

What will we need?


- Bone identification charts
- Rubber gloves
- Pen and paper
- Ruler
- Tweezers
- Cocktail sticks
- Magnifying glass
- Pot of mild disinfectant
- Paper towels
- A shallow dish or newspaper
- Glue

Where can I buy pellets?

Suffolk Owl Sanctuary sell pellets for dissection.

- ✓ These pellets are sterilised with heat to ensure they are safe for the classroom or home education.
- ✓ They are sorted for quality and size to make sure that each pellet provides students with an interesting and educational experience.
- ✓ Each pellet is completely unique and they are not artificially filled or tampered with during their preparation.

Please visit: www.owl-help.org.uk/shop

 03456 807 897



Join the Suffolk Owl Sanctuary

PELLET DETECTIVES



Suffolk Owl Sanctuary

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Mark Leggett

What will we find?

There may be many things that you find inside your pellet, such as bones, parts of insects or the quills of bird feathers.

All of these things can provide you with useful information; all birds and animals have a preferred habitat and feeding habits, so finding out more about the owl's prey will help you to discover more about the owl!

Tips & Tricks

Using the tweezers and a cocktail stick, tease the pellets apart.

With the tweezers, carefully remove anything you find, clean it up and dry it on a paper towel.

Match each item you remove with the Bone Identification Charts.

Remember...

Remember to ALWAYS wash your hands after handling owl pellets and their contents!

What is an owl pellet?

Owls are carnivorous and eat a wide range of animals; they will either eat their prey whole or tear it into large chunks.

Once swallowed, the food travels down the owl's oesophagus to the gizzard. Parts of the prey are broken up by enzymes, but the hard bony components and other elements such as hair and feathers remain undigested. These are then regurgitated as a pellet. Pellets are NOT droppings, as they do not pass through the intestine.

Why dissect an owl pellet?

Dissecting owl pellets is a wonderful hands-on way for children to learn about various facets of these enthralling birds. It's a fascinating and engaging classroom or home-learning activity which provides youngsters with important information about all sorts of aspects of an owl's lifestyle.

Pellet Detectives of all ages invariably enjoy this informative science activity, which is one that prompts all sorts of discussion and investigation. For instance, finding out more about the food chain, which is the path by which plants and animals get their energy. At the top of the food chain are predators - animals that eat other animals, which are their prey. As birds of prey, owls have a very significant part to play ecologically.

Pellet detecting also leads to introducing a much wider range of topics, including the conservation and care of local environments - indeed, possibilities for expansion of the subject into other areas of the curriculum are boundless!

Bone Chart A						Bone Chart B					
Bone	Bird	Mouse	Rat	Shrew	Vole	Bone	Bird	Mouse	Rat	Shrew	Vole
Skull						Clivicle					
Pelvis						Humerus					
Scapula						Fibula & Tibia					
Femur						Radius & Ulna					

Don't forget...

Suffolk Owl Sanctuary offer templates for Bone Identification Charts, work sheets and teacher notes.

✓ Free download

Please visit: www.owl-help.org.uk/pellet-detectives

Food for thought...

$$A+B=C$$

What would happen if one of the creatures in your food chain disappeared?

What effect might it have on the other members of the food chain?

How might your food chain be affected if the local habitat was damaged or destroyed?

What could happen to the local environment?

Could this have any consequences outside of the local habitat?