

School of Veterinary Science

Pathology Report

Submitter Ref.: H314	Date Sent:	Accession No.: 62054
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To: [REDACTED]
Department of Conservation
Golden Bay

Report Sent: 29/05/2023

Copy To:

Email:

Species: Cetacean	Breed: Hector's Dolphin		
Age: Unknown - length consistent with subadult/adult. No reproductive organs remain so not possible to define more closely	Sex: Unknown		
Owner: Department of Conservation	Type: Post Mortem		
ID: H314	Prev. Accn.:		
Submitted:	At Risk:	Affected:	Dead:

History

Found beachcast at Farewell Spit inner beach, 300m from crossing road.

Gross Findings

The carcass was received frozen and was thawed for necropsy. The body was in an advanced state of decomposition (code 4), with extensive skin loss and liquefaction of the blubber and marked putrefaction of the internal organs. Body condition was difficult to assess due to the blubber liquefaction, however there did appear to be atrophy of the dorsal lumbar muscles.

Standard length = 1.21m. Weight was not recorded due to state of decomposition and tissue loss (i.e. the weight would be inaccurate).

On the left side of the body, extending from the mid-thorax to the level of the anus, there were 3 curved deep incisions, each of which extended through the blubber and muscle, exposing the underlying body cavities. A 4th similar but shallower curved incision was present caudal to this. The incisions were roughly parallel, with the arc of the curve facing cranially. Spacing between the deep incisions (from cranial to caudal) was 17cm and 12cm. The tissue defect associated with the cranial-most incision was teardrop shaped, measuring 13cm x 10cm maximum dimensions, with exposure of the ribs. Two other significant skin lesions were present on the left tail stock; one being a full thickness blubber defect roughly rectangular in shape, and the second a curved incision through the blubber, facing in the opposite direction to the other curved incisions.

On the right side of the body and extending ventrally to include the anogenital area, there was a full thickness tissue defect with scalloped edges, extending into the abdominal cavity. Shreds of muscle tissue and unidentifiable abdominal organs herniated through this tissue defect. Numerous curved shallow incisions were present in several 'layers' parallel to the scalloped edges. These were spaced from 10mm to 40mm apart, and were 35-100mm long. The lungs were discoloured greenish-pink and distended by putrefactive gas. The remaining abdominal organs were friable and fell apart on handling. There were no identifiable reproductive organs.

Diagnosis

Boat strike/propeller injury with shark scavenging.

Comments

The damage on the right side of this dolphin's body is consistent with a propeller injury, supporting a diagnosis of death resulting from a boat strike. The tissue damage on the left side of the body was caused by shark scavenging. Clinton Duffy was consulted to review the images of tissue damage in this dolphin and confirmed that the lesions on the left side were caused by several, different-sized sharks.

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