

# Wild Turkey Diet Research



## Research Goals

Oregon State University in conjuncture with WDFW, ODFW, USFS, with support from the National Wild Turkey Federation and Oregon Hunters Association is conducting a two-year research project to determine the diet of wild turkeys in Oregon and Washington.

Information about diet will help improve habitat management programs in both states and help us understand the role that turkeys play in NW ecosystems. Our research objectives will address specific research priorities outlined in both the OR and WA turkey management plans, helping strengthen turkey management in both states.

As part of our research, we will be collecting male and female turkeys during fall/winter and spring. By removing the crop from each bird and sorting, counting, and weighing food items, we can describe the turkey diet. **We are requesting the help of OR and WA turkey hunters by asking that you donate the crop of each bird harvested during the fall and spring turkey seasons.**

Participation by hunters will provide greater geographic coverage helping to assure that our data are relevant to wide areas in both states. We are focusing on specific GMUs including: **101-133, 145-186, 382, 388, and 568-578.** This is a unique opportunity for turkey hunters to contribute data to organized research that seeks to improve management; we hope you will agree to participate.

## Instructions for Removing Crop

1. Label a zip-lock freezer bag with a permanent marker **1. Date, time and location bird was shot (GMU or closest town) 2. Sex of bird 3. Name and phone number (optional)**
2. With the bird lying on its back, pluck feathers to expose neck then make a shallow incision lengthwise down the neck from just below the chin to midbreast. Peel back skin to expose the trachea, crop, and esophagus. The esophagus is thin and pliable compared to the more rigid trachea. The crop, located at the base of the neck, is a thin transparent sack when empty, but it may contain food (**figure 1**).
3. Gently detach the esophagus and crop from surrounding tissue. Remove the crop by cutting the esophagus one inch below and above the crop (**figure 2**).
4. Preserve crop and esophagus by placing the labeled freezer bag and freezing as soon as possible to prevent decomposition of crop contents.

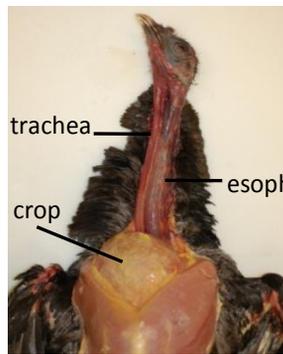


Figure 1

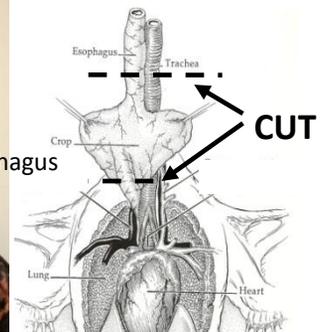


Figure 2

## Submittal Options

- During business hours drop off at any WDFW regional office  
[www.wdfw.wa.gov/about/regions/](http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/about/regions/)
- Contact your local NWTF chapter president
- Pre-paid envelopes are available upon request



Sara Paroulek and Dr. Bruce Dugger  
Oregon State University  
Dept. of Fisheries and Wildlife  
[turkey.project@oregonstate.edu](mailto:turkey.project@oregonstate.edu)



Washington Department of  
FISH and WILDLIFE

