OWL PELLETS

Topic or Concept

Owls eat many different types of small mammals. They bolt and swallow their food without chewing.

Objective

1. Relate the owl's eating habits with other animals (snake, cow, human).
2. Relate the contents of the owl pellet to the human skeletal system.
3. Discuss the food web, population control.

Materials **Available From Region 20 Living Science Materials Center**	**Enrichment Activity**
LM-303 Owl Pellets (6 per class) **Not Available From Region 20 Living Science Materials Center** 3 small paper cups or beakers Scissors Hydrogen peroxide (optional) Paper (white) Water Glue Precut cardboard template Bleach (diluted) Various skeleton models Metric Ruler Overhead projector Forceps or toothpicks Hole punch Placemat (tray or paper) 1 liter plastic bottle Plastic owl (optional)	**Procedure:** 1. Soak 1 liter bottle in hot water to remove label and base (this can be done in advance). Cut bottle just below the neck so that it fits snugly inverted in the base. 2. Test cardboard for proper fit inside the bottle. 3. Place owl pellet on the placemat. 4. Gently separate bones from fur (soak in hydrogen peroxide for one minute if pellet is too dry). 5. Place bones on bone sorting chart. 6. Soak bones in diluted bleach to clean and whiten the bones (soak only three minutes). 7. Lay bones out on skeletal layout sheet. 8. Transfer to cardboard and glue bones to the cardboard. 9. Glue labels to cardboard near bones. 10. Cut white paper to fit backside of cardboard (to be used as key for display). 11. Make key for bone display using the bone identification handout. 12. Glue key to cardboard. 13. Place completed bone display into inverted 1 liter bottle, which rests on the original bottle base. **Questions and Observations** 1. Measure the owl pellet (in millimeters) a. Length of the pellet _____mm b. Diameter of the pellet _____mm 2. Identify at least three physical characteristics of the pellets – smell, color, texture, etc. 1. 2. 3. 3. What do you think is inside of the pellet? 4. In which part of the owl does the pellet form? 5. Why does the pellet form? 6. After opening the owl pellet what information was attained?