School of Veterinary Science

Pathology Report

Submitter Ref.: H297	Date Sent:	Accession No.: **60574**

To: [redacted]
Department of Conservation
Oamaru

Email: twaterhouse@doc.govt.nz

Report Sent: 25/05/2022
Copy To:

Species: Cetacean		Breed: Hector's Dolphin	
Age: Neonate		Sex: Male	
Owner: Department of Conservation			Type: Post Mortem
ID: H297			Prev. Accn.:
Submitted:	At Risk:	Affected:	Dead:

History

Reported via hotline on evening of 3/12/2021. The left tail fluke was removed by a DOC officer prior to shipping. The body was held frozen and sent to Massey March 2022.

Gross Findings

This calf was received frozen and was thawed for necropsy.
Standard length = 750mm. Weight = 8.2kg.
The body is in a moderate state of preservation (code 2) and in moderate body condition, with a concave neck and some loss of epaxial muscle mass. The skin is covered with superficial 'dents' and cracks, many likely to be post mortem, from lying on a stoney substrate. There is early skin sloughing and minimal scavenging, other than around the umbilicus and the left eye: the left globe is missing.
The dorsal fin is folded, and there are fetal whiskers and obvious fetal folds. The lateral tongue papillae are pronounced. The umbilicus is missing (scavenged).
The lungs are well aerated, and are mottled red/pale. The heart has several 1mm diameter white specks, interpreted as dilated superficial lymphatics, over the epicardial surface. The stomach contains a single shell and a small amount of tiny pebbles, along with cloudy pink ingesta. There is semi-digested milk throughout the small and large intestine, and no meconium remains in the terminal large intestine.

Histopathology

The histological findings confirm that this calf was born alive, had suckled and survived for at least a few days.

Diagnosis

Possible maternal separation

Comments

Although the degree of autolysis of the tissues makes it difficult to be absolutely certain, there is no indication of an inflammatory disease process being involved in the calf's death. The calf had passed its meconium (fetal feces), and the blood vessels of the umbilicus had begun to heal, showing that it had survived for at least a few days to a week after birth. The presence of milk in the intestinal tract also shows that the calf had suckled relatively recently. Maternal separation is a possible cause of death, although it is not possible to confirm this diagnosis, or to say how this occurred.

Date: 25/05/2022	Pathologists: [redacted]
Students:	