

Pathology Report

Submitter Ref.: H296	Date Sent:	Accession No.: 60474
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To: [REDACTED]
Department of Conservation
Invercargill

Report Sent: 12/04/2022

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Species: Cetacean	Breed: Hector's Dolphin		
Age: Neonate	Sex: Male		
Owner: Department of Conservation	Type: Post Mortem		
ID: H296	Prev. Accn.:		
Submitted:	At Risk:	Affected:	Dead:

History

Not provided

Gross Findings

This young calf was received frozen and was thawed for necropsy. The carcass was in a moderate state of preservation (code late 2/early 3), with some cracking of the skin along the dorsum and minimal scavenging (focussed around the eyes and blowhole). The umbilicus was fresh. There were fetal folds but no fetal whiskers. The teeth had not erupted. No lacerations or impressions were detected at leading edges of the flippers, tail, dorsal fin or snout.

Weight = 6.8kg; Total length = 755mm; blubber depths = 15mm dorsal, 13mm lateral and 13mm ventral. The neck was prominent.

The lungs were aerated and pink. No bullae were detected. A single 1mm diameter cystic lesion was present at the margin of one lung lobe. There was no froth in the lungs and scant fluid.

The stomach was empty. The distal intestine contained abundant meconium. The intestinal lymphatics were not distended. The liver appeared pale.

The brain was liquefied.

Histopathology

All tissues were moderately autolysed and markedly impacted by freeze-thaw artefact, making detailed interpretation impossible. The lungs were inflated, showing that the calf was born alive and took at least a few breaths. There was no detectable evidence of any inflammatory or infectious processes (bearing in mind the poor state of preservation of the tissues).

Diagnosis

Possible maternal separation

Comments

There was no obvious disease process detected in this calf, and no evidence of fisheries interaction. The calf had been born alive and had lived for at least a short time, but the presence of abundant meconium (fetal faeces) in the intestine suggests that he may never have suckled. Maternal separation is a possible cause of death; as always, this is a diagnosis of exclusion and is difficult/impossible to verify.

Date: 16/03/2022	Pathologists: [REDACTED]
Students:	