

Pathology Report

Submitter Ref.: H267	Date Sent: 24/01/2018	Accession No.: 55411
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To: [REDACTED]
Department of Conservation
Waikato
Waikato

Species: Cetacean	Breed: Hector's Dolphin		
Age: Adult	Sex: Male		
Owner:	Type: Post Mortem		
ID: H267 W18-01Ch	Prev. Accn.:		
Submitted: 1	At Risk:	Affected:	Dead:

History

Washed ashore 100m south of Sunset Beach surf club. Attended until DOC arrived. Significant trauma (bite marks) to RHS exposing internal organs. No immediate signs of net entanglement. Adult Maui sex unknown. Standard samples and measurements taken, including DNA. Carcass taken to Provida Foods Hamilton for overnight storage in chiller, prior to dispatch to Wendi Roe, Massey University, Palmerston North.

Gross Findings

This dolphin arrived chilled, in an adequate state of post mortem preservation. There were multiple bite wounds involving the right head and thorax, right flank and dorsum caudal to the dorsal fin, with extensive tissue loss. The intestines were herniated through the flank wound. Wound margins were scalloped, consistent with shark bites. The base length of the smallest scallop was 50mm; the remainder were all 80mm or longer. The remaining skin had numerous semicircular or straight shallow abrasions, and there was extensive skin loss due to decomposition. Black sand particles were embedded in wound margins. No encircling impressions were present, and no nicks were evident on flipper, fluke or fin margins. The tongue and both eyes were missing (scavenged). The head/neck bite wound extended into the thoracic inlet. The thoracic cavity contained abundant unclotted blood as well as a 640g blood clot which filled the caudal part of the left hemithorax. The thoracic aorta was ruptured at the level of the mid-thorax, directly beneath the dorsal neck bite wound, and the surrounding soft tissue was haemorrhagic. The left lung was dark red, wet and heavy. The stomach contained numerous fish bones. Stomach compartments and all contents have been saved (frozen). The liver was friable and discoloured (autolysed), but firm to incise. Only one testis was present (170 x 70mm; 213g with epididymis; 193g without).

Diagnosis

Shark predation

Comments

This was a seemingly healthy, mature male dolphin that had been attacked by a shark. The immediate cause of death was haemorrhage due to the ruptured aorta. Tissues have been saved for histology, and an updated report will be sent if the histological examination shows anything additional of interest.

Date: 24/01/2018	Pathologists: [REDACTED]
Students:	