# KU NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM & BIODIVERSITY INSTITUTE

## Act like an Aye-Aye

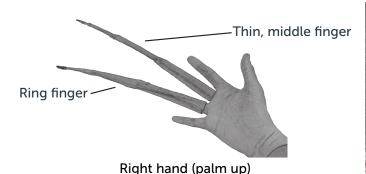
### What you need

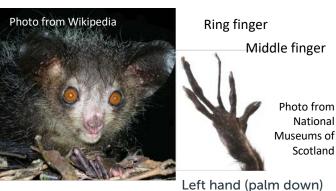
- Paper (to wrap around fingers; you can use empty paper towel tubes)
- Long tube (empty paper towel tube, two toilet paper tubes taped together, PVC tube)
- Balloons, plastic wrap, foil (anything that you can use to cover the end of paper tubes)
- Scissors and tape
- Small object(s) that will fit inside tubes

#### **Preparation**

Follow the instructions below to make digits for your middle and ring fingers, and 'branches'.

- 1. Wrap a piece of paper around your middle finger to form a tube (about 2 to 2 ½ times the length of your finger), use tape to hold it together. It should be snug but not tight. Twist the tips and use tape to make them rigid.
- 2. Make one for your ring finger.
- 3. Fill one end of a long tube (half way) with lightweight material such as newspaper, packing peanuts, bubble wrap, and cover the end with a balloon, plastic wrap or foil. Place a small object into the other end and cover as before.





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#### What to do

- 1. Wear the long digits on your middle and ring fingers.
- 2. Use your long fingers to tap on the tube and listen for the hollow section like an aye-aye searches for insect larvae. Aye-ayes mostly use their middle finger to tap and remove larvae they find inside, and use their ring fingers to tap on other food sources such as fruit.
- 3. Remove the cover to see if you were successful. Try different materials and objects to see how it affects the sound.

#### What is happening?

Aye-ayes (Daubentonia madagascariensis) use percussive foraging; they tap on wood and use sound, and possibly other senses, to detect cavities and then gnaw holes to get inside.