

Pathology Report

Submitter Ref.: H330	Date Sent: 23/02/2024	Accession No.: 63086
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To: [REDACTED]
Department of Conservation
Christchurch

Report Sent: 26/02/2024
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Email:

Species: Cetacean	Breed: Hector's Dolphin		
Age: Adult	Sex: Female		
Owner:			Type: Post Mortem
ID: H330			Prev. Accn.:
Submitted:	At Risk:	Affected:	Dead:

History

Caught in trawl net along with H331 (calf).

Gross Findings

This adult female Hector's dolphin was airfreighted to Palmerston North and presented chilled. The body was in a good state of post mortem preservation (code 2) and good body condition, with a rounded lumbar profile. Weight = 39.4kg. Standard length = 1.365. Blubber depths = 12mm dorsal, 1mm lateral, 10mm ventral. There was a large number of lacerations over both sides of the body, most extending into the skin but not as deep as the blubber. Most were either straight or slightly curved, and some had a finely waved outline. There was also a wider (2mm) deep bruised/haemorrhagic indentation over the dorsal aspect of the snout. There were several nicks, short lacerations and tears of the trailing edges of flippers and fins. Multiple teeth were missing midway along the right mandibular arcade, co-inciding with a lip laceration immediately above this defect. Tooth root remnants were palpable in some sockets. The remaining teeth were mostly in good condition, with some areas of mild wear. There was no subcutaneous bruising (including the tissue underlying the snout impression). The mammary gland was well developed, with milk present in the ducts. The oropharynx and oesophagus contained sections of fish vertebrae. The right lung was pale pink and hyperinflated cranially, and darker red and firm caudally, with some rib impressions over the darker parenchyma. The left lobe was diffusely mottled dark red, with rib impressions over the entire lobe. On excision, the airways did not contain fluid or froth. There were numerous lungworm in the smaller airways, and scattered firm to gritty lungworm granulomas within the parenchyma. The stomach contained a large amount of undigested fish flesh along with fish bones. Watery tan fluid was present in the ampulla. The intestinal lacteals contained chyle. The kidneys both had multiple small bubbles beneath the capsule, along with numerous pale mottled patches visible on the capsular surface and occasionally extending into the superficial parenchyma. Rare renules appeared pale on cut surface. The uterus had linear striations and the ovaries were active with numerous corpora.

Diagnosis

Known bycatch

Comments

This dolphin had gross necropsy findings consistent with capture in a trawl net, including fresh prey in the stomach, numerous lacerations over the body and head, and a partially-encircling impression mark on the snout. She had milk in her mammary gland, showing that she was nursing a calf at the time of her death. This was most likely the calf found in the net with her.

A full set of tissues from this dolphin will be processed for histological (microscope) examination, and an addendum report will be sent if there is anything unexpected present in these tissues. The histological examination will be invaluable in adding to our growing body of knowledge on diagnosis of bycatch (drowning) in Hector's and Māui dolphins.

Date: 26/02/2024	Pathologists: [REDACTED]
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Students: