

School of Veterinary Science

Pathology Report

Submitter Ref.: H300	Date Sent:	Accession No.: 60555
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To: [REDACTED]
Department of Conservation
Hokitika

Report Sent: 02/05/2022

Copy To: [REDACTED]

Email:

Species: Cetacean	Breed: Hector's Dolphin		
Age: Neonate	Sex: Female		
Owner: Department of Conservation	Type: Post Mortem		
ID: H300	Prev. Accn.:		
Submitted:	At Risk:	Affected:	Dead:

History

None provided

Gross Findings

This dolphin arrived frozen, via Massey Albany. The body was in a poor state of post mortem preservation (code 3-4), with early liquefaction of the blubber and marked autolysis (including extensive post mortem gas production) in thoracic and abdominal organs. There was moderate scavenging around the eyes and ventrum, including the umbilicus. There were irregular full skin-depth lacerations and 'cracks' on the right of the body. The rostral 1/3 of the tongue had been scavenged. The maxillary teeth had erupted; mandibular teeth were close to the gingival surface but not yet erupted.

Body condition was assessed as good, with no prominence of the neck, and convex epaxial muscles.

There was red gelatinous discolouration of the blubber over the dorsum of the skull and between the mandibles (common post mortem artefact, particularly in frozen/thawed and autolysed bodies).

The stomach was empty, and most of the mucosa had sloughed. The kidneys were pale and friable (autolysis) and the bladder was empty. The lungs were hyperinflated (post mortem gas production) and mottled red/pale.

Weight = 8.8kg. Standard length = 755mm. Blubber depths = 16 dorsal; 15 lateral; 12 ventral (but note early liquefaction).

Histopathology

Tissues were too autolysed for interpretation

Diagnosis

Open - too autolysed for interpretation

Comments

Unfortunately the state of decomposition of this calf made it impossible for a diagnosis of cause of death to be made. Maternal separation is always a potential cause of death in neonates/young calves, however there are multiple underlying reasons for a calf to become separated from its mother, including severe weather events (physical separation of two otherwise healthy animals), illness/death of the mother, or illness of the calf. In this particular case the decomposition meant that we were unable to assess whether this was a healthy calf.

Date: 02/05/2022	Pathologists: [REDACTED]
Students:	