

**Institute of Veterinary, Animal and Biomedical Sciences
Massey University**

PATHOLOGY REPORT

Status: Pending
Date: 06/12/2008
Type: Mortality

Submitter Department of Conservation	Submission Details Lab. Case/Spec ID: 42643 Date Submitted: Date Received: 18/09/2008 Previous Case ID: WMD Case/Spec ID: 4658/1
Animal Details Animal Name: Species: <i>Cephalorhynchus hectori hectori</i> Common Name: Hector's Dolphin Sex Class: Female Age Class: Adult Date Died:	Epidemiology Number Dead: 1 Number at Risk: Number Sick: Number Submitted: 1

DIAGNOSIS

Unidentified chronic illness

COMMENTS

The fact that this was a thin animal that had no net marks, an almost empty stomach and minimal lung congestion or oedema means that it is unlikely that she drowned in a fishing net. Her poor body condition suggests that she had a chronic illness, but a cause of death could not be identified at gross post mortem. Tissues have been saved for further diagnostic work if required; however as usual it should be noted that freezing of bodies decreases the chance of being able to make a diagnosis.

The trailing edge of the dorsal fin had been removed, although at post mortem the degree of artefactual damage (particularly drying of the tissue and rolling of the wound edges) made it impossible to determine whether this was a knife wound or a tear.

ANIMAL HISTORY

Reported Sunday 7 September by Craig Jones, resident of Arahura, that a dead dolphin was washed up on the beach about 1km north of Arahura River mouth. Body was located by Doc staff at 9.30 on Monday 8 September. the only suspicious marking on the body was a straight tear or cut on the rear edge of the dorsal fin. Photos were taken of this from different angles. The body was measured and taken to Hokitika and placed in freezer at 12 noon the same day.

GROSS PATHOLOGY

The body had a pronounced neck and marked wasting of the epaxial and hypaxial muscles, with prominent lateral and dorsal spinous processes (very thin). There was skin slipping over most of the body and the blubber was beginning to liquefy (decomposition). The teeth were worn.

The caudal portion of the dorsal fin was missing. The wound edge had dried markedly and the tissue margins were rolled inward (due to drying of the body post mortem and to freezing), making assessment difficult. No associated bruising was visible, suggesting that this was a post mortem wound.

INTERNAL EXAMINATION

The stomach was comparatively empty. The lungs had minimal amounts of fluid in the terminal airways, and minimal congestion. The uterine body had a few linear striations, and there were corpora albicans on the left and right ovaries (sexually mature female).
No other abnormalities were found.