# Owl, Mouse, Bush

**Purpose:**
The purpose of this game is to create a real time visual of how predator and prey populations can be affected by the partnering population. Predator-prey relationships can be a complex topic that is hard to fully understand in some situations. This game helps to show direct effects of growing and shrinking population sizes of predators and their prey. Not only this but it also adds an extra step in how the surrounding ecosystem ay be affected by these relationships as well.

**Materials:**
- Pinnies for the mice "tails"
- Large field/rec area
- Pilons

**Set-Up:**
1. Place a small circle of pilons in the centre of the game space (this will be for the owl players to start the round in).
2. Place another ring of pilons surrounding the inner circle approximately 10ft from the inner circle (distance can be adjusted as see fit depending on the average speed of the students in the class).
3. Place a third ring of pilons the same distance from the previous ring as that ring was to the centre (this is the line in which the shrubs will stand).
4. Determine which students will be the mice, owls and shrubs to begin.
5. Have the mice tuck their pinnies in so that they can act as tails that the owls will then attempt to grab.

## Directions:

- All the owls must begin the round will all body parts within the inner most ring.
- All mice must start anywhere they choose within the second ring keeping all body parts within their ring area until round has begun.
- All shrubs will stand with both feet on the line of the final outer ring.
- The teacher will begin the round by calling out "HUNT".
- The object of play is for the **MICE** to successfully hide under (get to) a **SHRUB** without being caught (having their flag taken) by an **OWL**. Each **SHRUB** can protect only one **MOUSE**. However, **OWLS** can catch as many **MICE** as time permits.
- While the **MICE** run for cover among the **SHRUBS,** the **OWLS** chase after them. The **SHRUBS** hold out their arms as if they were branches for the **MICE** to hide beneath. After 30 seconds play is stopped.
- At the end of a round:
  - **MICE** that are caught become **OWLS**.
  - **OWLS** that hunted successfully remain as **OWLS**.
  - **OWLS** that did not catch a **MOUSE** become **SHRUBS**.
  - **SHRUBS** that harbour a **MOUSE** become a **MOUSE**.
  - **SHRUBS** without a **MOUSE** stay **SHRUBS**.
- Play several rounds (5-10) keeping track of how many mice, shrubs, and owls are present at the beginning of each round.
- Discuss any patterns and trends that become apparent between each of the rounds (ask questions such as "When there were large amounts of owls, what typically happened to the mouse population?", "When there were many mice and few owls, how were the populations effected at the end of the round?", "When there were very few shrubs for mice to hide, what happened to the mouse and owl populations in the next round?", ect…)