

GREATER KUDU

~ TRAGELAPHUS STREPSICEROS

These shy, graceful animals can often be seen best from outside the zoo entrance. They're a type of "spiral-horned antelope" more closely related to bison and cattle than to other antelopes. Their scientific name means "goat-deer" and there's a strong resemblance despite their distant relation.

Kudu are cousins to bongos, but while all bongos have horns, only male kudu have these ornaments.

The kudu's huge ears and distinctive facial markings are key to a likeness.

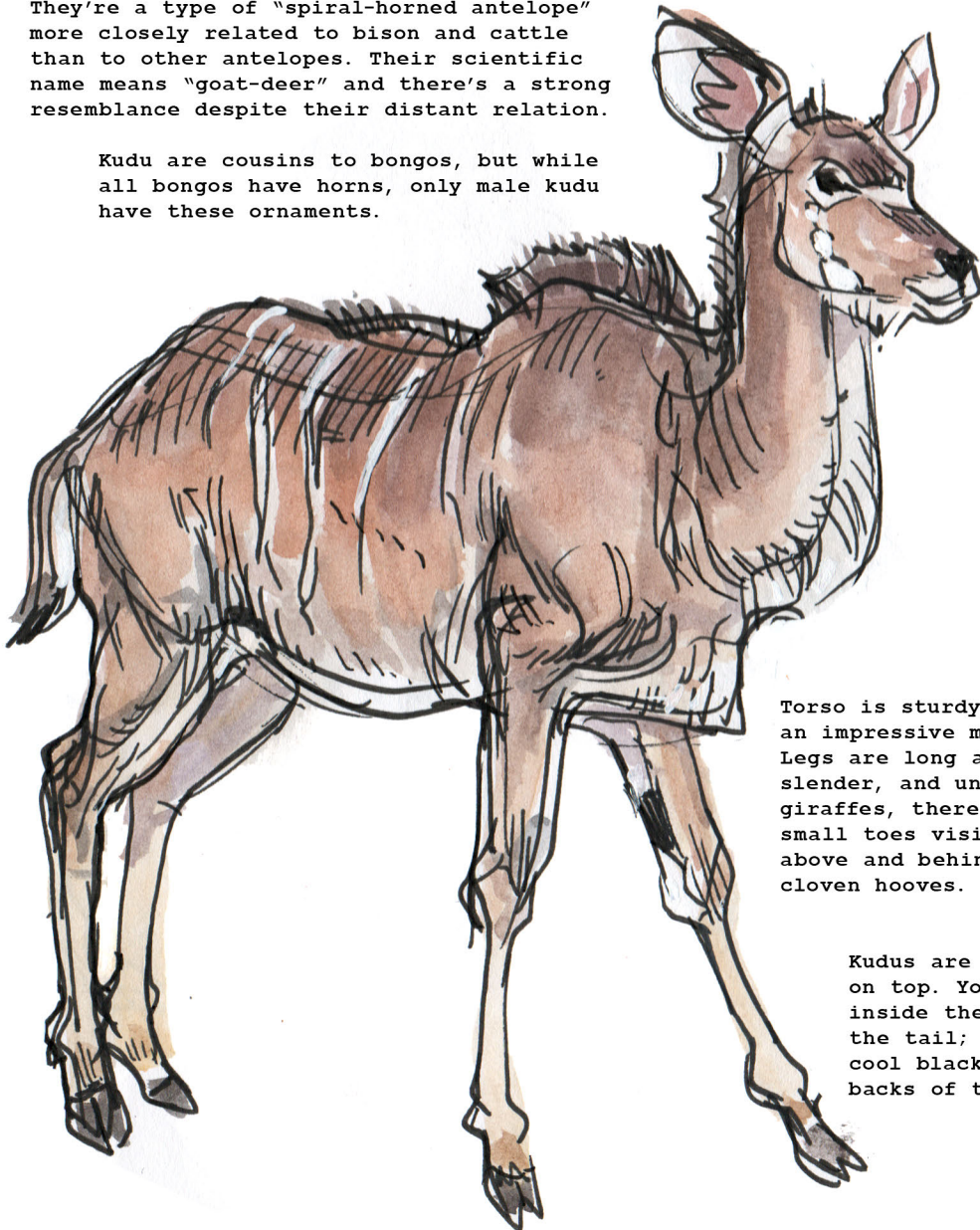
White "domino mask" stretches across bridge of nose. There's more white around the mouth and on its cheeks.

Note the cute heart-shaped nose on snout!

Torso is sturdy, with an impressive mane. Legs are long and slender, and unlike giraffes, there are small toes visible above and behind the cloven hooves.

Kudus are generally darker on top. You'll see white inside the legs and under the tail; note also the cool black stripes on backs of the forelegs.

At least one kudu is always watching you!



RETICULATED GIRAFFE

~GIRAFFA CAMELEOPARDIS RETICULATA

Note the long face and flexible muzzle. I find that adding a line for the upper eyelid helps create that gentle personality we all associate with the lovable giraffe.

This giraffe subspecies is distinguished by the net-like pattern of its spots. (Its name comes from the Latin word for "net".)

It might be easier to draw the light "net" instead of dark spots!

Each giraffe has its own unique patterns and colors. In general, spots are bigger and darker on the neck and upper body, and fade out halfway down the legs.

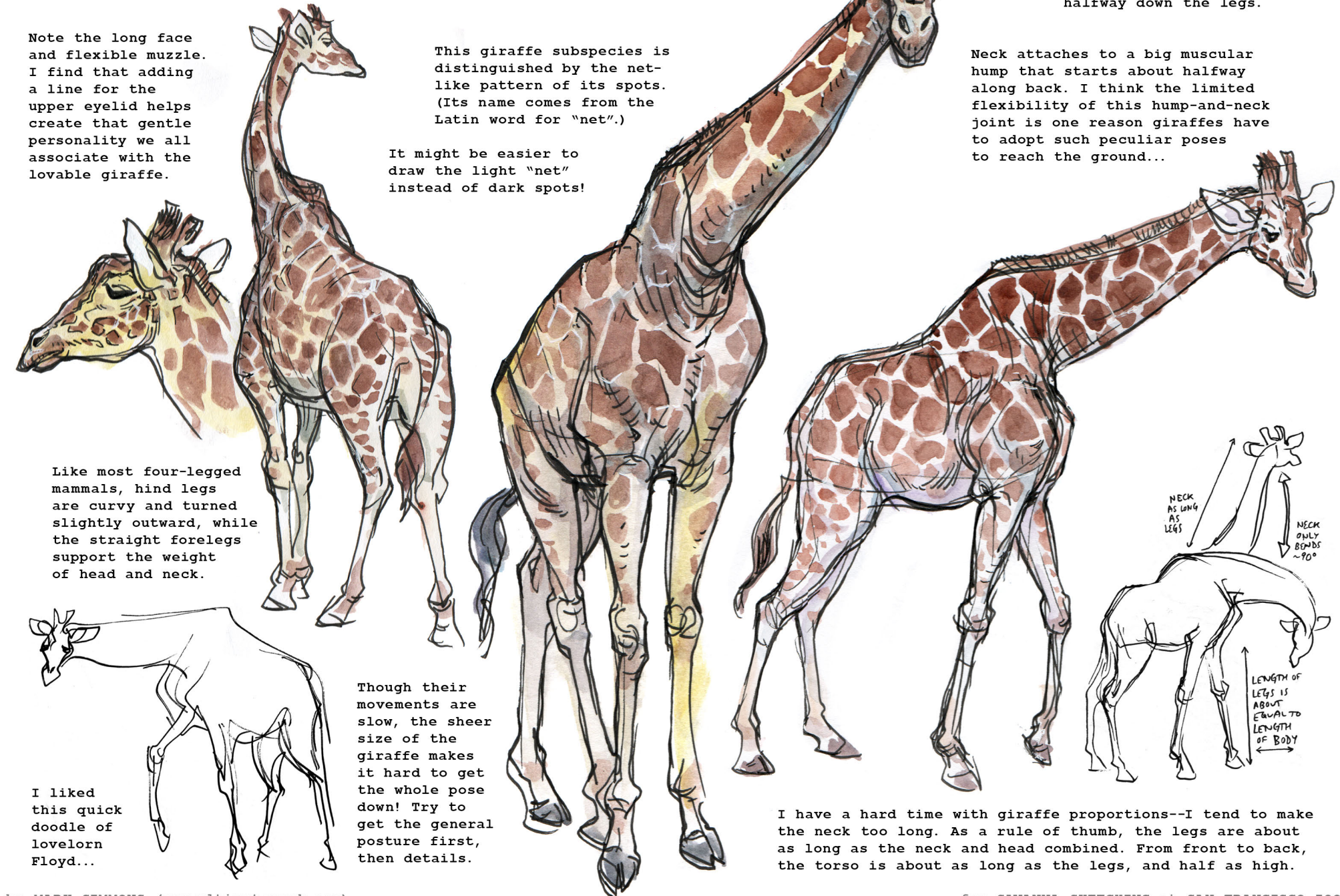
Neck attaches to a big muscular hump that starts about halfway along back. I think the limited flexibility of this hump-and-neck joint is one reason giraffes have to adopt such peculiar poses to reach the ground...

Like most four-legged mammals, hind legs are curvy and turned slightly outward, while the straight forelegs support the weight of head and neck.

Though their movements are slow, the sheer size of the giraffe makes it hard to get the whole pose down! Try to get the general posture first, then details.

I liked this quick doodle of lovelorn Floyd...

I have a hard time with giraffe proportions--I tend to make the neck too long. As a rule of thumb, the legs are about as long as the neck and head combined. From front to back, the torso is about as long as the legs, and half as high.



GRANT'S ZEBRA

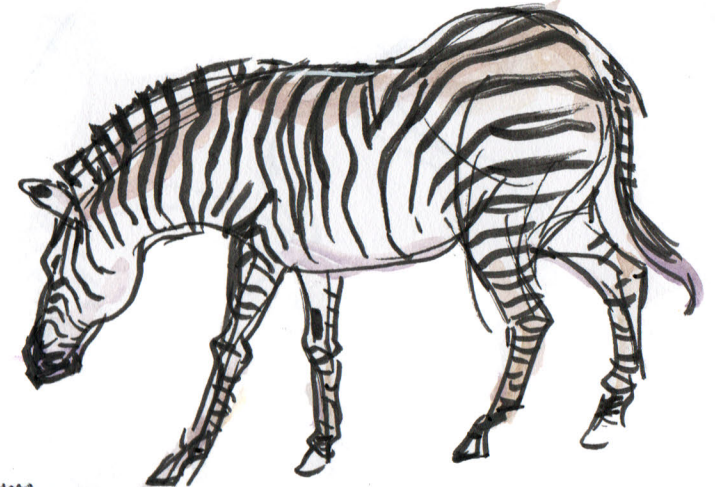
~EQUUS QUAGGA BOEHMI

This is one of several subspecies of the plains zebra, the most common kind of zebra. Each subspecies has its own marking style, and these also vary by individual, but I've tried to show the general pattern you'll see in the SF Zoo's Savanna exhibit.

There are three places--on the cheek, high on the foreleg, and in the middle of the back--where the stripes change direction and you'll see triangle shapes where they meet. Notice also the looping lines that form a diamond pattern on the front of the zebra's adorable face.



These zebras have a distinct black stripe down the middle of their backs. We can see pure white on the insides of its legs, and in the center of its bottom. As we go down the legs, the stripes get thinner and denser, so that the legs are quite dark by the time they reach the hooves.



Though the zebra is similar to a horse, its stocky build and short legs also remind me of a donkey. I think it looks more "zebra-like" the more I emphasize its round bottom and skinny little legs...



Neck stripes continue up into the short mane.



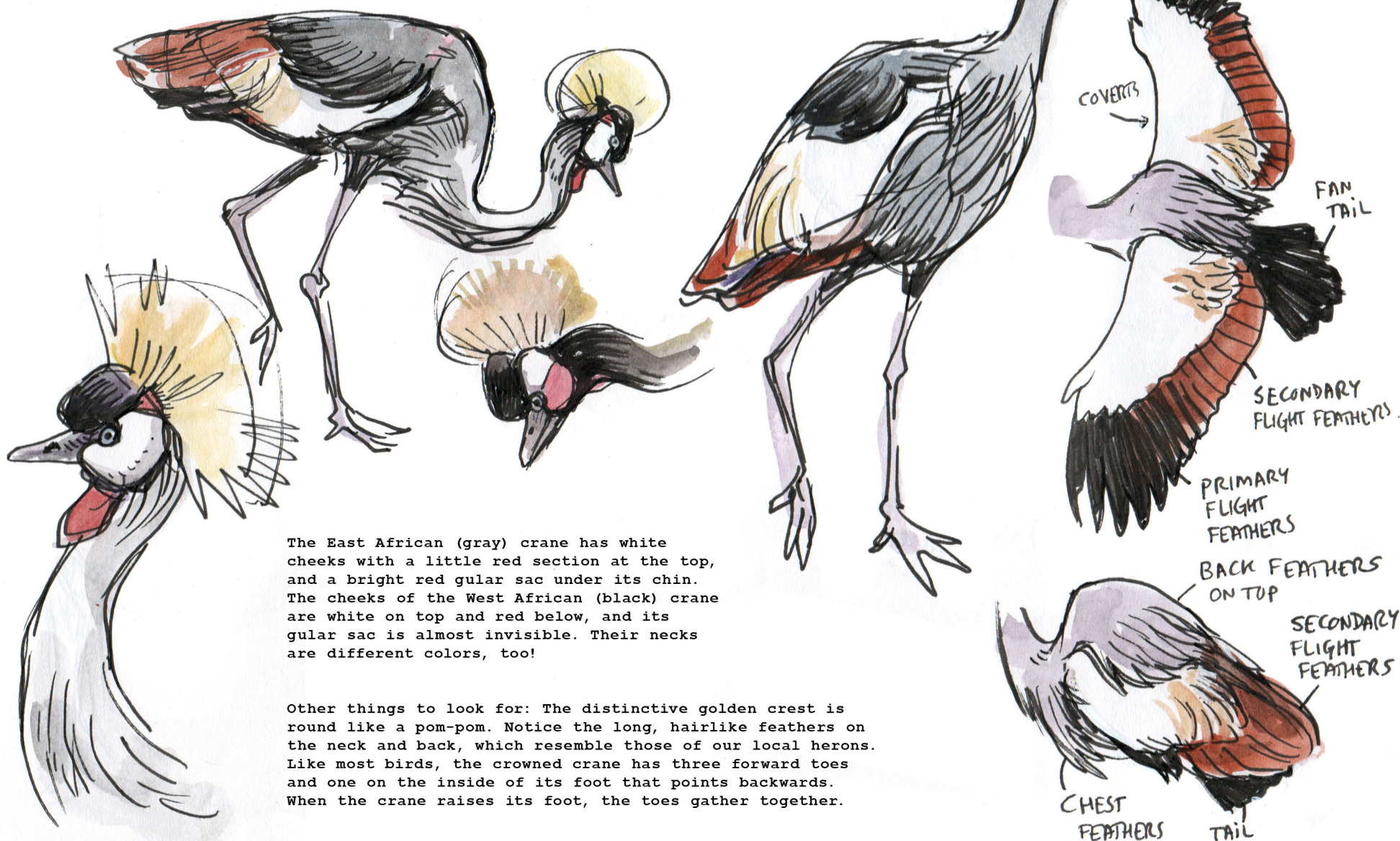
Try to sketch the whole body first, then "wrap" the stripes around it.

CROWNED CRANE

EAST AFRICAN (GREY) ~ *BALEARICA REGULATORUM*
WEST AFRICAN (BLACK) ~ *BALEARICA PAVONINA*

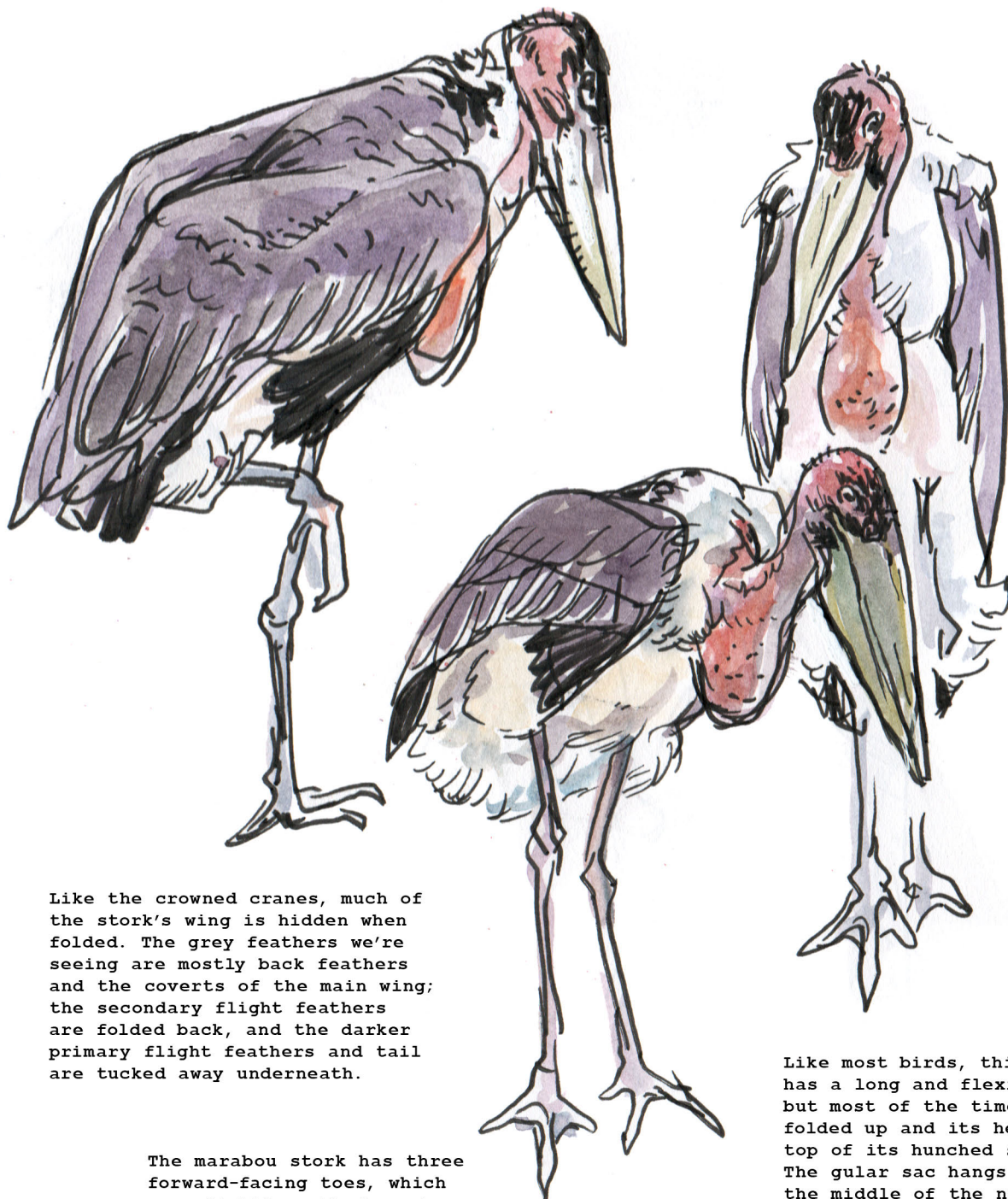
The Savanna exhibit has both grey and black crowned cranes; they're almost identical apart from the face pattern, neck colors, and gular sac. They're pretty simple and fun to sketch!

Much of the wing is hidden when folded. It's overlapped by back and chest feathers; we can see the coverts and secondary flight feathers in between.



The East African (gray) crane has white cheeks with a little red section at the top, and a bright red gular sac under its chin. The cheeks of the West African (black) crane are white on top and red below, and its gular sac is almost invisible. Their necks are different colors, too!

Other things to look for: The distinctive golden crest is round like a pom-pom. Notice the long, hairlike feathers on the neck and back, which resemble those of our local herons. Like most birds, the crowned crane has three forward toes and one on the inside of its foot that points backwards. When the crane raises its foot, the toes gather together.



Like the crowned cranes, much of the stork's wing is hidden when folded. The grey feathers we're seeing are mostly back feathers and the coverts of the main wing; the secondary flight feathers are folded back, and the darker primary flight feathers and tail are tucked away underneath.

The marabou stork has three forward-facing toes, which are slightly webbed, and one backward-facing toe.

Like most birds, this stork has a long and flexible neck, but most of the time this is folded up and its head sits on top of its hunched shoulders. The gular sac hangs from about the middle of the neck.

MARABOU STORK

~LEPTOPTILOS CRUMENIFERUS

A very distinctive bird, with its vulture-like bald head and impressive "gular sac" (an inflatable throat pouch). The Savanna exhibit's resident stork, "Mr. Big," can usually be found standing right by the viewing platform in the middle of the exhibit and he makes a very cooperative model.

You may also see a black-crowned night heron hanging out with Mr. Big. It's not a zoo animal, just a visitor who likes the free food, and it's been nicknamed "Mr. Small".

The soft, fluffy feathers around the neck and under the tail were once popular fashion accessories! Hollywood starlets like Marilyn Monroe often wore marabou feather boas.



OSTRICH

~STRUTHIO CAMELUS

One of several types of flightless "ratites"--others include the rhea, emu, and cassowary (which can all be found at the SF Zoo) plus the little kiwi (not at the SF Zoo).

Its scientific name, from the ancient Greek term for this bird, means "sparrow-camel"!

The ostrich's face looks rather intense and cross, but I think that impression is probably misleading.

Male ostriches have black and white plumage. The ones at the SF Zoo are all female, so their feathers are plain grey.

Ostriches only have two toes, and only the long inner toe has a claw. Their hind legs really resemble those of hoofed mammals, don't they?

Although the ostrich's body may look like a shaggy mass, when it spreads its wings you can understand its anatomy a little better. The legs are attached in the middle of its rounded torso, which is covered in relatively short feathers. Longer, fluffier feathers hang from its wings and tail, and there's a "ruff" of feathers around its neck and shoulders that can be puffed up for dramatic effect.