

Pathology Report

Submitter Ref.:	Date Sent:	Accession No.: 51492
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To: [REDACTED]
Nelson

Report Sent: 01/11/2014

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Email:

Species: Cetacean	Breed: Hector's Dolphin		
Age: Adult	Sex: Male		
Owner:			Type: Post Mortem
ID: H251, W14-26Ch			Prev. Accn.:
Submitted:	At Risk:	Affected:	Dead:

History

31102014Pakawau

Dolphin found washed up dead and beginning to decay. Was situated at the mid tide mark and collected before the tide came back in at 9.30pm so no photo was taken in situ. Body was brought in to Takaka DOC the next morning.

Gross Findings

Depth of nail notch: 0.022m
Dorsal blubber depth: 8mm
Eye to blowhole length: 0.145m
Height of dorsal fin: 0.105m
Lateral blubber depth: 9mm
Length of base of dorsal fin: 0.215m
Length of flipper: 0.18m
Length of flukes: 0.11m
Snout to anus length: 0.915m
Snout to genital slit length: 0.8m
Snout to origin of dorsal fin length: 0.57m
Snout to origin of flipper length: 0.29m
Total length: 1.23m
Ventral blubber depth: 9mm
Width of flipper: 0.085m
Width of flukes: 0.46m
Weight: 30.3kg

The body was received frozen and was thawed before necropsy.

There was moderate to marked decomposition, particularly of the soft tissues of the head. There was a moderate decrease in muscle mass of the epaxial muscles and a slight pronouncement of the neck, indicating some degree of weight loss. The blubber cover was very poor (thin body condition) and there were large numbers of blubber cestodes. Multiple sites along the ventrum and flanks had large areas of skin and blubber missing (scavenger damage). Both eyes were missing.

The internal organs were still partially frozen. The abdomen contained approximately 50ml of dark red fluid (likely due to freeze-thaw damage). Moderate numbers of nematodes were present in the stomach and oesophagus, and the gastric mucosa had multifocal to coalescing chronic ulcers. There were no prey remnants in the stomach. The lungs contained numerous lungworms and scattered gritty foci (parasite granulomas). The terminal airways contained a scant amount of foam.

Histopathology

Lung: Severe multifocal granulomatous pneumonia (severe lungworm) and diffuse interstitial pneumonia
Mesenteric lymph node: Severe granulomatous and fibrosing lymphadenitis with trematode eggs

Diagnosis

Severe parasitism

Comments

Unfortunately the decomposition and freezing of this body will make it more difficult to get a definitive diagnosis of cause of death, but the poor body condition of the animal suggests that he had been ill for a while prior to death. Histology is less reliable on frozen tissues, but may still be able to pick up any underlying infectious disease. There was no indication that this death was due to entanglement.

ADDENDUM (final diagnosis with histology)

This dolphin had quite severe lung disease, partly due to a heavy lungworm infection. Toxoplasma testing on the lungs was negative.

The presence of parasite eggs in the lymph nodes also indicates severe parasitism in this dolphin.

Date: 20/04/2018	Pathologists: [REDACTED]
Students:	