



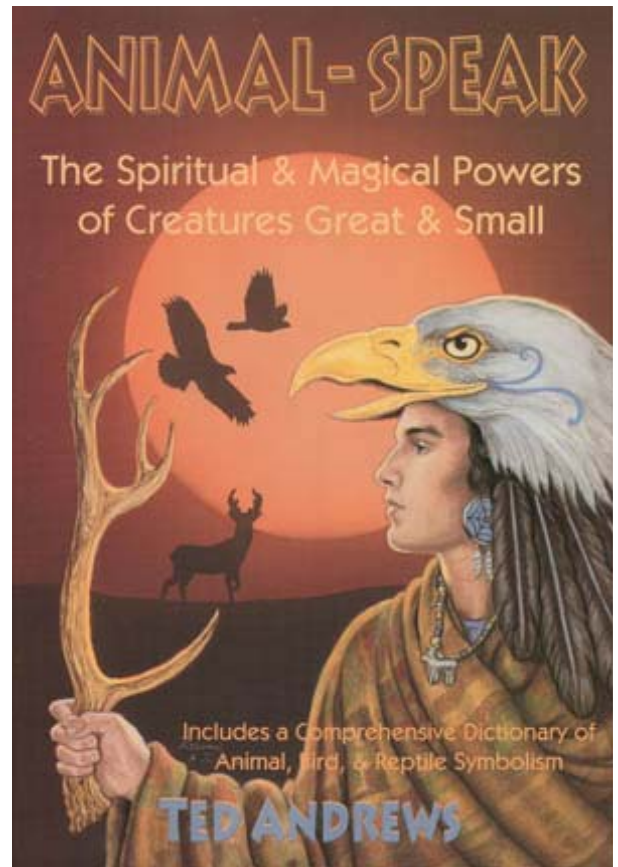
# ANIMAL-SPEAK

By Ted Andrews

This is not the complete book written by Ted Andrews, but it does contain a good part of the animal dictionary, as well as the symbolisms of colors, flowers, numbers, birds and trees.

Some of the animal photos have been copied from other web sites, but they have not been altered and most of the photos state the photographer's name. Other photos were taken by womenhead, and may be copied.

To order the book go to: [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)



Bird Goddess

Artist—William Fahey  
[www.deathless-art.com](http://www.deathless-art.com)

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# Symbolic Qualities of Colors

COLORS	POSITIVE QUALITIES	NEGATIVE QUALITIES
BLACK	Protection, birth, magic	Secretiveness, sacrifice
BLUE	Happiness, calm, truth	Depression, loneliness
BROWN	Grounded, new growth	Lack of discrimination
GREEN	Growth, healing, abundance	Uncertain, miserly, greed
GREY	Initiation, imagination	Imbalance, secretiveness
ORANGE	Warmth, joy, creativity	Pride, agitation, worry
RED	Sex, passion, strength	Anger, aggression, impulse
VIOLET	Alchemy, humility, spirit	Obsession, misunderstood
WHITE	Purity, sharing, truth	Scattered, overextended
YELLOW/GOLD	Communication, optimism, inspiration	Needing clarification, overcriticalness

# Symbolic Qualities of Numbers

NUMBER	POSITIVE ASPECTS	NEGATIVE ASPECTS
1 (ONE)	Beginnings, originality, leader	Arrogance, dominance
2 (TWO)	Feminine, dreams, cooperation	Sensitivity, meddling
3 (THREE)	Creativity, birth, mystical	Gossipy, moody
4 (FOUR)	Foundations, patience, builder	Stubborn, rigid
5 (FIVE)	Versatile, change, activity	Scattered, overindulgent
6 (SIX)	Home, service, family	Jealous, worrisome
7 (SEVEN)	Wisdom, seeker, truth	Faithfulness, critical
8 (EIGHT)	Power, money, infinity	Careless, greedy, authoritarian
9 (NINE)	Healing, understanding	Gullible, hypersensitive

(All double digit numbers can be reduced to one of these nine by adding the two digits together. For example  $23 = 2 + 3 = 5$ )

# Symbolic Qualities of Flowers

BABY'S BREATH = modesty, sweet beauty  
BASIL = integration, discipline and dragon force  
BEGONIA = balance, psychism  
BUTTERCUP = self-worth, the power of words  
CACTUS = manifestation of riches and beauty  
CARNATION = deep love, healing, love of self  
CLOVER = luck, love and fidelity, kindness  
DAFFODIL = power of inner beauty, clarity of thought  
DAHLIA = higher development, self-worth, and dignity  
DAISY = increasing awareness, creativity, inner strength  
GARDENIA = purity of action and purpose, emotional help  
GERANIUM = happiness, healing, and renewed joy  
GLADIOLA = receptivity to divine will  
HIBISCUS = femininity, sexuality and warmth, new creation  
HYACINTH = overcoming of grief, gentleness, inner beauty  
IRIS = higher inspiration, psychic purity  
LAVENDER = magic, love, protection, healing, and vision  
LILY = birth, godly mind, and humility  
MARIGOLD = fidelity, longevity, loving sacrifice  
MORNING GLORY = breaking down of the old, spontaneity  
ROSE = love, strength through silence, passion  
ROSEMARY = power, clarity of thought, sensitivity  
SNAPDRAGON = will force, creative expression, clairaudience  
SUNFLOWER = opportunities, self-actualization, happiness  
VIOLET = modesty, fulfillment, psychic sensitivity

# Symbolic Qualities of Trees

APPLE = magic, youth, beauty, and happiness  
ASH = sacrifice, sensitivity, and higher wisdom  
ASPEN = determination, overcoming fears and doubts  
BEECH = tolerance, past knowledge, softens over-criticism  
BIRCH = new beginnings, cleansing of past, vision quests  
CEDAR = healing, cleansing, protection  
CHERRY = death and rebirth, new awakenings  
CYPRESS = understanding of role of sacrifice  
ELDER = birth and death, renaissance of Faerie Realm  
ELM = strength of will, intuition  
HAWTHORNE = fertility and creativity, magic  
HAZEL = hidden wisdom, drowsing and divination  
HEATHER = healing from within, immortality, and initiation  
HOLLY = protection, overcoming of anger, spiritual warrior  
HONEYSUCKLE = learning from the past, discrimination, change  
LILAC = spiritualization, realization of true beauty  
MAPLE = balance, practical expression of psychic, promise  
OAK = strength and endurance, helpfulness, continuity  
ORANGE = clarity to emotions, release of trauma  
PALM = protection, peace, opportunity  
PINE = balance of pain and emotions, creativity  
SPRUCE = new realizations, healing, intuition  
SYCAMORE = communication, love, learning to receive  
WALNUT = eases transitions, following a unique path  
WILLOW = magic, healing, inner vision and dreams

# Symbolic Qualities of Birds

- BLACKBIRD = omens and mysticism, color of fear and promise
- BLUEBIRD = happiness and fulfillment, color of north or east
- CANARY = healing power of sound, heightened sensitivity
- CATBIRD = communication potential, new lessons or opportunities
- CHICKADEE = sacred number is seven, seeker of truth and knowledge
- CROW = intelligence, watchfulness, magical, past-life connections
- DUCK = maternal, graceful and comforting, protective
- EAGLE = capable of reaching new zenith, great perception, bridging worlds
- FINCH = new experiences and encounters, wide range summer solstice
- GOOSE = story telling, fertility and fidelity, symbol of eight and infinity
- GROSBEAK = heals old wounds, family values, past lives significance
- HAWKS = primal life force, fulfillment, spring and fall equinoxes
- KINGFISHER = halcyon days, peace and prosperity, linked to north, blue
- LOON = realizing dreams, haunting and eerie song, imagination
- MAGPIE = occult knowledge, doorway to new realms, wily and willful
- MEADOWLARK = cheerfulness, sublimation, inner journey, linked to moon
- NUTHATCH = applying wisdom to natural world, groundedness, ethereal
- ORIOLE = positive energy, reconnecting with inner sunshine, nature spirits
- OWL = silent wisdom and nocturnal vision, healing powers, magical
- PEACOCK = wisdom and vision, ostentatious, protective and powerful
- PELICAN = self-sacrificing, non-competitive, buoyant, rising above trials
- PIGEON = love and security of home, fertility, archetypal energies
- RAVEN = shapeshifting, messenger or omen, blending human and animal
- ROBIN = new growth, territorial, color link to throat center
- STARLING = sociable, communicating diversity, forceful
- STORK = related to humanity, connected to emotions, water, birth process
- SWAN = sensitive, emotional, dreamer and mystic, longevity
- TURKEY = spiritual connection to Earth Mother, shared blessings\
- VULTURE = purification, never-ending vigilance, guardian of mysteries
- WOODPECKER = weather prophet, drumbeats into other dimensions



# Blackbird

has long been associated with omens and mysticism. Its color, alone, had evoked both fear and promise. Although called a blackbird, only the males are black. Females usually have a streaky, brown plumage.

Not all blackbirds are black. One variety has a yellow head and throat which stands out strongly against the black plumage. The yellow and black coloring has long been associated with the Archangel Auriel. Auriel is considered the tallest of the angels, with eyes that can see across eternity. This being oversees all of nature and all of the nature spirits. Auriel has traditionally been associated with the summer season.

Another variation of the blackbird is the red-winged blackbird. This bird has a red path on its wings, with a dash of yellow as well. These colors connect this bird to the level as Binah in the Qabalistic Tree of Life. This is the level associated with the Dark Mother and the primal feminine energies. This bird has ties to all the creative forces of Nature.

On the Tree of Life, black is the color for Binah and red is the color for Geburah (Mars type of energy). Yellow or amber is the color of the path that connects the two, and it is the path of Cancer, the mother sign of the zodiac. The red-winged blackbird is thus a totem associated with the stellar energies of Cancer.

The male red-winged blackbird will lose its luster during the winter. This reflects how the summer is the time of vibrancy and vitality for those with this bird as a totem. It indicates the need to use the winter to go back into the great womb of life in order to be able to bring forth new energy and expressions of energy the following summer.

Blackbirds nest in swamps, marshes, and low brush—usually just a few feet from water. Again this reflects a tie to water, an ancient symbol for the feminine force and for Nature. They often use cattails as perches. A study of herbal qualities and characteristics of cattail will also provide further insight.

Blackbirds are known for fiercely staking out their own territory, and they will often drive off any other of their kind that are in the vicinity. Because of this, the sight of two blackbirds sitting together is often considered a good omen. In Europe, blackbirds came to be associated with St. Kevin, and one story tells of how they nested in his hand. Again because of this association, to have blackbirds nesting in your environment is usually a beneficial sign. St. Kevin was known as a person of tremendous gentleness and love.

Europeans used to eat blackbirds in a pie, as reflected in the nursery rhyme. Most of the time though, live blackbirds were hidden in empty pie shells to provide amusement at gatherings. If the blackbird has come into your life as a totem, you will open to new surprises and to a new understanding of the forces of Nature as they begin to migrate into your life.

**KEYNOTE:** *Understanding of the Energies of Mother Nature*

**CYCLE OF POWER:** *Summer*



Photo by Fred Fallon

# Bluebird

is a native bird of North America. Although once common, they are now quite rare. This often is a reminder that we are born to happiness and fulfillment, but we sometimes get so lost and wrapped up in the everyday events of our lives that our happiness and fulfillment seem rare. When bluebirds show up as a totem, it should first of all remind you to take time to enjoy yourself.

Bluebirds are part of the thrush family, and you may wish to read about thrushes to learn more of the bluebird. The males are entirely blue, while the females are blue only in the wings. Occasionally there will be some warm reddish tones on the chest as well. Pay attention to the colors and where they are located. This will provide some insight.

To the Cherokees, blue is the color of the North, while in many magical traditions, it is the color of the East. The edges of many Jewish prayer shawls were often the color of blue. Blue is associated with the throat chakra and creative expression. Blue is symbolic, so ask yourself what blue means to you personally.

The idea of the bluebird being symbolic of happiness is fairly recent. This concept has developed more within this century than any other time. As far as I have been able to discover, the bluebird did not play any major role in Indian myths or tales.

This bird always has a plaintive song and a modest, unassuming appearance. Its shoulders are hunched up when perched, giving an impression as if ready to dive. This can be symbolic of a need to work hard and play hard. Are you trying to shoulder too much responsibility?

To the Pueblo, the bluebirds are considered winter birds, because they descend to lowlands with the snow and cold during that season. This transition from winter to summer is dramatic in the area of the western home of the Pueblo. It is a transition from great coldness to summer heat.

This is symbolic of a passage, a time of movement into another level of being. Specifically, it is connected to the transformation of a girl into a woman, and thus the bluebird is also sometimes connected to puberty rites (1). This, of course, has connection to human fertility and a new confidence and happiness in coming into your own.

Other Pueblo rites revolved around the use of bluebird feathers as prayer sticks. They were considered beneficial for snow and ice, and for bringing the summer rainy season. There are also rites in the Pueblo tradition that tie them to the fertility of the land.

Bluebirds are gentle and unaggressive. They do not push or bully other birds, but they are scrappy when threatened. They have been known to put to flight jays and even larger birds. Their homes usually have an entrance facing South, the direction for awakening the inner child. If a bluebird has come into your life, look for opportunities to touch the joyful and intrinsically native aspects of yourself that you may have lost touch with.

**KEYNOTE:** Modesty, Unassuming Confidence and Happiness

**CYCLE OF POWER:** Winter & Summer (Changes of Seasons)





# Blue Jay

has long been thought of as a bully and a robber, and although it can have those tendencies, it has other qualities that make it stand out positively. For those to whom the jay comes as a totem, it reflects lessons in using your own power properly. It can also reflect lessons in not allowing yourself to be placed in a position in which power is misused against you.

The word "jay" comes from the Latin "gaia" or "gaea" which has associations to Mother Earth (Gaea) and Father Heaven (Uranus) resulted in the first creatures who had the appearance of life. This reflects much about the intrinsic power associated with the jay. It has the ability to link the heavens and earth, to access each for greater power.



The black and white marking found on its blue wings also reflect this same ability. The sky (blue) separates the Heavens (white) and the earth (black). This is a totem that can move between both and tap the primal energies at either level. The jay is aware of this innate ability, and this is reflected in its blue crest - higher knowledge that can be used.

The main problem will be in dabbling in both worlds, rather than becoming a true master of both. Those with a jay as a totem usually have a tremendous amount of ability, but it can be scattered or it is often not developed any more than is necessary to get by. It is not unusual to find individuals with blue jays as totems being dabblers -- especially in the psychic and metaphysical field. They know a little bit about a lot of things, and they use that knowledge sometimes to give the impression they know more, or that they are true masters.

The bright blue crest of the jay should always be a reminder that to wear the crown of true mastership requires dedication, responsibility, and committed development in all things in the physical and the spiritual. The blue jay is a reminder to follow through on all things -- to not start something and then leave it dangling.

The blue jay reflects that a time of greater resourcefulness and adaptability is about to unfold. You are going to have ample opportunities to develop and use your abilities. The jay does not usually migrate, staying around all winter, so look for there to be ample time to develop your energies to access new levels. It will stay around and work with you as long as you need it.

The blue jay is actually a member of the crow family, and most crows have no fear. Crows and jays alike will gang up to harass and drive off owls and hawks. The jay is fearless, and it is because of this that it can help you connect with the deepest mysteries of the earth and the greatest of the heavens.

The blue jay is an excellent mimic, with a sharp eye and voice. It especially has a wonderful knack for imitating red-shouldered hawks. Old-time naturalists were convinced that the blue jay derived pleasure from this activity. As with all members of its family, this sense of seeking pleasure - often at the expense of others - can reflect an imbalance. Sometimes jays show up when this is occurring in your own life.

Blue jays have a tremendous ability for survival with the least amount of effort. They reflect great talent, but that talent must be developed and utilized properly. If the jay has flown into your life, it indicates that you are moving into a time where you can begin to develop the innate royalty that is within you, or simply be a pretender to the throne. It all depends on you. The jay has no qualms. It will teach you either direction.

**KEYNOTE:** *The Proper Use of Power*

**CYCLE OF POWER:** *Year-round*





# Butterfly

Probably no animal or insect has come to represent the process of transformation and shapeshifting more than that of the butterfly. For those with this totem, the process of metamorphosis should be studied closely. With butterflies and moths there are always four distinct stages of change. (The cocoon is only spun by the moth, and not by a true butterfly, for the chrysalis stage).

When a butterfly shows up, make a note of the most important issue confronting you at the moment. This probably why butterfly has shown up. What stage of change are you at in regard to them? To determine that, you may have to examine and determine what you wish the outcome to be, and how best to accomplish it.



The butterfly is a powerful symbol in myth and religion. In early Christianity, it was a symbol of the soul. In China, it was used as a symbol of conjugal bliss and joy. In the Hopi tradition, unmarried girls of the butterfly clan wore their hair in the shape of butterfly wings. In Indian lore are stories of how butterflies come when called by the children of the Nez Perce tribe.

To the Native Americans, the butterfly is a symbol of change, joy, and color. The colors of the butterfly should be examined for its significance and to help you understand its role within your life. Prior to a workshop on fairies and elves recently in Florida, I was performing a meditation at a nearby nature center in preparation for the workshop. When I opened my eyes, I was surrounded by approximately a dozen black and yellow butterflies (Zebra Heliconius). There were even several on my lap.

This was very significant to me for several reasons. First, there has long been an association in folklore of a relationship between those of the Faerie Realm and butterflies. The black and yellow was even more significant. In traditional angelology, these are the colors often associated with the archangel Auriel in her guise of overseeing the activities of the nature spirits. It was a wonderful indication of the energy that would accompany me to my workshop.

Butterflies appear to dance as they light upon flowers and such. They remind us not to take things quite so seriously within our lives. They awaken a sense of lightness and joy. They remind us that life is a dance, and dance, though powerful, is also a great pleasure. Butterflies can be reminders to get up and move, you can dance. Dance brings sweetness of life back. This is further exemplified by the fact that butterflies actually have taste receptacles on their front legs. They taste flowers by walking upon them.

Butterflies bring color and joy with them. When butterflies come into your life, look at how much or how little joy is within your life. Lighten up. Look for change. Don't forget that all change is good. Butterfly medicine reminds us to make changes when the opportunities present themselves. Transformation is inevitable, but butterfly will help teach you that growth and change does not have to be traumatic. It will teach you that it can occur as gently, as sweetly, and as joyfully as we wish.

**KEYNOTE:** *Transmutation and the Dance of Joy*



## GIANT SWALLOWTAIL

# CARDINAL

Most people have no trouble recognizing these redbirds. They are also part of the finch family, and a general study of finches is beneficial for those with this totem. Unlike many other birds, they are usually year-round residents, and their influence and the archetypal energies associated with them can be accessed all year long. They remind us that regardless of the time of day or year, we always have opportunity to renew our own vitality and recognize the importance of our own life roles.

The cardinal has a loud and clear whistle. Whistles are often reminders to listen closely—to pay attention to what is blowing on the winds. In the case of the cardinal, the female joins in on the whistling, which is unusual among birds. This reflects that we should be listening to the inner voice (the feminine) more closely for our own health and well-being. Since most female birds usually are quiet and camouflaged, a cardinal totem almost always reflects a need to assert the feminine aspects of creativity and intuition more strongly.

All Cardinals are beneficial and friendly. They eat many weed seeds and injurious insects. The seventeen-year locust (cicada) is one of these. Cardinals can reflect a need to be more careful about your diet, that what you are eating may be injurious to yourself and affecting your overall vitality.

Cardinals lay three to four eggs, and they hatch in about twelve days. This, along with being a 12-month resident, reflects the rhythm of twelve that is going to become more prominent within your life.

The male cardinal makes a good parent, and often shares with the female the task of egg incubation. The male, though, will always feed the female while she is in the nest, and the baby cardinals as well. Although the male normally has the brighter color, when it shares the task of incubation, its colors remain much the same as the female, all for the sake of camouflage. This often reflects lessons associated with responsibility and recognition of the importance of the task at hand.

The male usually has a bright red head, although their coloring will often be duller on the back and wings. The bright-colored crest is a warning to rivals, while the duller colors can help shield it.

These birds are named for the cardinals of the Roman Catholic Church, with their bright red robes. If it is your totem, it may reflect past-life connections with the church, or even a reviving of more traditional religious beliefs, regardless of denomination.

Cardinals brighten the environment. They catch the eye and add color to our lives. When they appear as a totem, they do so to remind us to become like them. Add color to your life, and remember that everything you do is of importance.

**KEYNOTE:** *Renewed Vitality through Recognizing Self-Importance*

**CYCLE OF POWER:** *Year-round (often with a rhythm of 12 - hours, days, months, years)*



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# Chickadee

The chickadee is

part of the titmouse family. "Tit" is a folksy 14th-century English name for anything little. The "mouse" part of titmouse comes from "mose," a general name that was applied to any small, dull-colored bird in that same time period. It is known for its cherry call, and to many people its mating song is the first true sign of spring.

The chickadee usually has a black cap on its head. Many birds have caps, and this has some great significance. Anything associated with the head has applications to the thinking process, higher mind, and higher perceptions. Black is associated with mystery, the feminine, and the great womb of life. As to the color of the cap, it reflects that the chickadee can help you with the uncovering of mysteries of the mind. It can awaken understanding and higher truth. It can help you perceive more clearly in the dark.

To the Cherokee Indians, the chickadee is the bird of truth. It helps us to pinpoint truth and knowledge. One tale speaks of a witch by the name of Spearfinger, who terrorized the entire tribe. She would wait in hiding to kill any passer-by. After killing them, she would stab the liver of the individual with her spearfinger and eat it. Nothing seemed to be able to stop the witch as she was made mostly of stone. Then a chickadee landed on her, showing the tribe warriors exactly where she was vulnerable to attack.

Chickadees usually travel in groups, reflecting a cheerful sociableness about them. For such a small bird, it is also fearless, with no qualms of taking on larger birds that may threaten it.

There are seven kinds of chickadees and this is most significant to those with this totem. Seven has an ancient mysticism associated with it throughout the world. It is a sacred number. It is a symbol of the individual rising from the material plane of life, as depicted in the ancient image of the triangle (3) upon the square (4). It has association with the seven rays of power, the seven major planets, the seven bodies of the human being, and the seven chakra centers.

It is this last correspondence that is reflected most strongly with the chickadee. When the seven chakras or energy centers of humans are balanced, there is a greater realization of truth in the world around us. It also enables us to express the truth more joyfully within our life. Some people say, "The truth hurts." Those who have a chickadee as a totem will learn to express the truth in a manner that heals, balances, and opens the perceptions. Truth is shared in a manner that adds cheer and joy to your own life and the lives of others.

**KEYNOTE:** *Cheerful and Truthful Expression*

**CYCLE OF POWER:** *Spring*





# Crow

My grandfather once told me that the

crow was the smartest of all birds. What's more, it even knew it was the smartest of birds and enjoyed it to the fullest. In fact, it was so smart that it chose to stay a crow, rather than move on to some other area of evolution. It has a unique ability to outwit most birds, animals, and even humans at times, and they make for themselves a wonderful living. It can be thought of as another being who felt it was better to rule in hell than serve in heaven. Crows seem to have mastered it well.

Crows intrigue us and they aggravate us. They and their other family member, the raven, have a great mysticism and mythology about them. There are actually five species of crows, one of which is the raven. Because they are of the same family (the only real difference being size) it would be beneficial for those with crow as a totem to also study the qualities and mystical aspects of the raven.

The first noticeable characteristic about this bird is its striking black color. Sometimes it will have hints of deep blue and purple on the feathers as well. Black is the color of

creation. It is the womb out of which the new is born. It is also the color of the night. Black is the maternal color and thus the black night gives birth to a new day. Although the crow is a diurnal or daytime bird, it reminds us that magic and creation are potentials very much alive during the day. The crow, because of its color, was a common symbol in medieval alchemy. It represented "nigredo," the initial state of substance-unformed by full of potential.

In Roman mythology, raven and crows used to be as white as swans. In fact a white crow watched over Apollo's pregnant lover at Delphos. One day the crow brought bad news to Apollo and was turned black.

This connection to watchfulness is still strong today. Crows always have a sentinel posted. They build their nests high in the treetops so that they can see the entire area in which they are living and feeding. Occasionally crows have been seen attacking and killing one of their own. There arose an old belief that the crow being attacked was a sentinel who failed. It may also be a reminder of what can happen if we are not watching for magic and creation every day.

Watchfulness warns other crows and other animals of intruders and threats—human and animal. They have been observed raising a ruckus when hunters are around, warning deer and other birds. They recognize possible dangers and they always post lookouts when feeding—their most vulnerable time.

This ability to warn is connected to the crow's second, most-noticeable characteristic—it's voice. The crow is actually a member of the songbird family because of its voice box structure. Although few think of the crow as a songbird, there have been many claims (unsubstantiated) over the years that when it is alone, it will sing in a soft musical voice.

Crows have a complex language. They have a remarkable voice range, but they actually do not sing. They can caw in many different ways, each with its own meaning. Learning to understand the language of crows is something we all can do with practice. Although it has a single tongue, it does not use the tongue to make any sounds. Pliny once wrote that if the tongue of a crow were split, it would learn to speak like humans. This, of course, was not true. All that would happen is that the crow bleeds to death. The cawing out of the crow should remind us that magic and creation are cawing out to us every day.

The great horned owl is probably the most deadly enemy of the crow. If an owl comes into the area of a crow, it will mob the owl and chase it off. Crows know that if the owl discovers its nests, the night could bring death. Many crows have lost their life to the silent night hunts of owls.

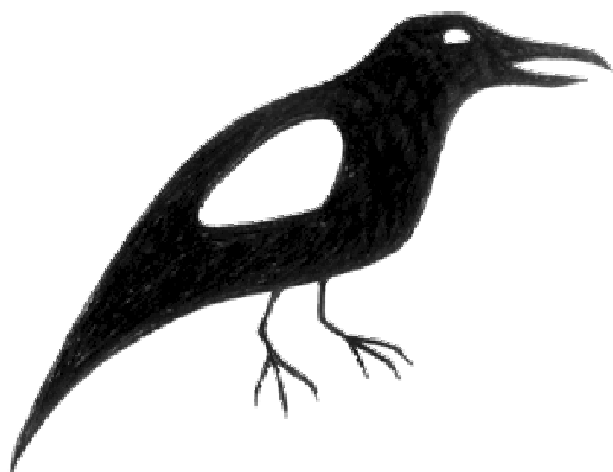
The crow has great intelligence. It is adaptable to its environment. It will eat almost anything. Part of their ability to survive is their being omnivorous. They have a unique ability to communicate with each other and to work together.

Their ability for watching and their intelligence has given them a reputation for thievery. They will rob food from other birds or whatever source is around—including human food supplies.



Crows and all corvines are easily imprinted with the image of their keeper. Those who have crows as pets have found them extremely trainable, with an ability to count and develop a complex communication with their owner. And yet in the wild, even though they are constantly seen and heard, it is hard to get near them. Again, I have found that it reflects for most people little awareness or realization of the magic necessary to create or recreate their life.

The courtship and mating procedures also reflect much about the crow's association with magic. The male crow sets out to make itself as handsome as possible, and it is during this time that its voice takes on a singing quality. (Love makes the whole world sing.) The male and female build the nest together. The nest is built high up for protection and it is kept very clean. Even young crows do not foul their own nest. A little meditation on this will reveal much about health, home and respect.



Crows have a great mythology about them. This can reflect not only past-life connections to those times and cultures but it also reflects some of the archetypal forces that it can connect with us. As with many animals, crows also have been known to predict tornadoes, rain, and other changes in weather by the way they fly. Working with crows can help you see how the winds are going to blow into your life and how to adjust your own life flights. Crows have long been considered magical, and my grandfather once told me how even finding a dead crow was a sign of good luck.

We have spoken of crows and their link to Greek/Roman mythology, but they have appeared in others as well. In China a three-legged sun crow was worshiped. It was a symbol of solitude. To the Athapaskan Indians of Alaska, a crow (in the form of a raven) was the creator of the world. To the Celts, the crow was also associated with creation.

In Biblical lore, the prophet Elijah was fed by ravens and crows while hiding in the wilderness. In Norse tradition, the god Odin had two ravens who were his messengers.

Wherever crows are, there is magic. They are symbols of creation and spiritual strength. They remind us to look for opportunities to create and manifest the magic of life. They are messengers calling to us about the creation and magic that is alive within our world everyday and available to us.



**KEYNOTE:** *The Secret Magic of Creation Is Calling*

**CYCLE OF POWER:** *All Day—All Year*



# Dog

Dogs are domesticated canines. Their descendants are coyotes and wolves, and thus they should be studied as well. Dogs are companions to humans, providing faithful protection. Every dog and every breed has its own unique qualities. Many breeds were designed for specific purposes and functions. Studying the history of your breed will help you define the kind of energy specific to this totem.

Different dogs will mean different things. Herding dogs were for protection and to assist in the labors of herding domesticated farm animals. Some dogs were raised specifically for sporting activities—hunting and retrieving. Thus they may have qualities unique to them—a love of water, a need to run, etc. Some dogs are mixed, embodying qualities from a variety of breeds, reminding us that we each are unique.

Examine the qualities of your breed and the individual dog. It will reveal much about the energy associated with it. Examine the individual personality. How does it behave most of the time? What does this say about you? Earlier in the book, I gave an example of how my four dogs are unique, and how I use their behavior as messages for myself. If my dog Cheyenne, who is usually standoffish and a loner, becomes very friendly and pesters me to play, it usually indicates I need to take some time off and socialize and play a little. Our animals can tell us so much.

Most Native American tribes had dogs for protection and warnings, but dogs have held symbolic importance in other societies as well. In India the dog is a symbol of all caste systems, reflecting the small becoming great. In early Christianity it was a symbol of guardianship (as in the sheepdog), and it was even an allegory for the priest. In Greece it was a companion to and guardian of the place of the dead. It has also been a symbol of motherhood, because dogs are very caring and nurturing parents.

It takes a lot to break a dog's spirit. Its ability to love, even when abused, is tremendous. Its spirit and willingness to love and to be a companion is great.

Study your dog. This will tell you more that what can be elaborated on here. If dog has come into your life as a totem, ask yourself some questions. What is this saying about your need for or lack of companionship? Are you being faithful? Are others around you? Are you showing unconditional love, or receiving it? Do you need to be more protective of your territory? Do you need to play a little more? Are you being faithful to yourself? Does your spirit need bolstering? How about those around you? Examine your territories. Dog knows its home ground, and if it has shown up, its energies and lessons will touch you personally.

**KEYNOTE:** *Faithfulness & Protection*

**CYCLE OF POWER:** *Year-round*



# Doves

The dove has a tremendous wealth of lore and legend surrounding it. Most of it centers around all of the traditional feminine and mother symbols. In the Greek tradition, Aphrodite was born from an egg brooded by a dove. The Oracles of Dodona which Alexander sought were founded by a dove. To the Slavs, the soul would become a dove at death. To the alchemist, it was a symbol of sublimation. To the Christians, it is a symbol of peace, while to the early pagans it was a symbol for the yoni or female sexual organs. It has been associated with female sexuality through such goddesses as Astarte and Isis. Because of its association with many goddesses, it was considered the embodiment of the maternal instinct. "The name dove has been given to oracles and prophets...The prophet sent to Ninevah as God's messenger was called Jonah or the Dove..." (from the teachings of All Ages, by Manly Hall).



To the Pueblo Indians it was also honored. Its feathers were often worn and used in prayer sticks. The mournful song of the dove was considered an invocation to water and an indication to men where water could be found. (Again we have the ancient symbol for the maternal in the connection to water.) Its song would signify waterholes or springs to which the dove must return at dusk to drink.

The song of the dove speaks to all who hear it. Its mournful tones stir the emotions, the internal waters. During the summers, as a child, I loved being up before others had arisen. I remember stepping out the front door, the morning sun soft, and from the woods surrounding the house would come the sweet-sad song of the mourning dove. It always seemed to stir a sense of promise.



The dove is also a ground feeder, reflective of keeping contact with Mother Earth and the creative possibilities of the feminine energies on earth. Its diet is mostly seeds, but it will eat stones that accumulate in the gizzard to help with digestion. Those with a dove as a totem will find it beneficial that they eat bulk to aid their own digestive and creative processes.

The brood of the dove consists of two eggs. Two is a traditional number for the feminine and creative energies. A study of numerology, as applies to doves, will add even more insight for you.

The dove's song is its most distinctive characteristic. The voice of the dove is the rain song. Out of its mourning, it invokes new waters of life. Its song should remind us that no matter

what our life conditions, new water and new life are still possible. The Earth is a female planet, and this should remind us that creation and new birth is available to all of us upon it. The mourning dove helps us to remember that.

Although its song is heard throughout the day, it seems more distinct at dawn and dusk. These are the "Between Times" - a time in which there is a thinning of the veils between the physical and the spiritual, the past and the future. The dove can help you to use these times to see the creation process active within your own life.

The song of this totem tells you to mourn what has passed, but awaken to the promise of the future. It is a bird of prophecy and can help you to see what you can give birth to in your life.

**KEYNOTE:** *Feminine Energies of Peace, Maternity, and Prophecy*

**CYCLE OF POWER:** *Dawn & Dusk*

**ANIMAL SPEAK, by TED ANDREWS**







# Dragonfly & Damselfly

are very ancient with estimates of having been around for over 180 million years. They have a beautiful, jewel-like coloring. The bright colors take time to develop, reflecting the idea that with maturity our own true colors come forth. This is part of dragonfly medicine.

For many it is difficult to tell the difference between a dragonfly and a damselfly. Dragonflies have broad bodies and enormous eyes. Damselflies are more slender and delicate. When dragonflies are at rest, they hold their wings out like a glider. Damselflies will fold their wings over their backs when at rest. Dragonflies will often eat while in flight, and damselflies will always land before eating.

Both are known for their fast flight and their dazzling aerial feats, as if imitating how light itself can be moved and directed. They twist, turn, change direction in an instant, hover, move up or down, and even fly backwards. Dragonflies are sometimes known as mosquito hawks. Both the damsels and dragons are excellent hunter of flying insects. They can spot a movement forty feet away. They use their sharp, spiny legs and strong jaws to capture their prey.



Dragonflies and damselflies inhabit two realms—water and air. The significance of these should be examined. In their early life—as a nymph—they live within the water. As they mature and go through their metamorphosis, they move to the realm of air. It is not unusual to find individuals with dragonfly totems to be very emotional and passionate in the early years, but as they get older, they learn to balance it with greater mental clarity and control. Sometimes it can indicate that the emotions have gotten shut down because of emotional issues in the early life. Remember that the dragonfly and damselfly are always found around water. There must be expressions of the emotional and the mental together.

If a dragonfly has shown up in your life, you may need some fresh air in regard to something emotional. You may need to gain a new perspective or make a change. It may even indicate that you are neglecting

your emotions. Are you being too rational about everything? Are you not keeping the color of emotions alive?

Dragonflies are very territorial. They will lay their eggs within their territory near the water. The egg eventually develops into the nymph stage of metamorphosis in this insect, and remains as a nymph for almost two years, before it transforms into an adult dragonfly or damselfly. This can reflect a number of possibilities for those with this totem. It can indicate that an approximate two-year period of change is about to reach its culmination. It may reflect that you are coming into a two-year period. Only by examining your life and activities will you begin to understand its specific role.

Just as light can bend and shift and be adapted in a variety of ways, so can the archetypal forces associated with the dragonfly. It is one of the most adaptable of insects. It is why it has been able to survive for so long. Dragonflies have two pairs of wings, but if need be, they can fly with one. Their eyes are kept clean with special combs on their legs and by washing the eyes with water drops collected in the mouth.

Their main predators are frogs and birds. Particularly the frog should be studied by those with this totem.

Their realm is the realm of light, and they are only out during the day, as they are cold-blooded. Summer is their most powerful time, as they need the warmth and light of the sun. For those with this totem, this will be important to consider. Spending time outside in the sun near fresh water sources will be beneficial for restoring and changing health conditions for the better for those with this totem.

Although some have color pigments in their skin, for most the colors are caused almost the same way rainbows form. Structures in their shell scatter and refract the light, making them look iridescent green and blue. As they age, they may pass through several color changes. This ability to reflect and refract light and color has caused it to be associated with many forms of magic and mysticism—including color magic, illusion (causing others only to see what you wish), and more. Dragonfly's magic is the power of light and all that has ever been associated with it.

Dragonflies and damselflies are often depicted in Japanese paintings, representing new light and joy. To some Native Americans, they represent the souls of the dead. Some stories speak of the time in which they used to be real dragons. Often we assume that dragons have to be gigantic beasts breathing fire, but the fantastic creatures of the Faerie Realm often come in many shapes and sizes. Dragonflies because they are mythical relatives of the ancient dragons are wonderful links to working with nature spirits.





The dragonfly and damselfly reflect and work with the sun and light. The light changes throughout the day. The dragonfly and damselfly undergo their own transformations. If they have shown up, look for change to occur. Are you resisting change when you shouldn't? Dragonflies remind us that we are light and can reflect light in powerful ways if we choose to do so. "Let there be light" is the divine prompting to use the creative imagination as a force within your life. This is part of what dragonflies and damselflies teach us.

Life is never quite the way it appears, but it is always filled with light and color. Dragonfly can help you to see through your illusions and thus allow your own light to shine forth. Dragonfly brings the brightness of transformation and the wonder of colorful new vision.

**KEYNOTE:** *The Power of Light*



# Flicker

is a member of the woodpecker family. A study of woodpeckers and their characteristics in general will add to your own insight. Flickers are woodpeckers in the process of changing from life in the trees to life on the ground. Because of the tapping and drumming that all woodpeckers do in their search for food, they have connections to new rhythms coming into your life.

The Chippewa medicine man, Sun Bear, speaks of the flickers as the totem for the Strong Sun Moon in Medicine Wheel astrology. This corresponds to the periods between June 21 to July 22, or the sign of Cancer in traditional astrology. To the Native Americans it is especially courageous bird.

The flicker is a golden-winged woodpecker. It often has a red patch on the back of its head and a black crescent on its breast, all of which are very symbolic. When it flies up from the grass, it takes off in a strong, bounding flight, flashing the gold of its wings. When a flicker comes into your life, it will reflect new bounding leaps of spiritual growth.



The red on the back of its head reflects a stimulation of the chakra centers of the head—the throat, brow, and crown centers. These centers will be stimulated into new activity. This reflects that latent talents and intuition are going to be activated to a greater degree. It usually reflects, especially when it is a red shafted flicker, that the stimulation of the latent talents is going to be a catalyst for major creative changes in your life. Your physical and material life is going to change. When it is a yellow-shafted flicker, the changes will occur more in your own perception than in the outer world.

The black crescent is also significant, more so because it is over the breast area. The moon is a symbol of sensitivity and emotions. The black color of the moon often reflects the phase known as the New Moon. The flicker thus symbolizes a new sensitivity of the heart that is about to be awakened. This will stimulate new healing energies, and it can reflect that you will experience emotions more intensely.

The woodpecker has ties to Roman Mythology as well. The Roman god, Picus, with whom Circe fell in love, refused to accept the sun as a father-in-law. Because of this Circe turned him into a woodpecker. Meditating and studying this tale, as well as some of the Native American tales of the flicker, will provide insight into the role it will play in your life.

The name of the flicker actually comes from one of the sounds it makes. It can make a variety of sounds, and during the mating season it displays great musical talents. Of course, the drumming it makes is also ties to the mysteries of music and rhythm, and anyone with a flicker as a totem should begin to study the use of percussion instruments. Drums and rattles are inexpensive and can even be easily made. They are powerful tools for healing and for inducing altered states of consciousness.

Flickers and other woodpeckers are the master drummers. They can link you to any other rhythm in the world. They can help teach you to align with the heartbeat of the planet or the heartbeat of other animals. Its drumming is a reminder of the natural rhythms of the universe and that when we are not in synchronicity with them, things do not work for us.

The flicker is the most numerous member of the woodpecker family. They live in a variety of woods and other environments across the country. They build their nests in holes and they are very particular about the cleanliness of the home. They make excellent parents, both sharing in the responsibility. This is especially important as flicker babies are very demanding.

The flicker has a stout, sharp bill with which it does its drumming on trees in a search for insects and other food. It has a long tongue, giving it an ability to extract nutrition from the holes it creates with the bill. The mouth and any part of it is the beginning point for digestion and nurturing—through foods or words. This reflects the role a flicker can play in your life.

The flicker also has two toes in front and two toes in back of its feet. This is different from most birds, but this balance also reflects their ability to maintain balance on the side of trees. It facilitates their climbing ability. For those with this totem, it can reflect a new balance coming into your life, regardless of the conditions. Anytime there is balance, there is greater health.

To the Pueblo peoples and other Native Americans, the feather were considered religious articles. A red feather on a prayer stick usually reflected war against some enemy—physical or spiritual. When the feathers were worn in the hair,







it indicated the individual was a member of the medicine society. The same energy that can be used for war can also be used for healing. This is what the flicker teaches.

If a flicker has come into your life, it indicates a time of rapid growth and trust. Flicker will awaken a new rhythm and the ability and opportunity to manifest all-healing love.

**KEYNOTE:** *New Rhythm of Growth and Healing Love*

**CYCLE OF POWER:** *Summer (especially around the Summer Solstice)*



Photo by A. Wilson



# Grasshopper

although

the ancient Hebrews saw the grasshopper as a symbol of the scourge, in other societies it held a position of honor and respect. In China grasshoppers and crickets were symbols of good cheer, good luck, abundance, and virtue. Some even believed that relatives would come back to life as a grasshopper or cricket, and they would construct small cages for those they would find. Even to the ancient Greeks, the grasshopper was a symbol of nobility.

As its name implies, the grasshopper moves by leaping and hopping. This is also how it escapes. Grasshoppers have a tremendous jumping ability, and they can leap horizontally up to twenty times their own body length. For those with this totem, it is important to get off the haunches and move. Take a chance; take a leap forward.



The hind legs of the grasshopper differ from the rest of its legs and the legs of other insects. They are extremely long and large. The hind legs have delicately controlled muscles. Those with this totem will usually find that things don't move or flow the way they do for other people. Progress is not usually made step by step. Instead, others may seem to be progressing while you seem to be sitting still. Do not become discouraged. When grasshopper shows up, there is about to be a new leap forward—one that will probably carry you past the others around you in your life.

Grasshoppers have an instinct for finding the sunny sides of mounds and other places so they can be exposed to the sun. They have a knack for being in the warmth and light and knowing when to make their leaps. Trust your own instincts and rhythms if this is your totem. What works for others will not necessarily work for you. (Also remember that what works for you probably will not work for anyone else.)

Listen to your own inner voice to know when to make your moves in any area of your life. Grasshoppers possess a tympanic organ on the front legs. As they breath, this organ is activated. By moving the legs in different directions they are able to locate a sound's source. This connection between sensing sounds and the legs is highly significant. *Trust your inner voice.*

Those with grasshopper totems have an uncanny ability to leap into successful ventures. This becomes even more true when they learn to listen to that inner voice and follow their own instincts. Sometimes grasshopper can show up if we are not listening or if we are afraid to make the leap off our mound. Many times such fears have to do with the fact that "no one else has done it this way." Grasshopper people have to learn to make new leaps. Life only becomes difficult when they refuse to move. At such times they may feel as if they are experiencing a scourge themselves. Remember a grasshopper always leaps up or forward. It doesn't leap backward.

**KEYNOTE:** *Uncanny Leaps Forward*





# GULLS (Herring/Sea)

Gulls are wonderful birds. Most people, especially in seashore resort areas, have a tendency to look upon them as pests. In their communities, away from human contact, their behavior is much different.

Sea gulls—or herring gulls as they are rightly called—are actually shore birds, and they seldom venture far from land. Shorelines are places of great mystery and magic. It is a place neither of land nor sea; it is between the two. It is one of those regions often associated with fairy contact. Because of this, gulls can help teach how to open communication with the Faerie Realm of life—especially the water sprites and spirits.

This idea is further reinforced by the fact that the gull is associated with the element of water, as well as air. It is a bird which can combine the gifts of swimming and flying. It is very buoyant in the water. It knows how to work in both kingdoms; it knows the behaviors appropriate to both. This reflects the ability to teach you how to behave and work in other dimensions than that which is normal.



The appearance of a gull usually indicates lessons or abilities in proper behavior, courtesy, and communication. It may reflect you need the lessons, or that you may become the teacher of such. It may also reflect new learning in the subtleties of communication.

Gulls have developed an intricate code of behavior. They have developed a regular signal code for all of their ritual activities. They use a combination of calls and gestures. Because of this they can teach you how to read people more effectively. They can help you to understand the subtleties of communication—what is not being ostensibly expressed. They can help you to read be-

tween the line and understand the body language of others. They hold knowledge of the techniques of psychological communication.

Gulls also help to keep the beaches and shores clean. They are ecological birds. Their appearance as a totem may reflect opportunities to work on ecology in general or to work on cleaning up the shore areas of your own life.

The young are fussy eaters. They have to be stimulated to eat, and the color red is their eating stimulus. Adult mother gulls have a red spot on their beak. The baby gull know that only by poking at it will they get something to eat. This process reflects many subtle lessons. It has ties to proper eating behaviors, stimulation of diet (physical or otherwise), and more. Meditation on this will elicit some wonderful insight into your own life patterns and stimuli.

**KEYNOTE:** *Responsible Behavior & Communication*

**CYCLE OF POWER:** *Year-Round*



# Hawks

are the most intriguing and mystical of the birds of prey.

They are the messengers, the protectors, and the visionaries of the air. Hawks and owls have the keenest eyes of all raptors.

Hawks vary in size, appearance, and environments. There are so many different species that it is sometimes difficult to tell them apart. There are marsh hawks, forest hawks, sea hawks, and prairies hawks. The environment in which your hawk is found will tell you much about how its energies are likely to manifest within your life.

Even when people cannot tell one hawk from another, they can recognize it is a member of the hawk family. All hawks are impressive and stir the imagination. Their hunting ability, their eyesight, and their powerful flights and other behaviors are dynamic symbols.

In most raptors, the colors of the male and female of the same species are very similar. It is almost always the female who is larger though. This has much to do with the fact that the mother guards the nest. Many hawks mate for life, the red-tailed hawk being one example. The length of time that mated birds stay together is often determined by the number of seasons they spend raising the young.

An examination of the specific species of hawk and its behaviors will reveal much. For example, an osprey is sometimes referred to as a "fish hawk," based upon its primary diet. This magnificent bird is often mistaken for an eagle because of its nearly all white head, but it is the only large hawk that is clear white underneath. It is most numerous in coastal regions, as if its white breast reflects the white foam of the waters in which it hunts. Other examples are the Cooper's hawk, the goshawk and the sharp-shinned hawk who feed frequently on other birds. Although they eat rodents and such, most of their food is feathered. This reflects the old idea that what you eat, you become.

We do not have the space to explore all the characteristics of every hawk, but we will examine one species more closely. That species is the most numerous member of the hawk family, the red-tailed. It is named for the distinctive coloring on its tail feathers. Only the mature red-tails have this coloring. The immature also have lighter colored eyes, distinguishing them from their more mature relatives.

The red tail is very symbolic. It has ties to the kundalini, the seat of the primal life force. In the human body it is associated with the base chakra, located at the base of the spine the coccyx or tail bone. Those who have a red-tailed hawk as a totem will be working with the kundalini. It can also reflect that this bird becomes a totem in your life, only after the kundalini has been activated. It can also reflect that the childhood visions are becoming empowered and fulfilled. It may pop up as totem at that point in your life where you begin to move toward your soul purpose more dynamically.

The red-tailed hawk is a member of the buteo family or the group of soaring hawks. The ability to soar and glide upon the currents is part of what hawk can teach. Although it is a part of this species, it is most often seen perched on tree-tops and utility posts, using its phenomenal eyesight to locate prey. It teaches how to fly to great heights while still keeping your feet on the ground.

Hawks are occasionally harassed and attacked by smaller birds. This is very significant for those of you who have a hawk as a totem. It indicates that there are likely to be attacks by people who won't understand you or the varied and different uses of your creative energy. They may attack your ability to soar.

The red-tailed hawk is usually a permanent resident in an area, although occasionally it may migrate. This permanency reflects that as a totem, this hawk will be with you permanently once it shows up.



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Although incorrectly called a “chicken hawk,” the red-tail feeds mostly on rabbits, rodents, and snakes. It has an adaptable diet which has helped it to survive. The red-tail was often accused of and shot for killing chickens when in reality it was one of the bird hawks, such as a cooper’s hawk.

It is generally accepted that red-tails mate for life. Both the male and the female help care for the young. Two or three eggs are laid in the spring. They vigorously defend their nests against any intruders. They cling to their home territories for years. And they can live up to 14 years in the wild.

This “14” is significant. The 14th card in the tarot deck is the card for Temperance. This is the card that represents the teaching of higher expressions of psychism and vision. It can be used in development of astral projection—new flights out of the body. It has ties to the activation of your vital energies (kundalini), and the bold expression of it. It

is tied to the archetypal forces that teach beauty and harmony in moderation. It holds the keys to higher levels of consciousness.

Rising to a higher level can bring a rapid development of the psychic energies. The red-tailed hawk helps us in balancing and using those senses appropriately. It teaches the balance necessary to discover our true purpose in life. If you have a red-tailed hawk as a totem, meditation on the 14th tarot card will help you to see how this hawk will lead you to use your creative energy in manifesting your soul purpose.

The red of the red-tail reflects a greater intensity of energy at play within your life. It reflects an intensity of physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual forces. This bird is a catalyst, stimulation hope and new ideas. It reflects a need to be open to the new or shows you ways that you may help teach others to be open to the new.

To the Pueblo, the red-tailed hawk was known as red eagle. Its feathers and energies were used in healing ceremonies and for bringing the rains and waters necessary for life. To the Ojibwa, the red-tailed hawk represented leadership, deliberation, and foresight. “Hawk is akin to Mercury, the messenger of the gods. Hawk medicine teaches you to be observant...Life is sending you signals.”<sup>9</sup> The red-tail can spread its wings to great width, and it can teach you to use your creative energies in the same way. It can extend the vision of your life.

The beak and the talons are always commented upon by observers. They are the most striking features of any hawk, especially the red-tail. It is a fearless bird. It will even take on poisonous snakes. It has a scaled leg to help protect it against poisonous bites, and immediately upon grasping its snake prey, it tears off the head. On one of my trips to Colorado, while traveling through Kansas, I was fortunate enough to see a red-tail swoop down upon a snake. Within seconds it had taken flight again, cutting across my path. I could see the head of the snake dangling by just a few threads of skin. It happened so quickly, that by the time I realized exactly what I had observed, the red-tail had disappeared.

Because of the strong energy (the intensified life-force) activated by this totem, and individuals with it must be careful in how they express themselves. There will unfold within you the ability to tear off the heads of any snakes in your life, or anyone or anything seen as an enemy. Your comments and actions will be like the hawk’s beak and talons—strong and powerful, but with a capability to tear and/or kill.

The feathering of the red-tail actually has two phases. Both of these are significant to anyone with this totem. Its feathering is a little lighter during the summer and darker during the winter. The lighter is often symbolic of more joyful and sociable kinds of energies. The darker phases can reflect a time to be alone or to withdraw a little. The red-tail and its color phases also help us to guard against blazing so brightly and intensely that we get burnt out.

The sky is the realm of the hawk. Through its flight it communicates with humans and with the great creator spirit. It awakens our vision and inspires us to a creative life purpose.

**KEYNOTE:** *Visionary Power and Guardianship*

**CYCLE OF POWER:** *Spring and Fall Equinoxes - New Moon*



# Magpie

The magpie is

cousin to the crow. It is a large bird with glistening black head. Magpies are curious and somewhat imprudent, and they have a reputation for stealing anything they can carry off. This reflects their skill at using whatever they can find. The magpie as a totem can help you to use whatever metaphysical or occult knowledge that you do have—no matter how incomplete it may be. The only thing that you must be careful of is that of thing and acting as if it will do more for you than it can.



Many consider the magpie the most intelligent member of its family of crows. They have great intelligence, adaptability, and social organization. It is found most predominantly in the northwest, and a study of the directions will help you to define its specific role in your life.

They are scavengers and opportunists, reflecting their great intelligence. Because of this, they can teach you to use what is at hand or they may reflect a “dabbling” pattern in your life. They can help you to advance your knowledge or your life. Their appearance most often reflects opportunities for advancement through proper use of intelligence.

The magpie has often been considered unlucky or lucky depending upon the times and quantities in which they are seen. One reason for this mixed response to the magpie comes from an old story of how it was the only bird which refused to enter the inside of Noah’s ark, preferring to perch on the roof.

From this story and the magpie’s own home construction comes an old idea that if a magpie perches on the roof of a house, the house will never come down. Magpies make their nests of mud and twigs. The nest are usually large, and often they are anchored in the forks of a tree or in a thorn bush. This makes the homes strong, and it also links the magpie to being able to open up an individual to new realms as simply and quickly as possible. (Thorn bushes often guard doorways to the spirit and fairy realm. Forked branches are intersections between worlds—again a doorway.) These homes are usually along a watercourse, and they can be used winter and summer.

Their homes are often messy, and this can be a warning not to look for quick and easy methods of attainment through occult knowledge. Their homes usually have a roof and are entered in through the sides. A magpie as a totem usually indicates that you are going to encounter the spirit realm and the metaphysical world in a different manner. You will enter into it and experience it in a way different from most—and often it is in an unusual manner.

The Scots had a fortune-telling rhyme about the number of magpies you might meet while out walking:

One’s sorrow, two’s mirth,  
Three’s wedding, four’s a birth.  
Five’s a Christening, six a dearth,  
Seven’s heaven, eight is hell,  
And nine’s the devil his ain sel’ (13)

A similar kind of association has been passed on in the United States in the folk tradition. One magpie is unlucky and can indicate anger. Two is merriment and marriage, like the “mirth” in the Scot’s rhyme. Three magpies indicates a successful journey (wedding can be a journey). Four magpies indicate good news, and five company or parties.

The magpie has an association with witchcraft. It was once believed that magpies were the familiars of witches and magicians. They were spirits in animal form. Part of this belief comes from their intelligence and their keen observation of human activity. It also, I’m sure, has connections to their thievery—as witches and magicians were not often looked upon kindly.



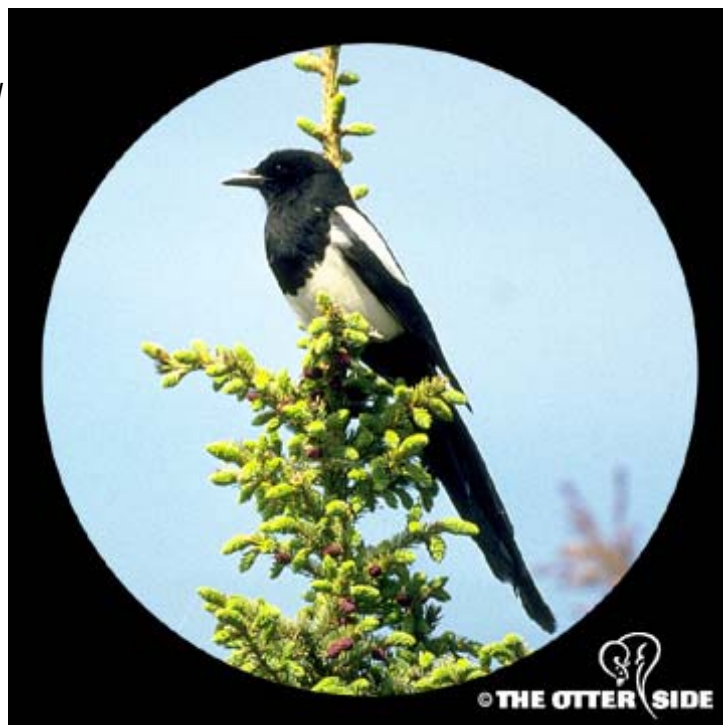


Its intelligence and wily character makes it an interesting totem, but one not easily controlled. It is a bird with a will of its own. It does have knowledge of how to use animals as familiars. It can also teach how to use occult knowledge for quick effects. Part of the problem with this bird as a totem is that the knowledge is usually incomplete. You may gain what you desire from the use of the knowledge, but it may come in an obtuse or unusual way. It may have other repercussions that you may not have considered.

If a magpie has shown up in your life, you need to ask yourself some serious questions. Do you have knowledge and are not using it? Are you employing whatever skills you have to get what you most need? Are you using your knowledge and skills inappropriately? Magpie can help you to define these answers. It can help you to learn to use occult knowledge in responsible but effective ways. The magpie will show you what you can do for your life with just a little occult knowledge.

**KEYNOTE:** *The Proper Use of Intelligence, Familiars, and Occult Knowledge*

**CYCLE OF POWER:** *Winter and Summer*



# Mockingbird

is famous in song and story. It is a traditional symbol of the South, and anyone who has a mockingbird for a totem should study the symbolism of this direction. It is a plain woodland bird, but has a magnificent song.

In spite of its plain appearance, the beauty of the mockingbird is recognized by all. This beauty lies in its song. It has a talent for mimicry. Mockingbirds can imitate other birds, cats, and even dogs. Some mockingbirds have a repertory of over 30 songs and calls of other birds. Impressionist comedians, such as Rich Little, have to have a mockingbird as one of their totems.

Mockingbirds will live close to humans because they are not afraid. They also like company, reflecting the idea that songs should be shared. They sing throughout the entire year, and will even sing while flying, which is rare among birds. They have also be known to sing by moonlight.

The mockingbird can teach you about the power of song and voice. It can help you to learn new languages and sing them just as naturally as one born to them. Anytime a mockingbird shows up as a totem, it is a time to learn to sing out your talents. Regardless of how others may see you, expect people to notice your actions—not your appearance.

The mockingbird can help you realize your inner talents and sing them forth. It can help you to find your sacred song in life. By singing that sacred song, you will find your life more rewarding and more significant. Most people, even if they know their inner sacred song (life purpose), are afraid to act upon it. The mockingbird can assist with this.

The mockingbird is a courageous bird. During breeding season (the development of your inner song and abilities), it will attack cats and any other raiders. It tolerates no imprudence. It fiercely defends its nest. It take the fight to the intruder, confident in its abilities.

Unlike many birds, the mockingbird may lay eggs two to three times a year. This reflects that opportunities to follow the inner song are never lost. They always come back around.

The mockingbird is the master of languages—spoken and unspoken, sung and unsung. It can read the language of the body and teach this ability to you. It can teach the secrets of all communication so that you can become more successful in life. This is reflected in the manner in which it finds its own food.

On its shoulders are prominent white patches. As it walks along, it occasionally opens its wings, flashing the white patches. They reflect the sunlight, alarming insects in the area. When they react, the mockingbird sees them and snatches them for dinner.

The ability to subtly stimulate responses in others is part of what the mockingbird can teach you. It can help you flush out injurious insects around you in your life and see where and who they are. The mockingbird will help you to recognize the subtle clues that others may miss. You hear the song of others.



Whenever the mockingbird arrives, look for opportunities to sing forth your own song. Follow your own path. Learn to take what you can and apply your own creative imagination and intuition to it, so that you sing it forth in a the manner and tone that is most harmonious for you and your life.

**KEYNOTE:** *Finding Your Sacred Song (Soul Purpose) and Recognition of Your Innate Abilities*

**CYCLE OF POWER:** *Year-round - Day and Night*



# Owl

No bird has as much myth and mystery surrounding it than the owl. Most perceptions of it are confused. It is not unusual to get contrary opinions of the owl. It has an ancient aura of mystery about it. Part of this is because it is a nocturnal bird, and night time has always seemed mysterious to humans.



The owl is a symbol of the feminine, the moon, and the night. It has been called a cat with wings. It has been worshiped as an idol and hated as the reincarnation of the devil. It has been believed to have great healing powers, both in North America and on other continents. Because of its association with the moon, it has ties to fertility and seduction, for the moon is the arouser of men and owls. The owl is the bird of magic and darkness, of prophecy and wisdom.

To the ancient Greeks, the owl was associated with the goddess Athena, and it was a symbol of higher wisdom. It was the guardian of the Acropolis. To the early Christian Gnostics, it is associated with Lilith, the first wife of Adam who refused to be submissive to him. To the Pawnee, it was a symbol of protection. To the Objibwa, it was a symbol of evil and death. To the Pueblo, it was associated with Skeleton Man, the god of death, but who also a spirit of fertility. "Owl medicine is symbolically associated with clairvoyance, astral projection and magic, both black and white" - (Jamie Sams & David Carson—Medicine Cards).

Many superstitions and beliefs have come to be associated with it. Owls have been thought of as the reincarnation of the dead. In Wales, the owl has come to be associated with fertility. If heard near a pregnant girl, it indicates an easy birth (Julio Torre-Owls). The most predominant is that of the owl being able to extract secrets. It was believed in ancient Rome that to place a feather or part of an owl on a sleeping person would enable you to discover his/her secrets. This is all tied to one of its keynotes, especially when we look at its acute vision and hearing.

The owl is a bird of the night, and the night has long been a symbol of the darkness within - the place in which humans hide their secrets. The owl has great vision and hearing. They can adjust in an instant from a telescopic to a microscopic focus. The pupils respond in a fraction of a second to very minute changes in light intensity. The owl's eyes are specially adapted to detect subtle movements. They also have extra light-sensitive cones and rods in the retina to help with this.

The yellow coloring of the eyes is very symbolic. It makes the eyes much more expressive, but it hints of the light of the sun, alive in the dark of the night. The sun lives through the owl at night. Meditation on this alone will reveal much about the magic of the owl within your life. Contrary to popular belief, the owl can see very well during the daylight. It is just more effective and more acute at night.

Even in the darkest night, with its acute eyesight an owl can pinpoint the exact location of its prey. Its hearing is just as keen as its eyesight. The ears of the owl are asymmetrical, and one ear is usually larger than the other. They are also located in different positions of the head. This enables it to sort out the auditory signals it picks up, facilitating it being able to locate its prey more easily.

The barn owl can locate its prey as easily or even easier with its ears than its eyes. It will swivel its head and rock back and forth to pinpoint noises of prey with great accuracy. It will also make period clicks as a form of echo location.

One who works with owl medicine will be able to see and hear what others try to hide. You will hear what is not being said, and you will see what is hidden or in the shadows. You can detect and pinpoint subtleties. This can make others uncomfortable because they will not be able to deceive you about their motives or actions. Owl people have a unique ability to see into the darkness of others' souls and life. This is very scary to most people. This vision and hearing capabilities has metaphysical links to the gifts of clairvoyance and clairaudience as well.





The owl, as a bird of the night, can teach all of the secrets of the night. These secrets involve everything that transpires when the Sun is gone. Owls are the eyes of the night, and they see what is not in the open. They have secret knowledge that they can share. Their medicine can extract secrets.

There are over 100 species of owls, and they have always had an intimate link to humans. Wherever humans live, so do rodents the primary food of owls. Because of this, owls live wherever humans live. The unfortunate part is that many hunters and farmers kill owls frequently, believing cats will do better with rodent control. Nothing is further from the truth. A barn owl can kill ten times the amount of mice than a cat in a single night and more if there are young to be fed.

Like humans, they blink by closing the upper eyelids, giving them a human expression which has added to the mysticism of owls. Unlike humans though, their eyes can not move. Their neck is flexible, giving them a wide range of peripheral vision. They cannot turn their heads completely around, but they do move it so quickly that it gives that appearance. The symbolism of the neck and its flexibility should be meditated upon for those with owl medicine. If your neck is stiff and inflexible, you are hindering your perceptions to a great degree. Neck massages would be very beneficial for anyone working with owl totems.

The owl, like hawks and other birds of prey, has a third eyelid. This nictitating eyelid moves from side to side. It cleanses the eye, clearing its vision. Again this symbolizes so much about new vision opening to you. It often reflects that you were born very perceptive—with a vision of others that you may or may not have not recognized or acknowledged. Often those with an owl as a power totem have a unique ability for seeing into the eyes and souls of others. Often these perceptions are discarded as wild imaginings or with such phrases as “Why in the world would I think that about this person?” These kind of imaginings, positive and negative, should be trusted.



The mating habits of owls follow similar patterns to other birds. The male will often increase its hooting and dance to get the attention of the female, especially of the great horned species, only mates when she truly trusts the male. Some owls mate for life, such as the barn owl. Others mate and stay together only until the owlettes leave the nest.

Many owls do not build nests. They will lay eggs in the forks of trees or use abandoned nest of other birds. Because they often have unusual nesting procedures, it is not uncommon to find owlettes and fledglings at the base of trees where they have fallen. Many people pick them up, believing them to be abandoned. This is rarely so. If left alone, the mother will take care of them.

Usually only the female will brood, but the male will keep the mates and the owlettes in a steady supply of mice. A male feeding the female and her brood can kill dozens of mice or its equivalent in a single night. This attest to the great hunting ability and rodent control that an owl can bring to an environment.

Owls fly silently. The front edge of the wing has a fringe that silences the flight. Most owls have wings that are great for the size of the owl. This also enables the owl to fly slowly and smoothly, facilitating its silent hunt. This silence is something that all with an owl totem should practice. Keep silent and go about your business. This will bring you the greatest success.

Some owls are endangered. This is partly due to destruction of habitat and partly due to unthinking hunting. The spotted owl is an example of an owl in danger because of its loss of habitat. The barn owl is threatened or endangered in many states. This is due predominantly to hunting and the perception of owls as pests.

Much study has been done on owls in regards to their prey. This is possible predominantly due to “owl pellets.” An owl will usually swallow its prey whole and head first. The parts of the prey that are indigestible (bones, fur, teeth, claws and such) are then regurgitated in the form of pellets. This is a very symbolic act in which much significance can be found. In the swallowing of the prey head first, the owl takes into itself the wisdom and energy of the prey. The regurgitation reflects its ability to eliminate those aspects that are unbene- ficial and unhealthy for it.

It is important to study the individual characteristics of each species of owl, as well as those for all owls in general. This will help you to define exactly how the owl is going to affect you and your life. In the context of this book, we are only going to examine six particular owls, but this will be enough to provide you with an idea as to how best to relate your owl totem to your individual life.

Some owls have a balancing raptor. The owl is lunar and nocturnal, while some raptors are diurnal and solar. Owls and some hawks will share the same territory, one hunting and using it by day, and the other by night. They don't nec- essarily get along, but they do tolerate each other in varying degrees. These can be seen as balancing medicines, and rituals and meditations can be used with the owl and its solar equivalent. They can be used to balance the male and fe- male.

One example is using owl and hawk feathers together as part of a dream bundle to help stimulate lucid dreaming. For example, a red-tailed hawk feather tied between two great horned owl feathers and hung over the bed may help you assert your will over the dream state. This can be used to develop astral projection or just for conscious control of the dream scenario during sleep.



The most common examples of owls and their daytime hawk equivalents are found in the chart below:

OWL (Lunar/Nighttime)	HAWK (Solar/Daytime)
Great Horned Owls	Red-Tailed Hawks
Barred Owls	Red-Shouldered Hawks
Screech Owls	Kestrels
Short-Eared Owls	Harrier Hawks
Snowy Owls	White Phase Gyrfalcons

The first owl we will examine is the **Great Horned Owl**. This is the most ferocious and most successful predator in the owl family in America. It is powerful and swift. It can easily snap the neck of a woodchuck. It will not hesitate to take whatever prey presents itself. The great horned owl will even take on all other birds of prey. Most are in awe of its formi- dable talons and strong beak.

The red-tailed hawk is most often considered the solar or daytime equivalent to the lunar and nocturnal great horned. This is because they may nest in the same tract of land. This does not mean they get along though. In fact, great horned owls will harass red-tails to the degree that if the opportunity presents itself, the hawk will try to eliminate the owl. Truly only the golden eagle is the one raptor unafraid and unintimidated by it.



This ferocity has enabled the owl to survive and adapt to constantly changing environments. It attacks life with a fervor. Unfortunately, this same ferocity has interfered with the reintroduction of the peregrine falcon into its former habitats. In the peregrine's absence, the great horned owl has taken up residence and will not share either its habitat or its food sources.

To many the hooting of the great horned owl, especially strong and frequent during mating, is a harbinger of spring. Its favorite habitat is in dense wooded areas of hardwoods and conifers. But it can live almost anywhere there is a food source.

The favorite food of the great horned is the skunk, and anyone with this owl as a totem should also study the significance of the skunk. This owl does not have a great sense of smell, which is probably why it is the skunk's most fearsome predator. It would also be good to study crows as they will often gang up and mob owls in their environment. Crows know that if the owl finds their home during the day, it is likely to visit at night, when the crows can neither see nor hear it approach.

The tufts on the top of its head are not its ears. They are simply tufts of feathers. The ears are located lower in the head, and as with all owls are extremely acute. They can hear as well or better than they see.

Next is the common **Barn Owl**. This owl has a heart shaped facial disc which is unique among owls. This reflects the ability to link the heart and the mind. It is part of what this owl teaches. It also has darker eyes. It has a golden buff feathering on top, and white feathering beneath.

The common barn owl has a variety of names. When seen at night from below, it has a ghostly appearance due to its white feathering. It is this aspect which has earned it the name of ghost owl. It is an owl whose medicine can connect you to old haunts and spirits of properties and homes that may still be lingering about. Its medicine can be used to help develop mediumship and spirit contact.

The barn owl is the master hunter. Many farmers have shot barn owls and tried to replace them with cats. Unfortunately, the farmers often do not realize that "one pair of nesting barn owls can eliminate more mice per night than ten cats put together" (Julio Torre, Owls). It is the barn owl's hearing ability which makes it stand out as a hunter. In fact, a large portion of the barn owl's brain is devoted to sorting out the auditory signals that it picks up. It has the ability to use echo location, a kind of sonar in locating prey. For those with this bird as a totem, the ability to hear the inner voice and even spirit (clairaudience—the power of faculty of hearing something not present to the ear but regarded as having objective reality) will definitely begin to develop.



Barn owl are inventive opportunists. They are adaptable and will take their food wherever they can find it. Their most common prey is the mouse, and those with barn owl medicine should study the qualities of the mouse as well.



Another marvelous owl is the **Barred Owl**. They are master vocalists and they have charming personalities. They are large and round, with dark eyes. They have a barred marking on their feathers, especially crosswise on the upper chest. It is almost as if this barring is an outer signal that it has much of its ferocity in check.

The barred owl is often found in dense deciduous forest and swamps. Because of loss of environment, it has invaded the haunts of the spotted owl. In the owl kingdom, the larger will also hunt the smaller. Since the spotted owl is



Smaller, it is somewhat threatened, even though many believe the spotted owl is just a close relative. Both share a love for the primeval forests.

The daytime equivalent of the barred owl is the red-shouldered hawk. These two share the same territory amicably—unlike the great horned and the red-tailed hawk. Both the barred owl and the red-shouldered hawk are at home in moist woodlands. They even share the same nesting space on occasion.

The barred owl has a benign nature, and is what is most outstanding about it. Although they may try to appear threatening, they are harmless. It is a great actor and can put on quite a show. Many believe its vocal performances are designed to put other animals and people off. It reflects the ability of this owl to teach us how to use the voice for greater effects.



**Screech Owls** are much smaller than those we have discussed so far. Like the great horned, they have tufts of feathers on their head that look like ears. They are usually reddish or gray in color and they are only 6-10 inches tall.

Contrary to their name, screech owls do not really screech. Their sounds are more like a soft whinny. During mating season, the male and female screech owls will sing duets. The males have a lower pitch. If the young are threatened, this is when the “screech” is usually heard.

In spite of their small size, the courage and ferocity of the screech owl is often compared to that of the great horned. It is thought by many to be a miniature of the great horned in this aspect.

The daytime equivalent of the screech owl is the kestrel. They both share the same territory. They both have a fondness for woodland border and the use of tree holes for nesting. They both have a fondness for crickets and mice.

Screech owls are excellent hunter. They also occasionally use cooperative hunting. This ability to cooperate to survive is part of what the screech owl can teach. It can show you how to be a fierce individual with an ability to cooperate with others—maintaining that individuality throughout.

The **Short-Eared Owl** is one of the few owls that will hunt day or night.

This in itself reflects that

its medicine is powerful day and night. It is also unique in that it will meticulously build its home. It will also migrate. The marking on it are flame-like, reflecting its scientific name (*Asio Flammeus*). This fiery aspect is reflected in its personality.

Earlier in the book I spoke of how the short-eared owl has a unique ability to show up overnight wherever there is an eruption of field mice population. This sixth sense, of being in opportune places at opportune times, is what





this owl can teach.

This owl is courageous and playful. While crows can mob and chase off hawks and other owls, the short-eared will turn the tables on its assailants. The crows often become the victims when they try the mobbing with short-eared owls. Though small, they are strong and fast—and they have no fears. And they shouldn't. Few birds can compare to them in aerial ability. Even the great blue heron, who thinks it is the king of the marshes, has fallen to the short-eared owl on more than one occasion.

Even its counterpart, the harrier hawk (the most agile of hawks) cannot outfly it. These two though will often share the same territory and have mock "dogfights." This owl and this hawk nest close to each other and rarely do they ever fight.

The short-eared owl is a versatile and curious bird. Its abilities are second to none, and it has no fear. It reflects a blending of fire and air. They have a stimulating effect upon all energies. They stir passion for life and fire the inspiration. They awaken the imagination.

The last example I will use is that of the magnificent **Snowy Owl**. It is larger than the great horned, but it is most noted for its white coloring. It is found in the open tundra of the arctic, but it will migrate as far south as is necessary to find food.

Most owls hunt by night, but like the short-eared owl, the snowy is at home both night and day. It can hunt in full sunlight or total darkness. It has the unique ability to open and close its iris to adjust to whatever light intensities (or lack of) there may be.

The snowy owl hunts predominantly by sitting and waiting. They seem to hunt lazily and often appear to be resting. This is far from the true. They conserve their energy, and they are continually observant, going into action when the opportunity presents itself. This sense of timing is part of what the snowy owl can teach.

Its primary prey are lemmings and arctic hares. These should be studied by anyone with this bird as a totem. It will usually eat its weight in food everyday, and like the short-eared owl, it has a knack for moving to areas where food supplies will more likely be found. It seems to instinctually detect possible famine periods and thus is able to move at the opportune times and return as well. This kind of prophetic instinct is part of what this bird can teach. It has the power of prophecy and spirit.



When the snowy moves into a new area, it does not proclaim its presence. It enters quietly and goes about its own business. This is part of what makes it successful. It can teach us this same ability. When it walks, its talons are withdrawn into its well-padded feet. Again this reflects its ability to be non-threatening in spite of its power and ability. It accomplishes its tasks with timing and skill, not through intimidation. True strength is gentle and this is what the snowy teaches.

This is a very skillful bird at the game of survival. Even the young can sprint, swim, and even play dead if it is necessary, assuming an almost torpid state. This bird seems to embody the strength and power of the great horned, while having the temperament of the barred. And on top of it all, it has the skill, courage, and talents of the short-eared.

**KEYNOTE:** *The Mystery of Magic, Omens, Silent Wisdom, and Vision in the Night*

**CYCLE OF POWER:** *Nocturnal –Year-round*



# Parrot

is a bird of the sun. Its bright colors and sunshine aspect are what gives it its magic. Its feathers can be used in prayer sticks for powerful healing rites and to invoke the energies of the sun at any time of the year.

In the Pueblo tradition, it is a bird associated with the gathering of salt. The places where salt was found were considered a gift of the sun. Since the parrot was to the Pueblo a bird of the sun, there is the correspondence. Parrots come in a variety of colors. Anyone with a parrot as a totem should do some study of colors and their effects. The parrot is a wonderful teacher of the power of light and colors.

Some parrots have been taught to mimic humans. Because of this ability, the parrot has been considered a link between the human kingdom and the bird kingdom. Parrots, in this sense, could be linked to ambassadors, diplomats, and interpreters for the bird realm. They have a magic that will enable you to understand others more effectively. They can help you awaken a sense of diplomacy.



**KEYNOTE:** *Sunshine and Color Healing*

**CYCLE OF POWER:** *Year-Round*



**ORANGE-WINGED PARROT**



**BLACK-CAPPED LORY**



**AFRICAN  
GREY >**



# Pelican

There are two species of pelican in the United States—the white and the brown. Both have the recognizable pouch and long bill. Contrary to what many believe, and as is often depicted in cartoons, they use this to scoop fish and not store them. Some reflection on this may reveal some insight into your own personal activities. Are you trying to store what shouldn't be stored? Are you not using or digesting what you have?

Both types of pelicans embody the keynote, along with other aspects that were once considered very magical and powerful. An old story tells of how the pelican wounded its own breast and fed its young on the blood. This explains the image of self-sacrifice often associated with it, and has come to be a very Christian correspondence.

The brown pelican often nests in bushes (mangrove thickets). By avoiding nesting competition with their neighbors, pelicans make room for more of their kind. Again this reflects a kind of unselfishness. This is further reinforced by the fact that they will often employ teamwork in fishing. This is especially true of the white pelican. The groups descend and drive the fish into the shallow areas.

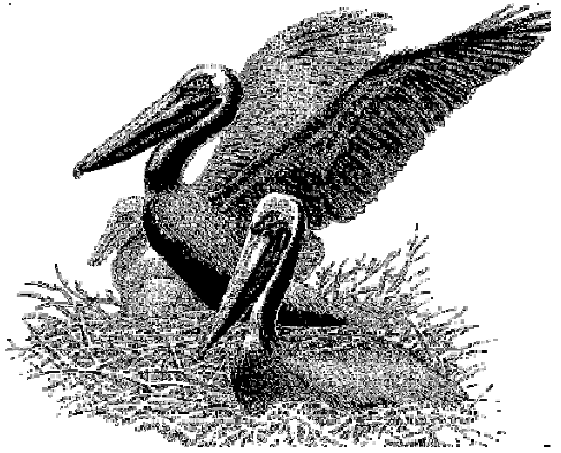
Despite their size, they are very light and buoyant. They can float like a schooner. The brown pelican is often observed flying solo and then suddenly plummeting into the water. It then pops up to the surface. It has this ability because of a system of air sacs under the skin that make it unsinkable.

Symbolically, this hints at being able to be buoyant and to rest on top in spite of the heaviness of life circumstances. The pelican teaches that no matter how difficult life becomes, no matter how much you plunge—you can pop to the surface. The pelican holds the knowledge of how to rise above life's trials. This same idea is hinted at in regard to an old belief that pelicans once lived on the desert, in which they fed upon serpents.

Pelicans, in spite of their lightness, sometimes have a difficult time taking off from the water. Still they do manage, and again we can see the correspondence to freeing oneself from that which would weigh you down. The water is a symbol of emotions, and emotions often weigh us down. The pelican teaches how not to be overcome by them.

**KEYNOTE:** *Renewed Buoyancy and Unselfishness*

**CYCLE OF POWER:** *Year-Round*



# Raven

is one of those birds that has a tremendous amount of lore and mythology surrounding it, and it is often contradictory. It is a bird of birth and death, and it is a bird of mysticism and magic.



In the near East, the raven was considered unclean—because it is a scavenger. It is one of the foods listed as forbidden in the Bible. The raven is one of the birds that Noah sent out after the floods, but it did not return to the ark. On the other hand, also in Biblical lore is the tale of how a raven fed the prophet Elijah when hiding from King Ahab.

In Scandinavian lore, the raven played a significant role. The Norse god Odin had a pair of ravens who were his messengers. Their names were Hugin (thought) and Munin (memory). Odin was known to shapeshift as a raven himself. This reflects the idea of raven being a messenger of the great spiritual realm.

The raven has a long history of being an omen. During the Middle Ages the croak of the raven was believed to foretell a death or the outcome of a battle. It was even taught to common folk in Christian communities that wicked priests became raven when they died. Even today, some old timers tell how you can expect hot weather when a raven is seen facing a clouded sun.

The raven is a member of the corvids family, to which belong crows and magpies and other such birds. In truth, the only really significant difference between the crow and the raven is in size, the raven being much larger. It would be beneficial to study the information on the crow for anyone who has a raven as a totem. Much of the same information that applies to one, also applies to the other. It is simply a matter of degree. Rather than repeat that information here, I would like to give you some information not generally associated with the crow itself.



The raven has a wealth of myth and lore surrounding it. In many ways it is comparable to the coyote tales of the plains Indians, the Bushmen tales of the mantis and other societies in which an animal plays both a significant and yet confusing role. The coyote was both a trickster and wise being—fool and wise one. This was true of the mantis in the tales of the Kalahari Bushmen.

In the Pacific Northwest, the raven has this same aura about him. In the Pacific Northwest, raven brought forth life and order. Raven stole the sunlight from one who would keep the world in darkness. Nothing could exist without raven. Raven is honored in art and on totem poles, reflecting the tales and mysticism that have developed around it.

With raven, human and spirits intermingle and become as one. This is reflected in its deep, rich shiny black. In blackness, everything mingles until drawn forth, out into the light. Because of this, raven can help you shapeshift your life or your being. Raven has the knowledge of how to become other animals and how to speak their lan-

guages.

Ravens are great at vocalizations, and they can be taught to speak. They incorporate and mimic the calls of other species. In the Northwest are tales of the Kwakiutl Indians who offered the afterbirth of male newborns to Raven so that when they grew up, they would understand their cries. Raven can teach you to understand the language of animals.

Ravens are playful, and they are excellent tool users. They will use stones and anything else that is available to help them crack nuts and such. They are birds not intimidated by others, and they are very fast and wary. Because of this, they are not easy prey for other animals or birds. This implies the ability to teach you how to stir the magic of life without fear. They are also known for their amorous behavior, reflecting the strong creative life force to which they have access.

This creative life force can be used to work the magic of spiritual laws upon the physical plane. It can be used to go into the void and stir the energies to manifest that which you most need. All this and more is what raven teaches. If raven has come into your life, expect magic. Somewhere in your life, magic is at play. Raven activates the energy of magic, linking it with your will and intention.



Raven speaks of opportunity to become the magician and/or enchantress of your life. Each of us has a magician within, and it is Raven which can show us how to bring that part of us out of the dark into the light. Raven speaks of messages from the spirit realm that can shapeshift your life dramatically. Raven teaches how to take that which is unformed and give it the form you desire.

The winter solstice and winter season is the time of greatest power for those with the raven totem. The solstice is the shortest day of the year. The sun shines the least on this day, thus it is the darkest. From that day forth, the light shines a little more each day. This is symbolic of the influence of raven. It teaches how to go into the dark and bring forth the light. With each trip in, we develop the ability to bring more light out. This is creation.

**KEYNOTE:** *Magic, Shapeshifting, and Creation*

**CYCLE OF POWER:** *Winter Solstice*





# Robin

Most commonly known as robin redbreast, this wonderful bird is a traditional herald of spring. Although robins often migrate, they do not always need to do so. Migration occurs due to lack of food and not to avoid colder weather as many believe. If the food supplies are beneficial, the robin will make its home year-round.

In spring, its song is often recognizable to all. In fact, few birds outdo the robin in overall distribution throughout North America. When a robin comes into your life, you can expect new growth to occur in a variety of areas of your life—not just a single area.

There exists much myth and lore around the robin. The most common legend is that it obtained its red breast when it pulled a thorn from the bloodied crown on Christ's head while on the cross. In the more superstitious tradition, the stealing of a robin's egg was a means to court misfortune. Some believe that you should make a wish when you see the first robin of spring, before it flies off, or you will have no luck for the next year.

In spite of this lore, a study of the robin can reveal much of its true worth as a totem. Robins react to red. In males, it signals other males "to get out of my territory." The red is, of course, connected to the kundalini. In the robin, it is more of a rust, as if it has been diluted with other colors. This, along with the fact that it covers the entire breast area, reflects its activation in a manner that will stimulate new growth in all areas of your life.

The song of the robin is a cheery, rolling trill. Part of its purpose is to help the robin establish its territory. Two males in the same area will puff up and sing with all their force. Fights between robins over territory are usually in song. Physical confrontations are more symbolic without injury.

This is very significant for anyone with this bird as a totem. It reflects a need to sing your own song forth if you wish new growth. Any confrontations or hindrances are more show than actual threats, so go forward.

The robin lays a distinctive powder-blue egg. This is a color that is often used to activate the throat center in humans.

This is a center associated with will force and creativity. The robin egg reflects the innate ability of those with this totem to assert the will force to create new growth in his/her life. When the robin comes to you, it is to help you in this process. It may reflect you have been doing so inappropriately or ineffectually. Either way, the robin will show you how to do it successfully.

Both parents share in the feeding of the young—on the average of once every twelve minutes (19). This is necessary, as the young are born entirely without feathers. Still, the robin has energy to raise more than brood a year. Again, this reflects the activation of the creative life force, reflected within the red coloring. It is the heart of the robin that gives it this ability.

**KEYNOTE:** *Spread of New Growth*

**CYCLE OF POWER:** *Spring*

19 Clement, Roland. *The Living World of Audubon* (New York: Gorssset & Dunlap, Publishers, 1974) p. 224



# Sparrow

has not always been considered the pest it is today. It is a perky, assertive bird that can hold its own against many forms of predation. The sparrow lives in all habitats. In the United States there were no natural checks upon it, and thus it multiplied at a fantastic rate.

The sparrow has its share of lore, as with many birds. One story tells of how it was the one bird present throughout the crucifixion of Christ, making it a symbol of triumph after long-suffering. It was a symbol of household divinities in Britain; and during the Middle Ages, it was a symbol of the peasants and lower classes throughout Europe. Peasants, at this time, were often helpless under the power of overlords. Because of this, they loved to hear tales of how the insignificant sparrow triumphed over such powerful enemies as wolves, bears, and eagles—the traditional symbols of nobility and those who mistreated the peasants.

Its ability to multiply and assert itself in spite of predation reflects the idea that nobility of the common person is inherently strong. For those who have a sparrow as a totem, look about you. Are you allowing others to take your dignity? Have you forgotten your own self-worth? Have you begun to think that you would always be under the heel of some tyrant—human or social? The sparrow will show you how to survive. It will awaken within you a new sense of dignity and self-worth, helping you to triumph in spite of outer circumstances.



The song sparrow is very symbolic of this. It has three spots in the form of an inverted triangle on its throat and breast. There is a dark spot on each side of its throat and a heavy spot in the middle of the breast. This reflects a drawing down of energy to awaken the heart and the throat centers. It is the assertion of will to bring out the inherent dignity so it can sing forth in your life. This is what the sparrow can teach.

**KEYNOTE:** *Awakening & Triumph of Common Nobility*

**CYCLE OF POWER:** *Year-Round*





# Spider

The spider has shown up in myth and lore throughout the world. Usually it's symbolism has been very similar wherever it is used. In India, it was associated with Maya, the weaver of illusion. It has had connections to the Fates in Greek mythology and the Norns in Scandinavian lore—women who would weave, measure, and cut the threads of life. To the Native Americans, spider is grandmother, the link to the past and the future.



Unlike insects, spiders have a two section body instead of three, often giving them a figure eight kind of appearance. This in conjunction with its eight legs (unlike an insect's six) links it to all the mysticism associated with the geometric form of the figure eight. On its side, this is the symbol of infinity. It is the wheel of life, flowing from one circle to the next. The difficulty is learning to walk those circles or even hold your position within the middle between the two.

Spider teaches you to maintain a balance—between past and future, physical and spiritual, male and female. Spider teaches you that everything you now do is weaving what you will encounter in the future. In the tarot deck is a card—The Wheel of Fortune. This is a card that has to do with rhythms— the rise and fall, the flow and flux. It is linked to the energies of honor and fame, and the sensitivities necessary to place ourselves within the rhythm of Nature. Meditation upon this card would be beneficial for anyone with the spider totem.

The spider awakens creative sensibilities. It weaves a web of intricate and subtle fabric, as if to remind us that the past always subtly influences the present and the future. Often the webs will take a spiral shape, the traditional for of creativity and development. The spider found within the web reminds us that we are the center of our own world. The ancient mystery schools had one percent inscribed about their portals: "Know Thyself and Thou Shalt Know the Universe!" Spider reminds us that the world is woven around us. We are the keepers and the writers of our own destiny, weaving it like a web by our thoughts, feelings, and actions.

The spider, because of its characteristics, has come to be associated by mystics and in mythology with three predominant expressions of magic. The first is the magic and energy of creation. It is a symbol of creative power, reflected in its ability to spin a silken web. It is also associated with assertiveness of that creative force, of keeping the feminine energies of creation alive and strong. As will be discussed further, this has ties to the characteristics of some spiders, i.e. the female black widow, which will kill and eat the male after mating has exhausted it.

The third predominant magic of the spider is associated with its spiral energy, the links with the past and the future. The spiral of the web, converging at a central point, is something to meditated upon by those with this totem. Are you moving toward a central goal or are you scattered and going in multiple directions? Is everything staying focused? Are you becoming too involved and/or self absorbed? Are you focusing on others' accomplishments and not on your own? Are you developing resentment because of it—for yourself or them?

Spider is the guardian of the ancient languages and alphabets. Every society has had myths about how the different languages and alphabets were formed. The Chinese alphabet is attributed to Ts'ang Chien, the god with the dragon face and four eyes. He formed it from the patterns of the stars, the marks on the back of the turtle and the footprints of birds in the sand. The Norse god, Odin, created the Runic alphabet after hanging upon the great tree of life for nine days and nights. After this time, the twigs fell off and spelled out certain formulas and words.

To many, there was an alphabet even more primordial. It was formed by the geometric patterns and angles found within spider's web. To many this was the first true alphabet. This is why spider is considered the teacher of language and magic of writing. Those who weave magic with the written word probably have a spider totem.

The spider has long been associated with death and rebirth. Part of this may have to do with the fact that some female spider will kill and eat the male after mating. This is often found in the insect world, the praying mantis being another such example. Because it is constantly building and weaving new webs, it has also been a lunar symbol, with ties to the waxing and waning of the moon. For those with this totem, this pattern is a reminder to maintain balance and polarity in all aspects of life. Spider teaches that through polarity and balance creativity is stimulated.

Books, movies, and television have had a tendency to promote a fear of spiders in the general public. Most spiders are poisonous. This how they kill or stun their prey. They serve a vital function in controlling insect populations.

The black widow probably has received the worst reputation undeservedly. It is found all over the United States. It is jet black, but it has a red hour-glass shaped marking on the belly. It is a poisonous spider, but it is not fatal to humans as many assume. It is actually a very timid spider, and it is usually as much or more afraid of humans than they are of it.



Tarantulas are another common big spider that people are familiar with. The tarantella, a folk dance of Southern Italy, was named after the tarantula. They believed incorrectly that its bite caused convulsive movements in humans. The dance with its circular direction and quick foot movements was named for it.

The tarantula is one of the largest spiders, and it is hairy. Its mouth is underneath its body. Its bite is poisonous, as with most spiders, but it would not affect the average human any more than a bee sting. Tarantulas do spin a thread, but they do not weave a web. This dig a burrow or a hole in the sand and hide in the bottom of it. As soon as they feel something walking around the opening, they will jump up, grab it, and pull it back in. That is how they catch their food.

Most spiders are actually very, very delicate. If you were holding a tarantula and dropped it, it would break and die. Spiders are a combination of gentleness and strength, and they have learned to combine both for successful survival. This is an important lesson for those with this totem.

As delicate as they are, spiders are also very agile. They can maintain balance and walk the tiny silken threads with ease. To walk the threads of life and maintain balance has been one of the mysteries throughout the ages. Myth and lore often speak of individuals who have learned to walk the threads between life and death—walking and sleeping—between physical and the spiritual. This is part of what spider medicine can teach, for spiders are the experts at walking threads.

Most people have little or no contact with the bigger spiders, but they will often see a wide variety around the house and home. Many of these serve vital functions, killing more harmful insects. Most of their movement occurs in the dark, and they move into inaccessible areas. This reflects much about how to express the creative energies. Don't be afraid to employ it in seemingly inaccessible corners. Weave your creative threads in the dark and then when the sun hits them, they will glisten with intricate beauty.

If spider has come into your life, ask yourself some important questions. Are you not weaving your dreams and imaginings into reality? Are you not using your creative opportunities? Are you feeling closed in or stuck as if in a web? Do you need to pay attention to your balance and where you are walking in life? Are others out of balance around you? Do you need to write? Are you inspired to write or draw and not following through? Remember the spider is the keeper of knowledge of the primordial alphabet. Spider can teach how to use the written language with power and creativity so that your words weave a web around those who would read them.



**KEYNOTE:** *Creativity and the Weaving of Fate*



**THE BLACK WIDOW SPIDER**



**THE TARANTULA SPIDER**

# Turkey

is sometimes called the earth eagle. It has a long history of association with spirituality and the honoring of the Earth Mother. It is a symbol of all the blessings that the Earth contains, along with the ability to use them to their greatest advantage. The turkey can live to be twelve years old. Twelve is a significant number in that the earth revolves around the sun in twelve months, reflecting a tie between the turkey and the honoring life cycle of the Earth. Those who have a turkey as a totem can usually expect a year of harvest.

Turkeys are native birds to this continent, and they were even raised by the Aztecs and Mayans. Almost every part of the turkey had usefulness. They were used as food. Their feathers were used for decorations, and even their bones were used to make whistles.

Turkeys have an intricate mythology among Native Americans. Turkey helped create the world, showing humans how to raise corn and fighting off evil spirits like the owl. Some stories teach how Indian sorcerers would turn themselves into turkeys and prowl around other villages.

The turkey is part of the chicken family, and the characteristics of it should be studied as well by anyone with a turkey totem. Some believe that the name for this bird came from the Hebrew name for peacock, "tukki."

The turkey is one of the most adaptable birds. Although once threatened, it is now surviving strongly again in the wild. Its greatest threat is the loss of habitat. Although they can adapt to most environments, their preference is for forested lands.

The diet of the turkey is varied, but they can eat up to a pound of acorns a day. Nuts and acorns have often been associated with hidden wisdom and new seeds of growth. Animals and birds which feed on them often reflected that new nourishment, in the form of wisdom and/or growth, is likely to occur. The turkey has also been known to steal the food cache of squirrels.

The male turkey has a bright red, fleshy wattle, and a peculiar inflatable growth on the forehead. When limp it dangles along its beak like a loose antennae. It can swell, such as at those times when one male challenges another. This growth is very symbolic. It is linked to the ancient idea of the third eye, the inner vision often associated with the pituitary gland in more traditional metaphysics. The brow center or third eye is the center for higher vision, and is often considered the seat of the feminine energies within each of us. This reflects its tie to the Mother Earth and all of its feminine energies and possibilities.

The male will often keep several hens. The female must actually lie down in front of her chosen to get his attention. The hens will sometimes use a common nest for their eggs. This again hints at the concept of shared blessings, as does the way in which they protect themselves.

Many believe that the turkey cannot fly, but this is not so. The turkey is capable of quick take-offs and can fly up to 50 miles per hour for short distances. They also run well upon their stout legs. They also will perch in trees at night for safety, roosting together; and they will change their roosting nightly. They find strength in numbers and thus reflect the energy of sharing.



**KEYNOTE:** Shared Blessings & Harvest

**CYCLE OF POWER:** Autumn





# Woodpecker

is one of those birds whose history is filled with myth and lore, much of it in connection with its most notable characteristics—the drumming. It is a relative of the flicker which was described earlier, and they share many of the same qualities and characteristics.

In the European folk tradition, the woodpecker was often considered a weather prophet, its drumming indicating forthcoming changes. It was even believed by some to be a thunderbird. In Babylonia, it was considered the ax of Ishtar and was associated with fertility. In the Greek tradition it occupied the throne of Zeus, considered sacred to this god of thunder. It was also considered the oracle of Mars, again because drumming was often used to accompany battles. The Romans also had a legend of the woodpecker. The powerful enchantress Circe fell in love with the woodland god Picus. When he rejected her love, she turned him into a woodpecker.

In the Native American tradition it is a bird connected to the heartbeat of the Earth itself. This drumming has many mystical connections, from new life rhythms to applications of shapeshifting. Many shamans learn to ride drumbeats into other dimensions.

There are, of course, different kinds of woodpeckers, each with their own unique qualities. Most are black and white, and some have red upon the head. The black and white reflects the need to see issues and aspects of life clearly. It reflects that things are fairly clear if we look closely.

The downy woodpecker is the smallest. It is also the most common and the most friendly member of the woodpecker family. The pileated, found most often in forest, is the expert woodchopper. Often as big as a crow, it is the largest of the woodpeckers. It has a conspicuous red crest. The red-headed woodpecker is also very common. While most woodpeckers, particularly males, have some red on the head, the red-headed woodpecker has a red mantle of feathers that covers its head and neck.

The red found in the head area of any woodpecker reflects a stimulation of the mental activities and the head chakra centers. It reflects a stimulation and awakening of new mental faculties. This is even further symbolized by the pecking that is the trademark of this bird.

Woodpeckers peck holes in trees and wood to get at grubs and other insects. This digging in, especially with the head, reflects increasing analysis. Their bills are strong and sharply pointed, and their skulls are heavier, facilitating the hammering. Their sharp bill and its long barbed tongue can be likened to the art of discrimination.

If a woodpecker has drummed out a song for you, then you should ask yourself some specific questions. Are you looking at all aspects of your life rationally? Are others around you not discrimination in their activities? Are you? Are you or others in your life just jumping into situations with little or no analysis?

Sometimes the woodpecker will show up just to stimulate new rhythms. Rhythm is a powerful means of affecting the physical energies. Sometimes it is easy to get so wrapped up in our daily mental and spiritual activities that we neglect the physical. This can be when the woodpecker shows up. It may also reflect a need to drum some new changes and rhythms into your life.

The woodpecker has strong hooked claws for firm holds upon a tree. Its tail feathers help to prop it upright. It also has a peculiar up and down flight. It will fly, coast down, fly and then coast down. It flies in a manner and rhythm unique to itself. All of this serves to emphasize the fact that it will become increasingly important for you to follow your own unique rhythms and flight. Do what works for you in the manner best for you. When woodpecker comes into your life, it indicates that the foundation is there. It is now safe to follow your own rhythms.



**KEYNOTE:** *The Power of Rhythm & Discrimination*

**CYCLE OF POWER:** *Summer*