

SWEDISH FIRM DEPLOYS CROWS TO PICK UP CIGARETTE BUTTS

Clever corvids become newest weapon in Södertälje's war against street litter.



Crows are being recruited to pick up discarded cigarette butts from the streets and squares of a Swedish city as part of a cost-cutting drive.

The wild birds carry out the task as they receive a little food for every butt that they deposit in a bespoke machine designed by a startup in Södertälje, near Stockholm.

Södertälje is carrying out a pilot project before potentially rolling out the operation across the city, with the health of the birds being the key consideration given the type of waste involved.

New Caledonian crows, a member of the corvid family of birds, are as good at reasoning as a human seven-year-old, research has suggested, making them the smartest birds for the job.

Günther-Hanssen said: "They are easier to teach and there is also a higher chance of them learning from each other. At the same time, there's a lower risk of them mistakenly eating any rubbish.

- What task are the crows trained to do?
- How are the crows rewarded for their work?
- What is the purpose of this pilot project?
- Why do you think the city wants to use birds to collect cigarette butts?
- What advantages do "New Caledonian crows" have according to the text?
- What does the article say about the risk of crows eating rubbish by mistake?
- Do you think using animals for cleaning is a good idea? Why or why not?
- Would this project work in your country? Explain.
- Do you think people will stop throwing cigarette butts if they know birds must clean after them? Why?
- Is giving birds food in exchange for cleaning ethical, in your opinion?
- What problems could appear if the city expands this program?
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- Should people rely on animals for solving human-made problems?

