

Activity: Forage Like a Kori!

(Adapted by Education Public Programs Intern Melissa Maher from the original interpretive program created by Melissa King, Zoo Atlanta Education Department)



Goal: Elementary school students will learn about the adaptations and feeding behaviors of kori bustards.

Supplies needed:

- A shallow box with an open top
- Artificial grass
Note: If artificial grass cannot be obtained, use a different textured material like shredded paper, leaves, rocks, sand, or deep carpet.
- Plastic insects and small animals (snakes, rodents, lizards, frogs)
- Metal tongs or tweezers

Background information: Kori bustards are large, **omnivorous** birds with **adaptations** that are used for **foraging** in the tall grasses of their African **savanna habitats**. They eat grasshoppers, dung beetles, lizards, snakes, rodents, carrion, flowers, seeds, roots, and acacia gum. They have strong, pointed bills that allow them to pick up and eat various types of foods. Their bill is wide enough to swallow large prey like mice. They have large eyes and excellent vision.

Vocabulary:

- **Omnivore:** an animal that eats plants, insects, and other animals.
- **Habitat:** the environment that an animal lives in.
- **Adaptation:** a characteristic of an animal that allows it to survive and thrive in its habitat.
- **Forage:** to search for and obtain a food source.
- **Savanna:** rolling grassland habitat with few, widely spaced trees

Instructions:

Set-up: Fill the box with artificial grass, or a similar material. Place the plastic insects and small animals in the box, making sure to put some deeper into the grass and some closer to the surface.

Activity: Give students the metal tongs, and explain how they are similar in structure to a kori bustard's beak. Ask students to "forage" through the grass with their "beak" in order to retrieve the plastic insects and animals. No hands allowed!

Challenge for older students: Set a timer for 30 seconds and allow students to see who can forage for and pick up the most insects and animals within that time.

Discussion Questions:

The strong, pointed beak and excellent eyesight of a kori bustard are adaptations that help them find their food in the tall grass.

- How do kori bustards obtain their food?
- What are some characteristics of the habitat they live in?
- What is an adaptation and what adaptations do kori bustards have to help them find and eat their food?

- Choose another animal. How does it obtain its food? What are characteristics of its habitat? What adaptations does that animal have for finding and eat food?

Conservation Information: Kori bustard populations are declining in the wild due to habitat loss, hunting, and collisions with power lines. You can help kori bustards by visiting zoos that house them, supporting conservation organizations, and sharing what you learn with others. Visit koribustardssp.org for more information!