

Pathology Report

Submitter Ref.: H316	Date Sent: 03/05/2023	Accession No.: 62074
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To: [REDACTED]
Department of Conservation
Dunedin

Report Sent: 17/05/2023

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Species: Cetacean	Breed: Hector's Dolphin		
Age: Adult	Sex: Female		
Owner:			Type: Post Mortem
ID: H316			Prev. Accn.:
Submitted:	At Risk:	Affected:	Dead:

History

Captured in commercial set net.

Gross Findings

This dolphin was received frozen and was thawed for necropsy.

The body was in an excellent state of post mortem preservation (code 2) and in very good body condition, with a rounded profile and good blubber coverage (dorsal blubber depth = 15mm, lateral = 15mm, ventral = 14mm). The standard length was 1.285m and weight = 41.0kg.

There were numerous lacerations and impressions on the body, including: leading edge of flippers, trailing edge of right pectoral flipper, leading edge of flukes, trailing edge of fluke, tail stock and snout. Several of the lacerations intersected to form a cross, most notably on the tail stock and lip margins. Notably, there were encircling impressions on the neck that were clearly visible when the carcass was first removed from the freezer and washed, but these impressions were barely discernible by the time the body had thawed sufficiently for necropsy.

There were poorly circumscribed areas of dark red glistening discolouration of the blubber and superficial muscle in the intermandibular area, occipital area of the head, and the dorsum at the level of the shoulders. These locations are common sites of 'pseudobruising' (freeze-thaw/autolysis artefact) and can't be distinguished from true (ante mortem) bruising.

There was a small amount of blood-tinged watery fluid in the thoracic and abdominal cavities, within expected limits for a frozen carcass. Scant fluid was present in the airways, and no froth was observed. The lungs were pink and well inflated, with scattered areas of darker red parenchyma (less inflated lobules). No lungworms were observed, and only a few gritty foci (interpreted as lungworm granulomas) were palpable. The aortic lymph nodes were prominent.

The stomach was distended by recently ingested prey items along with numerous nematodes. The stomach was saved intact and frozen for submission to Rochelle Constantine. The intestines contained normal tan watery to 'muddy' digesta. The intestinal lacteals were distended by chyle, consistent with recent feeding. The uterus was small and immature and the ovaries were smooth.

Diagnosis

Known bycatch

Comments

The history and lesions present in this dolphin are consistent with death due to drowning following accidental capture in fishing gear. The dolphin was healthy and in good body condition. Tissues will be processed and evaluated histologically to confirm this; any significant findings will be notified as an addendum report.

Date: 17/05/2023	Pathologists: [REDACTED]
Students: [REDACTED]	