E78: Coughing up Clues

Introduction:
You are going to be working in groups to dissect an owl pellet. Owl pellets can give scientists valuable clues about an owl’s diet and habits. Let’s see what you can observe and infer about what your owl has been eating and how it fits into the food web!

Procedure:

1. Observe your owl pellet.
   a. Record qualitative observations:

2. Carefully pull apart the owl pellet so that you have a piece for each of your group members.

3. Use your tools to gently separate all of the bones from the fur of your piece of the pellet.

4. Work with your group to divide all of the bones into groups based on their shapes. Use page E40 and the bone charts to help you.

5. Create a data table to record the types and number of bones you have collected. Don’t forget a proper title!
6. Use the index card, glue, and the bones your group has collected to make a complete skeleton of one animal. If you are missing bones, visit the “bone yard” and see if you can find what you need.

7. Sketch the skeleton you created.

**Analysis:**

1. What were you able to infer about the diet of owls from investigating an owl pellet? Include information about the type and number of organisms in an owl’s diet and use evidence from your observations in your answer.