



The BLUES Go Birding Across America

Center Activity – Owl Pellets

(adapted from A Teacher's Guide to Nature's Food Chains)

Objective: Children will take apart owl pellets to discover information about an owl's diet.

Materials:

- Owl pellets (may be purchased online)—one per child or group
- Toothpick—one per child
- Paper plates—two per child
- Copy of Owl Pellets Bone Identification Chart—one per child
- Glass of water (optional)

Prep:

- Set up the center with materials.
- Children should bring a piece of paper and a pencil to the center.

Directions for Students at the Center:

1. Owl pellets are the compact undigested parts (bones and fur) from an owl's diet. Several hours after a meal, an owl will spit out a pellet. Put the owl pellet on one of your paper plates.
2. Using the toothpick, gently begin pulling apart the pellet. As you separate the pellet you will find tiny bones mixed in with the fur. Wetting the pellet with water sometimes helps to loosen the fur.
3. Put the bones on the other paper plate. You may sort them, putting similar bones together in one area on the plate.
4. Optional: You may use the [Bone Identification Chart](#) to identify the types of bones you find, for example: jaws, skulls, legs, shoulder blades, and hips. An additional activity is to count the number of bones of each kind and graph your results.
5. When finished, put the bones in a location designated by the teacher. Throw away the toothpicks, paper plates, and fur. WASH YOUR HANDS.

Bone Identification Chart

	Rodents	Shrews	Moles	Birds
Skulls				
Jaws				
Shoulder Blades				
Front Legs				
Hips				
Hind Legs				
Assorted Ribs				
Assorted Vertebrae				
	<p>CATERPILLAR LARVAE AND COCOONS</p>		<p>CATERPILLAR DROPPINGS</p>	