Prepared by **BR 8 July 2012**

**CROP**

An expandable pouch near the top of the esophagus that temporarily stores food. This allows birds to eat large amounts of food and then move to a predator-free location. Very little digestion occurs here, except for a small amount of amylase activity—a digestive enzyme.

**PROVENTRICULUS**

A small glandular stomach where digestion begins, through the use of hydrochloric acid and digestive enzymes. The food has not been ground up yet, it is merely being prepared for the ventriculus (gizzard). The proventriculus is believed to control when food enters the ventriculus.

**GIZZARD**

Also called ventriculus, it is a smooth muscular stomach that is the most active site for mechanical digestion. Since birds do not have teeth to masticate their food, two sets of strong muscles in the gizzard replace the need for teeth. Gastric secretions from the proventriculus and salivary glands chemically digest the food.

**SMALL INTESTINE**

A long tube-like organ that begins with the duodenal loop (duodenum). The duodenum buffers the acidity of the stomach and finishes the digestion of the food. The newly released nutrients can be absorbed in the rest of the small intestine and dispersed throughout the body. This is the principal site for nutrient absorption.

**CECA**

Two blind-ended tubes at the junction between the small and large intestine. The ceca reabsorb water from the fecal material, recycle nitrogenous waste to create amino acids, and ferment the fiber. This produces fatty acids and B vitamins, which are beneficial to the bird. Two to three times a day, the ceca empty their contents as cecal droppings. Sage grouse are one of the only organisms that do not re-consume their cecal droppings.

**LARGE INTESTINE**

Also known as the colon, it is a short tube-like organ that reabsorbs the last of the water from the indigesta. The large intestine terminates with the cloaca, where all of the digestive wastes mix together, solidify, and excrete. This is why the fecal droppings of birds are usually covered with white uric acid.

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