

Pathology Report

Submitter Ref.: H295	Date Sent: 30/11/2021	Accession No.: 60311
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To: [REDACTED]
Department of Conservation
South Westland

Report Sent:
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Species: Cetacean	Breed: Hector's Dolphin		
Age: Neonate	Sex: Female		
Owner:			Type: Post Mortem
ID: H295			Prev. Accn.:
Submitted:	At Risk:	Affected:	Dead:

History

Found at 5 mile, Okarito.

Gross Findings

This dolphin arrived late on 3/12/21, chilled, but had been in transit for 4 days, hence was in a more advanced state of decomposition than when it left Okarito. The state of preservation was assessed as mild decomposition (fair condition; early code 3). Due to time and facility constraints a preliminary necropsy was conducted on 3/12/21, with sample collection for histology. The body was then frozen and later thawed (13/1/22) for completion of the necropsy.

Standard length (from DOC records) = 0.80m

Blubber depth = 13mm dorsal; 13mm lateral; 14mm ventral.

Body condition was assessed as adequate. There were multiple full skin thickness lacerations and 'cracks' particularly on the ventrum in the intermandibular area and right axilla. Dorsally, slightly to the right of midline at the level of the back of the skull there were two circular, 2mm puncture lesions approximately 2cm apart, which penetrated the skin and into the superficial underlying blubber.

The dorsal fin was folded. Fetal whiskers were present. The lungs were aerated. The stomach was empty, and intestinal lymphatics were not distended. Soft remnants of the umbilicus were present.

Histopathology

Histology summary:

All tissues are markedly decomposed, which severely limits accurate interpretation. The lungs are aerated, and alveoli frequently contained squames.

Diagnosis

Possible maternal separation.

Comments

It was not possible to determine a cause of death for this calf due to the decomposition of the tissues. The gross and histological findings suggest that this was a very young calf that had been born alive, but did not live for long. Young calves can die when they are separated from their mothers, for example during storm conditions, and this could have occurred in this case; however there is no reliable way of confirming this diagnosis.

Date: 19/01/2022	Pathologists: [REDACTED]
Students:	