

PART 1 Spend 2-5 minutes observing your pellet without touching it. Record the things you notice and wonder about your pellet in the spaces below.

I notice...	I wonder...

MATERIALS

Name _____

Date _____

- » owl pellet
- » tweezers
- » hand lens
- » napkin or paper towel
- » petri dish
- » cotton balls
- » Sharpie for labeling your petri dishes
- » scotch tape
- » dichotomous key
- » water (for wet dissection only)
- » *What do owls eat?* worksheet

PART 2 Owl Pellet Dissection

Today, we will search for skulls in our owl pellets. These are the skulls and bones of animals that the owl has eaten. You may find many skulls and bones in your pellet!

Place a check mark on the line as you complete the following steps:

- _____ Write your name on the lid of your Petri dish with a Sharpie. This container will store the skulls and bones you find so that you may take them home.
- _____ Unwrap the foil from the owl pellet.
 - » If you are doing a *dry* dissection, gently pull the pellet into two halves. You can use your fingers!
 - » If you are doing a *wet* dissection, place your owl pellet in a petri dish filled with water. Soak pellet for 10 minutes.
- _____ Use the tweezers to pull apart the soft material surrounding the skull and bones.
- _____ Place any skulls and bones you find on your clean paper napkin.
- _____ Observe the bones with your hand lens, and try to match the mandibles with their craniums.
- _____ Spread out a layer of cotton ball padding in the bottom of your petri dish.
- _____ Place the clean skulls and bones you found on this layer of cotton balls.
- _____ Use the dichotomous key to determine what prey your owl ate.
- _____ Close the lid of your Petri dish and tape it together.
- _____ Clean your work area according to the teacher's instructions and wash your hands.
- _____ Record the number of skulls for each prey species you find on the *What Do Owls Eat?* worksheet.

Name _____

Date _____