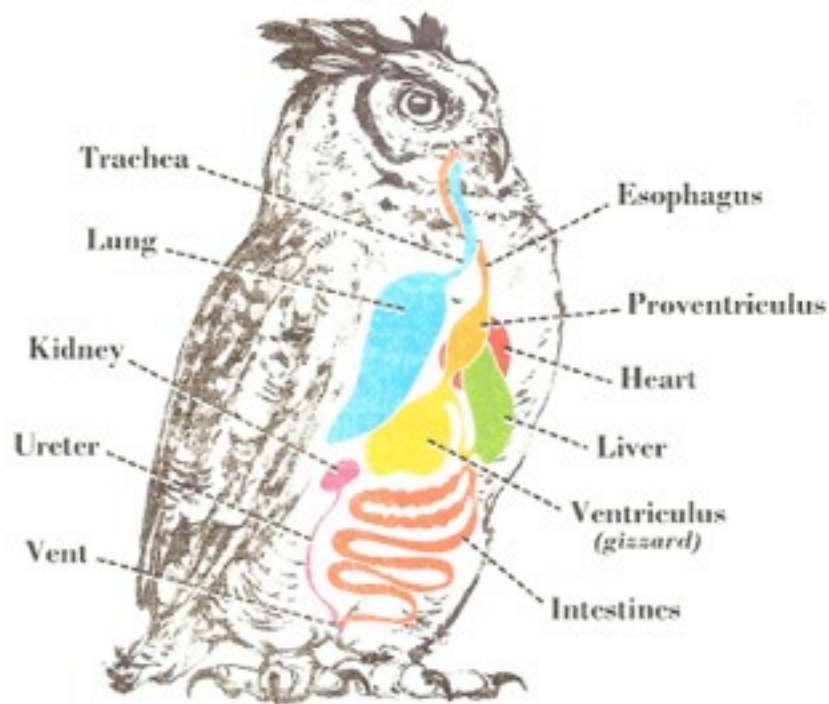


# Owl Vomit

Owls cannot chew their food. Instead, they usually swallow their prey whole - bones, fur and all!

Unlike other birds, owls do not have a crop (a storage area in the throat that allows the bird to swallow now and digest later), so the prey passes directly into the stomach. The stomach has two parts. The first part, the proventriculus, produces chemicals that begin breaking down the food. The second part, the ventriculus or gizzard, acts like a filter and holds back the bones, teeth, fur and feathers.



The bones, teeth, fur and feathers in the gizzard are compressed into a pellet. The pellet travels back to the proventriculus and may stay there for hours. However, since the pellet is blocking the way for any more food, the owl must vomit up the pellet before eating again.

If you find an owl pellet, you can determine what the owl had for dinner by dissecting the pellet and examining the bones (*see bone identification chart on next page*).



For more information about owls and other birds, go to [MidwestBirdWatching.com](http://MidwestBirdWatching.com)

If the owl swallowed more than one prey before forming a pellet, you should find more than one skeleton.

*Wear gloves and take appropriate safety precautions. Children must be supervised by a responsible adult.*



### Owl Pellet Bone Chart

	Rodent	Shrew	Mole	Bird
Skull				
Jaw				
Scapula				
Forelimb				
Hindlimb				
Pelvic Bone				
Rib				
Vertebrae				