

Pathology Report

Submitter Ref.: H277	Date Sent: 18/12/2018	Accession No.: 56791
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To: [REDACTED] Christchurch
 Report Sent: 20/12/2018
 Email: [REDACTED] Copy To:

Species: Cetacean	Breed: Hector's Dolphin		
Age: Neonate	Sex: Female		
Owner: Department of Conservation			Type: Post Mortem
ID: H277			Prev. Accn.:
Submitted:	At Risk:	Affected:	Dead:

History

Found on beach near Waimairi Surf Club, in sand, on 17 December. Air freighted to Massey, chilled, on 18 December.

Gross Findings

This neonatal Hector's dolphin presented chilled, in a very good state of preservation and in moderate body condition, with a slightly pronounced neck. There were fetal folds and fetal whiskers present, and the dorsal fin was folded. Lateral tongue papillae were prominent and there was a fresh umbilical stump. The teeth were not erupted. There were multiple, irregularly oriented creases in the skin of the right side of the body, consistent with impression marks from a surface (eg packaging material). The left side of the body had a few shallow indentations. There was also a deeper, curved impression on the outer surface of the right pectoral flipper, running from the midpoint of the flipper along the midline for approximately 6cm. There were two parallel linear lacerations at the mid-point of the left upper lip, each approximately 1cm long, spaced 1 cm apart. The white skin of the lower jaw below these lacerations had multiple red shallow linear to curved scratches randomly oriented, extending back 8cm from the rostral margin of the white patch. The gingiva along the tooth line of the right maxilla was shredded, with strips of partially detached gum. There were four, 3-5mm long, irregularly oriented shallow nicks in the left shoulder region. There were no lacerations or nicks in the fins or flippers, and no encircling impressions.

The stomach contained a small amount of milk, and the intestinal lymphatics were white and moderately prominent (recent ingestion of milk). There was soft to fluid greenish-brown digesta within the intestine, with no remaining meconium.

The lungs were well aerated with no froth or foam in the airways.

Weight: 6.9kg
 Length: 703mm
 Snout to anus length: 495mm
 Snout to genital slit: 470mm
 Snout to origin of dorsal fin length: 350mm
 Snout to origin of flipper: 182mm
 Snout to corner mouth: 100mm
 Corner mouth to eye: 20mm
 Dorsal fin height: 68mm
 Dorsal fin interior base: 147mm
 Fluke width: 205mm
 Fluke length: 80mm
 Fluke notch: 20mm
 Girth at eye: 370mm
 Girth at flippers: 457mm
 Girth at navel: 460mm
 Girth at anus: 275mm
 Flipper width: 50mm
 Flipper length: 130mm
 Eye to blowhole length: 99mm
 Dorsal blubber depth: 15mm
 Lateral blubber depth: 14mm
 Ventral blubber depth: 16mm

Histopathology

Histo summary:

Lung - moderate numbers of intra-alveolar squames with inflammatory response

Umbilicus - recent haemorrhage and neutrophilic infiltrate with areas of necrosis and thrombosis at free margin of umbilical stump. No clots in umbilical vessels.

Adrenal - marked congestion/haemorrhage at corticomedullary junction

Severe congestion of liver, spleen, kidney.

Diagnosis

1. Open cause of death; possible bycatch
2. Mild/moderate alveolar/interstitial pneumonia with intralesional squames

Comments

This is a very young calf that has fed recently, indicating that maternal separation is not the likely primary cause of death. There are some unusual lesions in and around the calf's mouth that are indicative of trauma, and could be consistent with contact with fishing gear.

Histology was undertaken to assess the general health of this calf. There is inflammation in the lungs (i.e. pneumonia), but it is difficult to be sure of the clinical significance of this. Further testing would be required to determine whether there is a diagnosable underlying cause.

Date: 20/12/2018	Pathologists: 
Students:	