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Phone: 800-507-0966

Fax: 800-507-0967

www.newpathlearning.com

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OWL FOOD WEB

A **food web** is a system of overlapping food chains. A **food chain** is a sequence of organisms showing who eats whom in an ecosystem. An **ecosystem** has many food chains that are interconnected. An animal can be eaten by many different animals and therefore be a part of many different food chains.

Organisms of a food web are linked by arrows to indicate the direction of **energy** transfer. Energy, in the form of food, passes as an organism from a higher level consumes an organism from a lower level.

Owls are **predators** which prey on rodents, shrews, moles, insects, reptiles and small birds. Since very few predators feed on owls, they hold the top position of the food chain. This food web shows a barn owl and great horned owl as the top-level **consumers**.



MOLE SKELETON IDENTIFICATION

Use the identification chart below to identify the remains of a **mole** that may be found within an owl pellet. Look at the shape and size of the skull, teeth, limbs, pelvis and other body parts that you may find to identify the prey animal.

Moles have a flat and broad skull with 10 upper teeth on each jaw side. They burrow underground and eat insects and other small invertebrates.



The mole's **front feet** are well adapted to digging.



A dissected owl pellet showing several types of animal bones.

Mole Bone Identification/Sorting Chart

Skull	Mandible (Jaw)	Scapula	Front Limb
Pelvis	Hind Limb	Ribs	Vertebrae