



Owl Pellets

A Scientific Investigation

Owl pellets provide clues about what an owl has eaten over the past twenty-four hours. Since owls cannot digest the bones and fur of any animal it eats, it regurgitates (spits back) those remains in the form of a pellet. You can take a pellet apart and identify the bones and the species of small prey the owl has eaten.

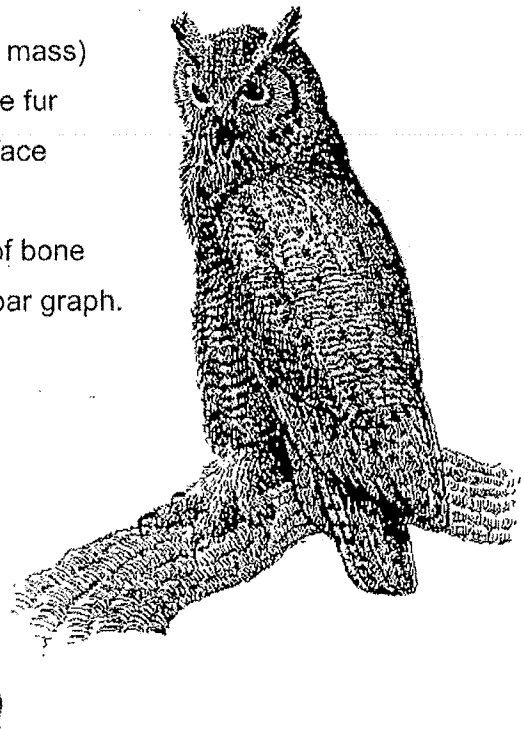


This activity will require you to take an owl pellet apart. Like a real scientist, you will complete the following on your own pellet:

- measure the pellet (length, width and mass)
- separate the individual bones from the fur
- reconstruct the skeleton on a flat surface
- identify the bones
- count the total number of each type of bone
- record your bone count results on a bar graph.

Materials:

- 1 owl pellet
- 1 paper plate
- 1 pair of tweezers
- 1 skeletal chart of a vole.
- colouring pencils
- latex gloves



Name _____

Activity Record

Write your predictions of what you will find inside the owl pellet.

Record your observations of what you found when you examined the contents of the owl pellet.

Describe the object in front of you. (Include the size, shape, color, texture, and weight of the pellet's contents)

Length: _____ cm Width: _____ cm

Texture: _____

Weight: \approx _____ g (hint: a pencil weighs approximately 50g)

How many of the following bones did you find:

Humerus _____

Femur _____

Lower Jaw _____

Skull _____

Vertebrae _____

Shoulder Blade _____

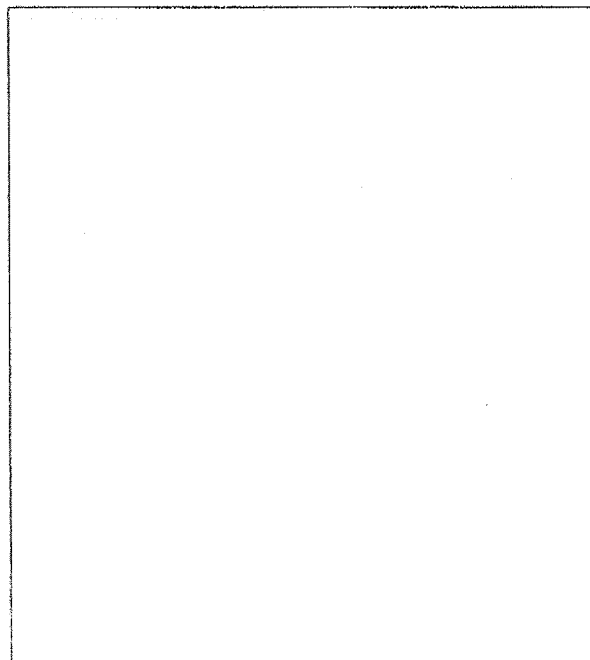
Ulna/Radius _____

Ribs _____

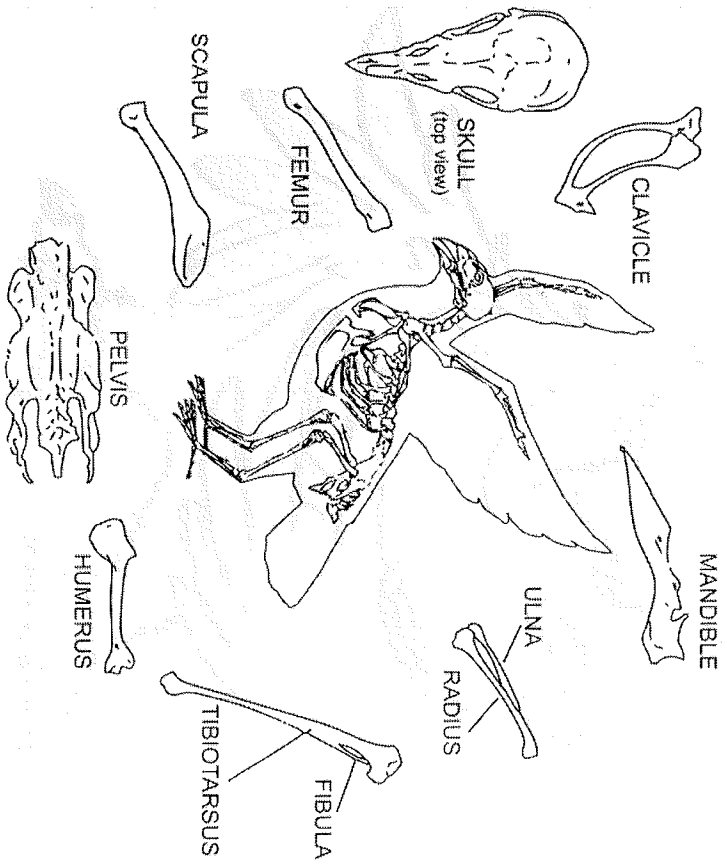
Pelvic Bones _____

Tibia/Fibia _____

Draw the bones you find:



BIRD



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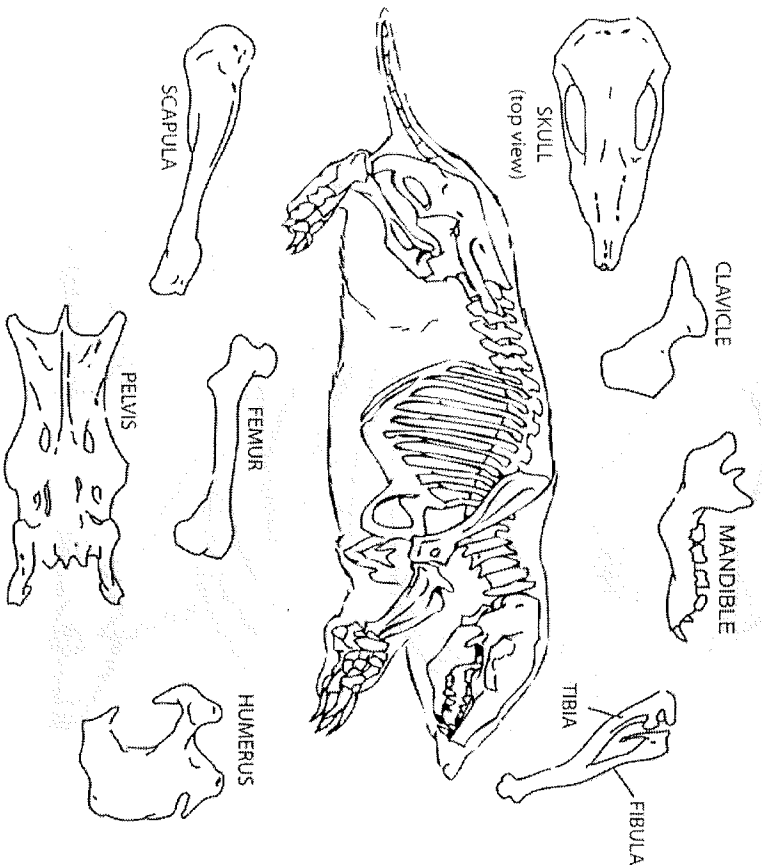


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MOLE

Scaparus orarius

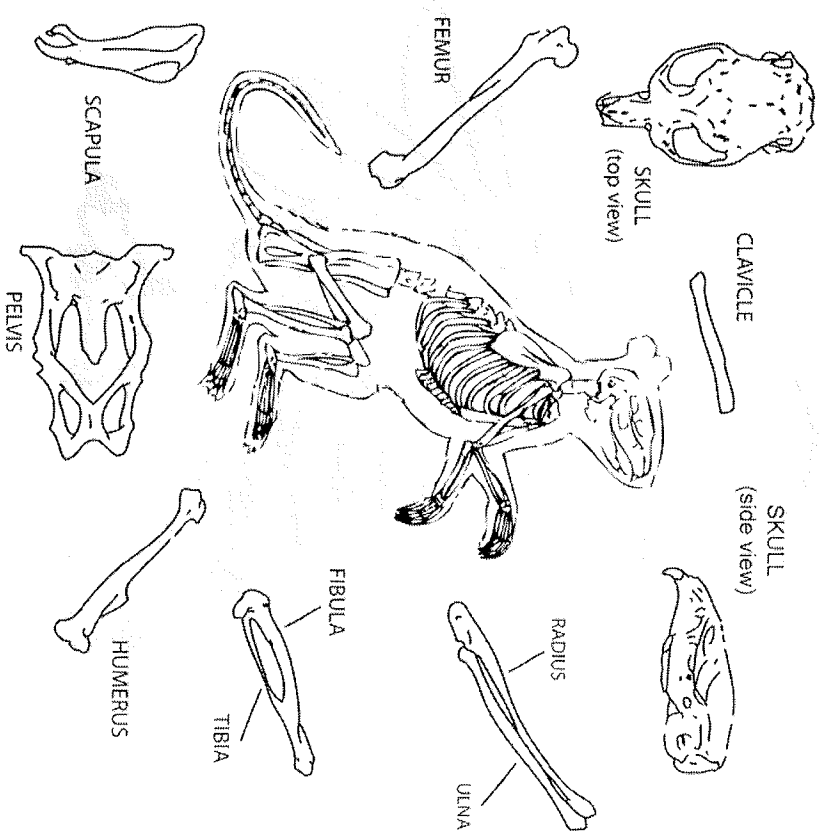


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MOUSE

Microtus

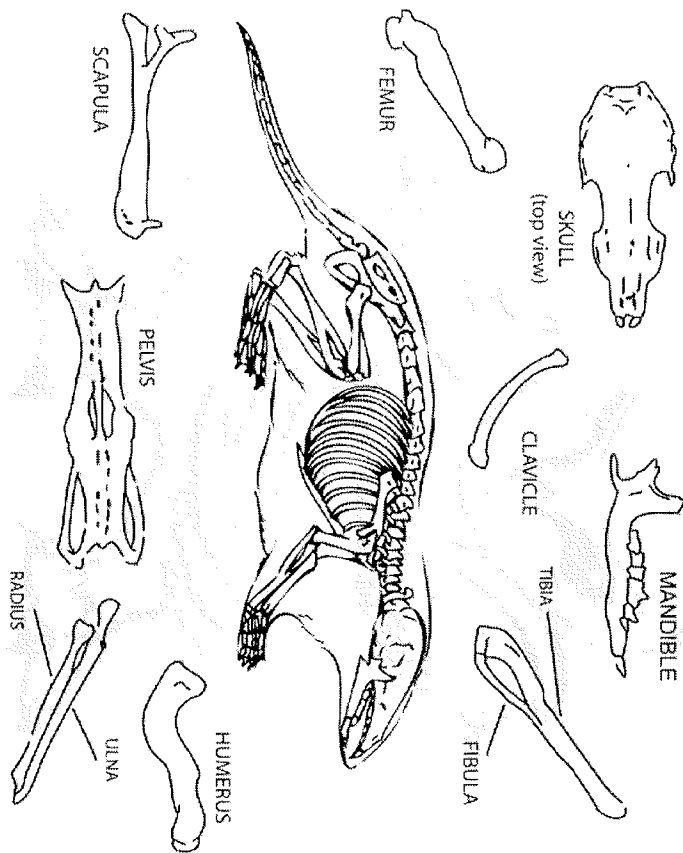


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SHREW

Sorex Vagrans

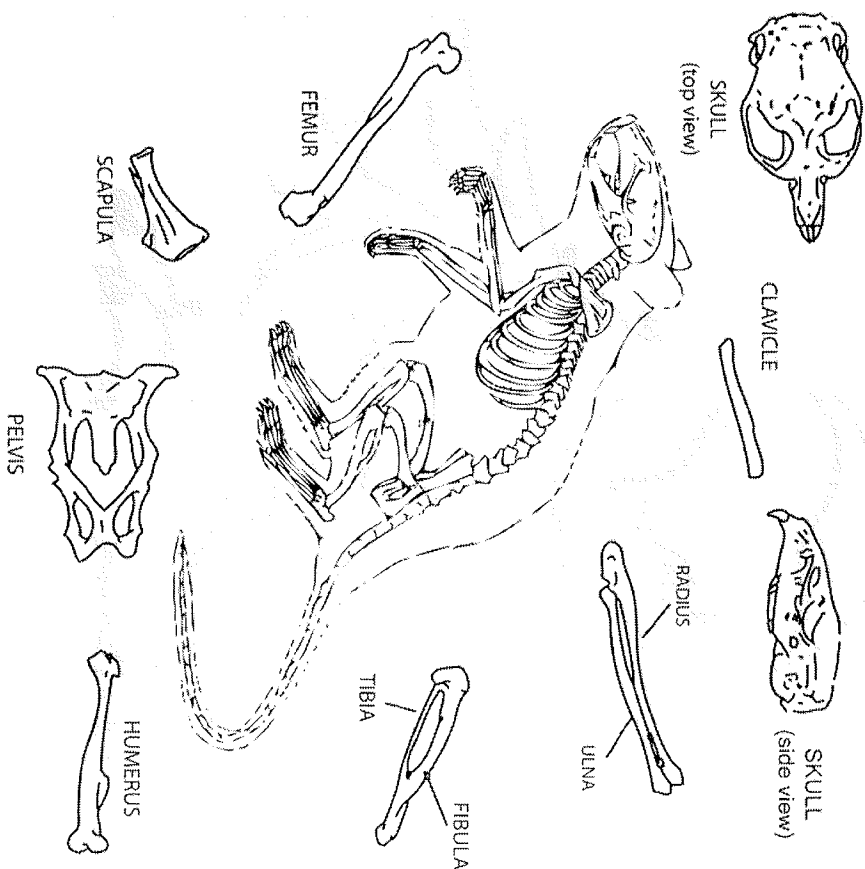


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RAT

Microtus

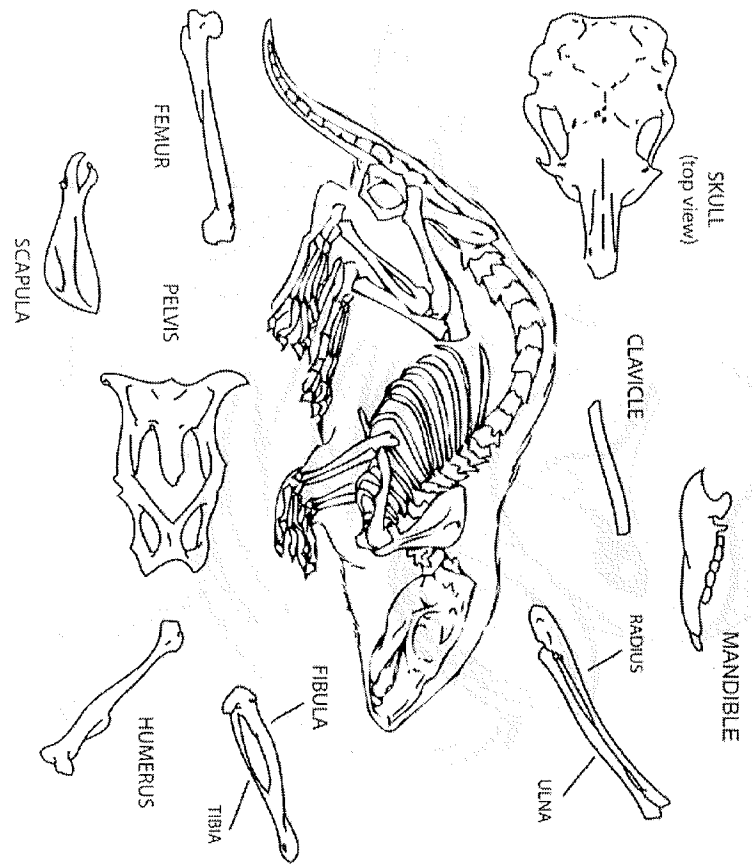


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VOLE

Microtus



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