

# Owl Pellet Dissection

Materials in your Coast Kit:

- 1 real owl pellet
- Tweezers
- Cake pop stick
- Toothpick
- Magnifying glass
- Bone chart

## What is an Owl Pellet?

Owls are predators and eat mostly rodents (mice or rats), shrews, or moles. Sometimes they will also eat lizards, small birds, snakes, frogs, or other small animals. Like all birds (except for some prehistoric ancestors of birds), owls do not have teeth. Instead of chewing their food, they swallow their prey whole. During the digestion, the food is separated in digestible and indigestible parts. The indigestible parts, like the bones, fur, and sand, are compacted together into an oval-shaped pellet, which the owl regurgitates several hours after it eats. Since the owl swallows the prey virtually whole, most of the bones are intact and can be viewed quite easily in the pellet.

**Your owl pellet is heat sterilized and completely safe to dissect!**

## How to dissect your owl pellet



1. Open the owl pellet up and examine the outside. Look for fur, feathers, and other identifiable material.



2. Use the wooden cake pop stick or the toothpicks to gently break the owl pellet up and observe what you see.



3. Use the tweezers to pick up some of the bones you can see. If you are lucky, you will find a skull or a jawbone in your owl pellet. Pay close attention to the teeth of the prey.



4. Examine these bones up close using your magnifying glass to identify whether they came from a rodent, shrew, mole, and small bird.

Use your owl pellet bone chart to identify the different bones you find. You may also see remnants of

feathers, fur, and bits of sand and gravel.