

Feral February Episode 6 – Stamp of approval

Description

Throughout the month of February, which I am calling –œFeral February,–œ I am going to do something a little bit different –œ I –œ™m going to create a series of theme posts every week day about my favourite things in the world: Animals.

Today –œ™s animal is the secretary bird!

The secretary bird of Africa is, at first glance, an oddity. It has a body similar to birds of prey (also known as raptors, such as eagles, falcons and condors), but the legs of a stork or crane. These birds can reach over 4 feet tall with a wingspan of over 6 feet or 1 and 2 metres respectively, making them one of the largest raptors in the world.



Secretary bird. Photo courtesy of Yoky. [Source](#).

Unlike other birds of prey, secretary birds spend most of their time on land, hunting large insects, small mammals, frogs and snakes. They also hunt in small family groups or monogamous pairs, helping each

other hunt for food.

The secretary bird hunts by stamping on vegetation to draw out potential prey. Once exposed, the bird will employ its unique hunting strategies to capture its prey – it will either run they prey item down to quickly bite and swallow it whole, or the bird will stomp on the prey with its powerful legs, stunning it long enough to injure and eat it.

As well, if a fire breaks out in its habitat, the secretary bird waits on the edge of the flames and picks off small animals that try to escape the heat.

Your daily dose of trivia:

The origin of their name, secretary bird, is not well-known. The research I have done seems to indicate that it was once thought that it came from the birds resemblance to a secretary with multiple quill pens stuck behind the ears. Others say that it actually derives from the Arabic word *saqr-et-tair*, which means “hunter-bird.”™

What do you think?

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Photo courtesy of Keven Law. [Source](#).

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