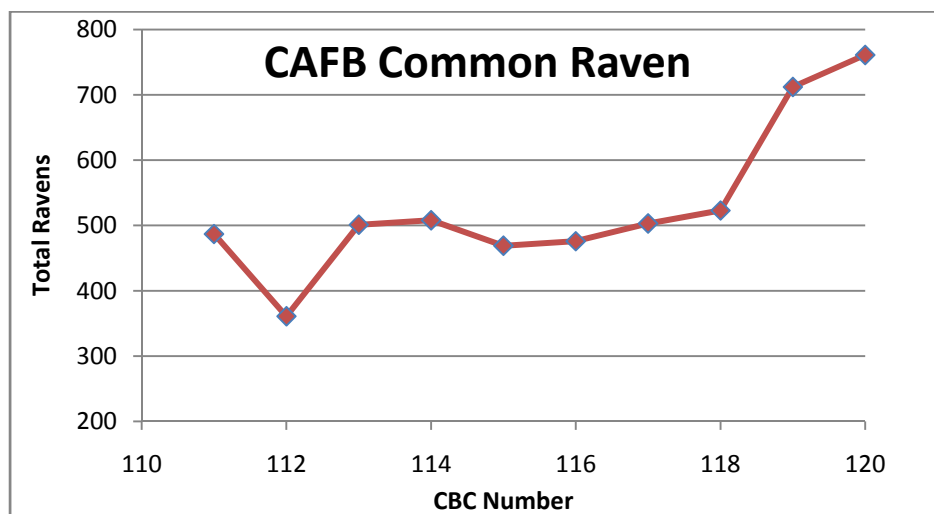
Local journalist Frank Hartzell decided to “dig into” the history of Common Raven interaction with humans in a September, 2019 article for the Mendocino Coast *Real Estate Magazine* that was a good introduction to the relationship between ravens and people. Here is the link:

<http://www.realestatemendocino.com/images/REM%20726.pdf>

A local Audubon conservation team has surveyed Glass Beach (adjacent to the city’s Coastal Trails) year-round for the past 14 years and gathered data about birds along the coastline of MacKerricher State Park from Glass Beach north to Ten Mile River. On the main beach of Glass Beach, 494 surveys were conducted and 2,612 Common Ravens were observed. The chart below indicates an increase in the average number of Common Ravens counted on the beach, particularly in the last three years. Based on what we saw during 2020 (including ravens being fed by people), we think that increase continued and will be reflected in our upcoming annual report.



Our Chapter has conducted a Christmas Bird Count in Fort Bragg for ten consecutive years. The chart below shows the total count for Common Ravens each year. The sharp increase in the last two Counts is largely from the population increase at the former millsite.



We are willing to devote a considerable amount of energy into bringing this crisis to the attention of the public and public officials. We would like to be kept in the loop about this issue in consideration before the city's Public Safety Committee and the City Council.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim Bray', written over a horizontal line.

Tim Bray, President  
Mendocino Coast Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 2297  
Fort Bragg, CA 95437

Mayor B. Norvell, Vice Mayor J. Morsell-Haye, Council Member L. Peters