

Outstanding Owls

Young Naturalists

Ages: pre-k through 2nd

Length: 1 hr

Whooo wants to learn about owls? Join the Young Naturalists to explore some owls that live in Syracuse and what makes them so spectacular. And we'll dissect some owl pellets to see what our nighttime animal friends have been eating, it will be a hoot!

Introduction:

- Who are owls?
 - Birds of prey- they hunt and eat other animals
 - Nocturnal- active at night!
- What do owls look like (after each adaptation ask why owls might have this)?
 - **Large head**- good sight and hearing
 - **Flat face**-
 - **Hooked beak**- eating animals (all birds of prey)
 - **Large eyes**- vision- pupils can expand the full size to allow them to see better at night- eye color is an indicator- nocturnal owls have more dark eyes and owls during the day have more orange yellow eyes
 - **Short tail**
 - **Long wings**- strong, quiet flight
 - **Sharp claws**
- What do owls sound like?
 - Owls snap their bills, clap their wings and more popularly will sing
 - Songs can be hoots, chirps, or whistles
- What do owls eat?
 - Most owls eat small animals like mice, voles, and rabbits
 - Some eat insects, birds or other animals
- How do owls eat?
 - How do we eat?- we chew food up and then swallow
 - Owls swallow their prey whole!

- When they swallow their prey whole, they eat things they can't digest like bones, fur
- and feathers- what do they do lol with these?
- Settles in gizzard, compacts it and then they throw them up into a pellet
- That's what we're going to dissect today!
- Activity: Dissect Owl Pellets
 - Hand out one owl pellet to each naturalist on a paper plate
 - Have them dissect- I passed out gloves, toothpicks, and magnifying glasses, but if you have tweezers or dissection tools that would also be cool!
 - Use bone keys (you can google these or they will come with owl pellets if you order them) to figure out what you find!

Sources:

<https://kids.britannica.com/kids/article/owl/353584>