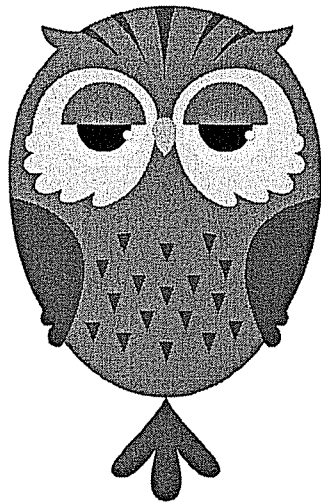


# Owl Pellet Dissection Lab

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Section \_\_\_\_\_



TEACHER

## Owl Pellet Dissection Lab Notes

\*Owls swallow \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ whole, and the resulting pellets generally contain the complete \_\_\_\_\_ of their prey.

\*Predatory \_\_\_\_\_ such as bobcats and \_\_\_\_\_ have \_\_\_\_\_ to grind up \_\_\_\_\_ and claws.

\*Owls, on the other hand, do not have \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ and cannot pass whole \_\_\_\_\_ and claws through their digestive tract safely.

\*Instead, these materials form a \_\_\_\_\_ that is surrounded with the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of the prey consumed. The \_\_\_\_\_ is then coughed out and the owl begins feeding again.

### Barn Owl Study

Scientists studied the diet of a Barn Owl for one year. In one year the Barn Owl ate:

\_\_\_\_\_ Mice

\_\_\_\_\_ Rats

\_\_\_\_\_ Bats

\_\_\_\_\_ Young Rabbits

\_\_\_\_\_ Sparrows

\_\_\_\_\_ Starlings

\_\_\_\_\_ Other Birds

\_\_\_\_\_ Lizards

\_\_\_\_\_ Frogs

\_\_\_\_\_ Moths

\_\_\_\_\_ Crickets

## Owl Pellet Analysis

- Objectives:
- 1) dissect on complete pellet of *Tyto alba*
  - 2) identify the mammals whose skulls are found
  - 3) identify bones and to construct a skeleton
  - 4) describe mammal populations that are prey for *T. alba*
  - 5) construct a food web with the owl at the highest level

- Materials:
- Owl pellet
  - white paper
  - dissection tools

- Procedure:
1. place an owl pellet on a sheet of white paper
  2. Using the dissecting equipment separate the bones from the feathers and/or fur.
  3. Clean the bones as well as possible and sort them according to type. You may need the bone identification chart for this. The skulls are the most important for identifying the type of prey so clean these very carefully.
  4. Use the key to mammal skulls to identify the prey.
  5. Record the kinds and numbers of prey you find on your data sheet and on the chart in the classroom. Once the class chart is complete, copy the class data on your record sheet.
  6. Answer the questions on the data sheet about the ecology of owls.

## Owl Pellet Dissection Lab Notes

\*Owls swallow small rodents and birds whole, and the resulting pellets generally contain the complete skeletons of their prey.

\*Predatory mammals such as bobcats and wolves have teeth to grind up bones and claws.

\*Owls, on the other hand, do not have teeth for grinding and cannot pass whole bones and claws through their digestive tract safely.

\*Instead, these materials form a pellet that is surrounded with the hair and feathers of the prey consumed. The pellet is then coughed out and the owl begins feeding again.

### Barn Owl Study

Scientists studied the diet of a Barn Owl for one year. In one year the Barn Owl ate:

1407 Mice

143 Rats

7 Bats

5 Young Rabbits

375 Sparrows

23 Starlings

54 Other Birds

2 Lizards

174 Frogs

25 Moths

52 Crickets

## What's On The Outside Of An Owl Pellet

Before you begin your dissection examine the outside of the pellet for clues of where it was gathered. Pellets are collected from a variety of places around the country. Using the chart below see if you can determine where the Barn Owl might have coughed out your pellet.

Small seeds ----- Open sheds, grain elevator

Dirt ----- Ditches and under trees

Hay or Straw ----- Barns and Hay sheds

Feathers ----- Man – made nesting boxes or bird houses

Pine needles ----- Under evergreen trees

\*Make a list of the items found on the outside of your pellet. Where might your pellet have been found?

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**Owl Pellet Dissection Lab Data Sheet**

1. Number of skulls found in your owl pellet: \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Species found in your pellet: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Use websites found on Mr. A's website to research information about owls found in British Columbia. Write down 3 facts about each owl.

Owl #1 Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Owl #2 Name: \_\_\_\_\_

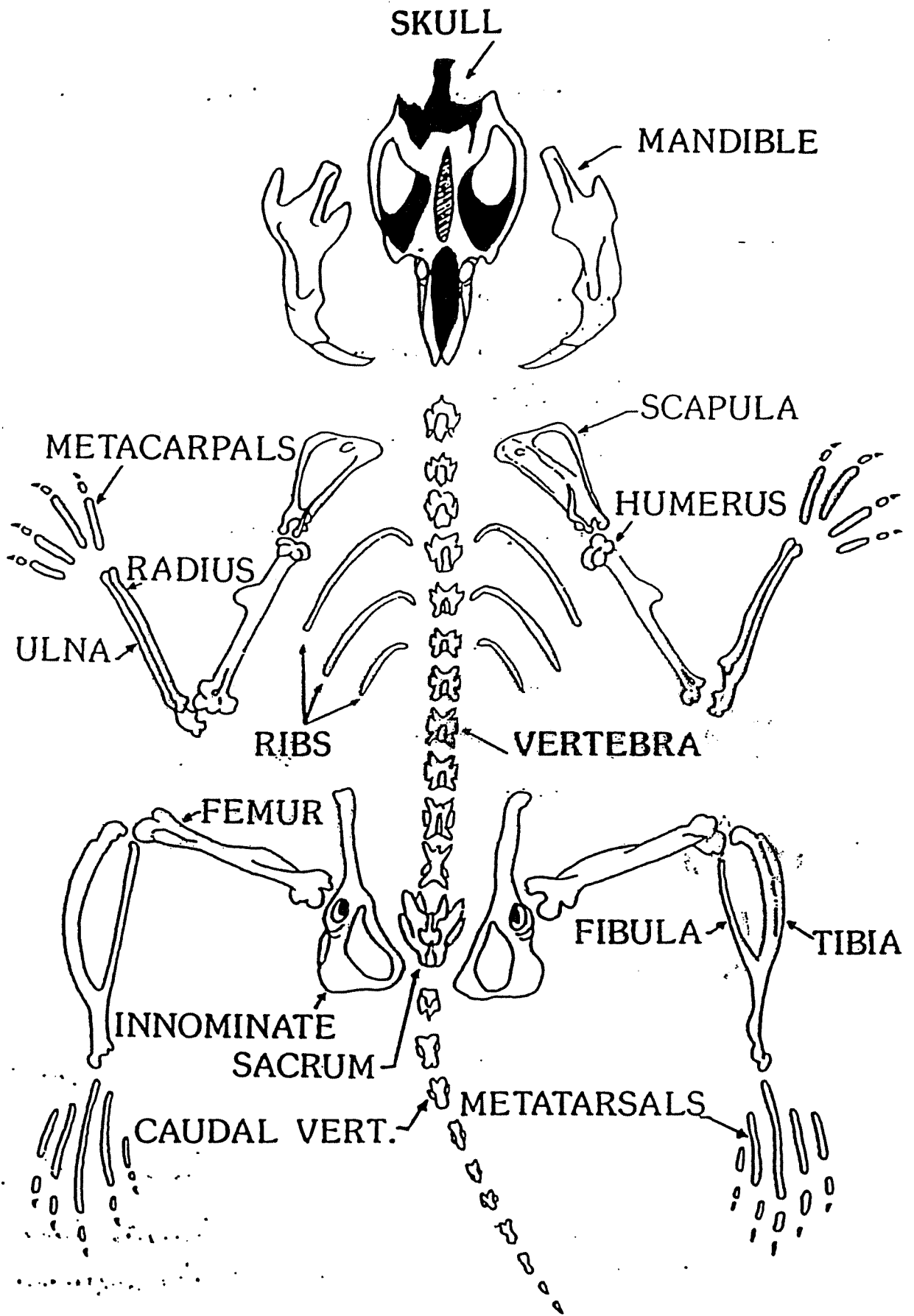
1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Owl #3 Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## **Constructing A Food Web**












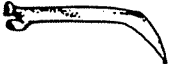








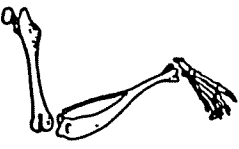


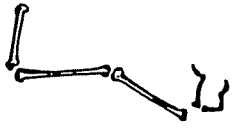




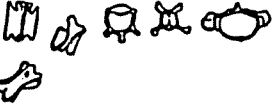


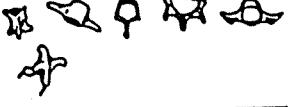
Construct a food web (name and draw sketch) with an owl at the top of the web. Your web should include at least 6 organisms (be sure to include a producer).



*PLEASE FEEL FREE TO PHOTOCOPY.*



# Bone Sorting Chart

	RODENTS	SHREWS	MOLES	BIRDS
Skulls				
Jaws	 <p>Loose Teeth</p>			
Shoulder Blades				
Front legs				
Hips				
Hind Legs				
Assorted ribs				
Assorted vertebrae				

CATERPILLAR LARVAE  
AND COCOONS



CATERPILLAR  
DROPPINGS

