

## **Owls and Other Raptors**

### **Biological Classification Series**

#### **Grade Levels:**

Grades 5-10

#### **Subject Areas:**

Science

Life Sciences

Biology

#### **Synopsis:**

Beginning with the common barn owl, extends the concept of birds of prey to include eagles, vultures, buzzards and kites. Live-action film footage highlights raptors' hooked beaks and talons, and their hunting and feeding habits. They are shown to range in size from tiny owls to huge condors.

#### **Learning Objectives:** Students will:

Understand that their hooked beaks and talons characterize birds of prey.

Describe how owls swallow their prey whole and regurgitate pellets several hours later.

Understand that birds of prey help farmers by preventing rodents from proliferating.

Understand that vultures and buzzards do their part in maintaining healthy environments.

#### **Vocabulary:**

talons, hooked beak, bird of prey, regurgitate, pellet, Grand Duke owl, hedgehog, nocturnal, Small Duke owl, Medium Duke owl, Royal Eagle, falcons, buzzards, rodents vermin, proliferating, Royal Kite, predators, gliders, Egyptian vulture, excrement, Bearded Vulture, diurnal, nocturnal, Condor, carrion, African Serpent Eagle

#### **Pre-Viewing Discussion:**

Have you ever seen an owl up close? Where did you see one? What do you remember about the bird's appearance?

When do owls usually hunt? What do they eat?

Why are we afraid of vultures? Are we afraid of eagles? Why are we afraid of some birds but not afraid of others?

What do eagles and vultures have in common?

**Post-Viewing Discussion:**

Are all birds of prey nocturnal? Can you name some who are not?

What do owls eat? What do vultures, buzzards, and condors eat?

Why do owls regurgitate their food?

How do raptors perform a valuable role in maintaining the ecological balance of the environments they inhabit? How does the owl help farmers? How do vultures and buzzards perform valuable tasks?

How many species of birds of prey are there? Approximately how many species of birds are there?

**Further Activities:**

Find out which of the five major classification groups owls and other raptors are in (i.e. Kingdom, Phylum, Class, Order, Family). Chart the relationships of animals in the largest to the smallest taxonomic groups around them. What characteristics make this group similar to and different from the other groups to which they are related? Then, pick one species from the program and determine its genus and species name, writing them in the proper scientific terminology. Find out why the genus and species name is written the way it is.

Further investigate the habits and physical characteristics of the Andean condor. How have the characteristics of this bird influenced South American folklore and mythology?

Compare the portrayal of vultures in animated cartoons and Western movies with the habits and physical characteristics of real vultures.

Further investigate why owls are excellent hunters. How does their vision and sense of hearing help them track their prey? What statistics can you gather about the speed of their flight, how far they can see, what movements they can detect etc.

Investigate how vultures are able to use rising air currents in their search for food. How are their bodies designed to take full advantage of these air currents?

**Related New Dimension Media Titles:**

Animal Babies Born Wild series

Habitats series

Biological Movement series

