LESSON 4: Predator/Prey Relationships

Exploration: Owl Pellet Dissection

Today you will explore owl pellets. The owl pellets are clean and safe to touch. You will need to touch them in order to do this activity. Please wash your hands after you are done.

- You and your partner will receive one owl pellet, one pair of forceps, a magnifying lens and a bone chart. Use your fingers to gently pull apart the owl pellet.

What do you find inside the owl pellet? _____

How do you think these things got in the owl pellet? _____

_____

- **Use the bone chart!** Match the bones to the pictures on the chart. What types of animal or animals are in the owl pellet?

_____

- **Now use the field guide!** Discover exactly whose bones you found (this will only work if you have a skull).

1. Begin by looking at the pictures of skulls on pages 248-263. Match the skull you found in the owl pellet to one of the pictures.
2. Look at the number next to the picture of the skull. The name of the animal is on the opposite page.
3. Write the name of this animal.

- If you need help using the field guide, raise your hand and your EcoTeam teacher can help you.

_____

Vocabulary:

Predator	An animal that hunts, kills, and eats other animals.
Prey	An animal that predators hunt and eat.

Learning Activity:

Now we are going to find out how much prey an owl might eat in one day, one week and one year! To do this we will examine your owl pellet and do some math.

First, make a guess! How much prey do you think this owl might eat in a year? _____

Now let's figure it out!

1. How many prey did you find in your owl pellet? *Circle one*: 1 2 3 4

2. Figure out how much prey this owl might eat in one year:

Number of days in a year → ☐

Number of prey found in pellet → ☐

X

Number of prey this owl might eat in a year → ☐

3. Compare the answer to your guess. Was the answer more or less than your guess?

_____

4. Let's think together. If one owl needs to eat this much prey to survive, then what do the prey need to survive?

_____

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5. Owls and their prey need habitat, which means a place to find food, water, and shelter they need. Describe what you think an owl's habitat might look like.

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