

# Pathology Report

Submitter Ref.: H292	Date Sent:	Accession No.: 60375
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To: [REDACTED]  
Department of Conservation  
West Coast

Report Sent: 24/02/2022

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Species: Cetacean	Breed: Hector's Dolphin		
Age: Neonate	Sex: Female		
Owner: Department of Conservation	Type: Post Mortem		
ID: H292	Prev. Accn.:		
Submitted:	At Risk:	Affected:	Dead:

## History

Found washed up on Hector beach

## Gross Findings

This young calf was received frozen and was thawed for necropsy. The body was in poor (code 3) post mortem condition, with extensive sloughing of skin and scavenging damage. Both eyes were missing. Copepods were present in the melon fat and throughout the abdominal cavity.

There were no fetal whiskers, fetal folds were evident, the dorsal fin was not folded, lateral tongue papillae were prominent, and the external portion of the umbilicus was missing. The neck was prominent. Blubber depths were 14mm dorsal, 13mm lateral and 15mm ventral. The standard length was .690m

The lungs were well aerated, with no foam and minimal fluid within airways. The heart had scattered white, 1-2mm diameter raised circular fluid-filled structures on the epicardial surface (interpreted as ectatic lymphatics).

The stomach was empty, and the intestinal lymphatics were not prominent. The terminal large intestine contained abundant meconium. Scattered irregularly along with small and large intestine were multiple 2-4mm long digested-filled sacculations protruding from the serosal surface.

One discernable ovary was present, attached to tattered remnants of one uterine horn (likely copepod scavenging).

## Histopathology

Lung: meconium and squame aspiration

## Diagnosis

Possible maternal separation

## Comments

This was a reasonably young calf, as indicated by the presence of meconium (faeces produced in utero) in the large intestine - usually this is flushed out of the intestinal tract over the first few days of life, as the infant feeds.

The lungs were inflated, indicated that the calf was born alive, and contained some skin cells and meconium within the alveoli. This happens in many species when a fetus is stressed just before or during the birth process, and aspirates material from the intra-uterine fluids. This can happen with some in utero infections, or due to a difficult birth. Unfortunately there is nothing to suggest the underlying cause in this case.

Ultimately, the cause of death in this calf may have been a result of separation from the mother.

Date: 24/02/2022	Pathologists: [REDACTED]
Students:	