



## **UGA RESEARCH STUDY**

The GAME Lab at the University of Georgia is researching Ruffed Grouse in the Georgia mountains. The research is examining genetics of grouse across the landscape to better help the declining grouse population in Georgia, with hopes that grouse hunting and grouse viewing opportunities within the state will improve following this research effort. This is a 5-year study that will run through 2027.

The GAME Lab is seeking assistance from hunters, birdwatchers, and other outdoor enthusiasts to help collect genetic materials from grouse.

Genetic Materials Include:

- Feathers from harvested grouse.
- Small pieces of muscle from harvested grouse.
- Blood from harvested grouse.
- Fecal samples from grouse drumming logs OR letting UGA researchers know precise locations of drumming logs.
- Roadkill grouse.

Precise locations of where harvested grouse were taken OR where samples were collected is critical. Although highly desired, hunters do not need to provide the exact location of the grouse, unless you wish, however, we do need location data within one mile. This information will stay confidential with UGA researchers to keep your favorite grouse hunting locations private.

***Interested in Helping?*** Review the protocols information on the next page. You can request a packet of collection materials (including a Ziplock bag and vial for storing samples, and paper patches for collecting blood) that UGA will send free of charge. Once a sample is collected, please contact Clay Delancey to arrange pickup. Typically, someone can arrive within 24 hours.

**For more information on the project or to request collection materials or request pickup of samples, contact Clay Delancey at [Clayton.Delancey@uga.edu](mailto:Clayton.Delancey@uga.edu).**

***Thank you for your cooperation!***

## **PROTOCOLS FOR COLLECTING RUFFED GROUSE SAMPLES:**

### **Feather samples:**

Pull 3 longer wing feathers and ~15 body feathers and place into a Ziplock bag. Alternatively, a wing or half wing with feathers can be placed into a Ziplock bag. This may be placed in a freezer temporarily until a UGA researcher can collect the sample. Use one Ziplock bag per bird.

### **Muscle samples:**

With a clean knife and tweezers, cut a dime-sized piece of meat from either the wings, breast or legs and place into the provided vial that contains an ethanol solution. Place vial into one Ziplock bag. Do not use the same knife and tweezers for another grouse sample. Use one vial, and one Ziplock bag per grouse.

### **Blood samples:**

Unseal provided filter paper and let blood from the bird drip onto the marked areas of the paper. Let sit till dried. If blood not dried within 10 minutes, gently dab away excess blood with a napkin. Once dried, reseal the filter paper and place into a Ziplock bag. Use one filter paper per grouse, and one filter paper per Ziplock bag.

### **Fecal samples:**

After finding a drumming log, use tweezers and carefully collect fecal materials and place into the provided vial containing an ethanol solution. Grouse feces is pellet like, and usually brown and white in color, and usually on or beside a fallen log. Be careful not to collect other materials (bark/twigs/moss) from the drumming log. Place vial into Ziplock bag. Use one vial, and one Ziplock bag per drumming log.



### **Roadkill/dead grouse:**

If you find a dead grouse, either in the woods or as roadkill, you may collect the aforementioned samples following the methods described.

Alternatively, you may collect the entire grouse and place in a trash or grocery bag, and preferably place into the freezer until a UGA research can collect it from you. Please double or triple bag the dead bird. If you do not wish to collect the bird, please reach out as soon as possible with the precise location of the dead bird so that a UGA researcher may go obtain the bird. On the outer bag with a sharpie, please write the date collected, where the sample was collected, and your name and phone number.

**ZIPLOCK BAG IDENTIFICATION:** On all Ziplock bags with samples, please use a permanent marker to write the collection date, precise location data (within 1 mile) where samples were collected, and your name and phone number. Exact location data is preferred, and you may take a point on a GPS unit or on your phone's map app. This information will stay confidential with UGA researchers to keep your favorite grouse hunting locations private. If you run out of or lose your vials, place samples in Ziplock bags in a freezer.