

School of Veterinary Science

Pathology Report

Submitter Ref.: H312	Date Sent: 17/01/2023	Accession No.: 61547
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Department of Conservation
Christchurch
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Report Sent: 01/02/2023
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Species: Cetacean	Breed: Hector's Dolphin		
Age: Juvenile	Sex: Male		
Owner: Department of Conservation	Type: Post Mortem		
ID:	Prev. Accn.:		
Submitted:	At Risk:	Affected:	Dead:

Gross Findings

This body was frozen before shipping. It was partially thawed on receipt and necropsy was conducted the following day. The body was in a moderate state of post mortem preservation, with focally extensive full thickness skin slippage (flippers, face), abdominal bloating and prolapse of the penis (code 3). The blubber had not liquefied.

Weight = 12.4kg; standard length = .805m

Blubber depth = 17mm dorsal, 15mm lateral, 15mm ventral.

The umbilicus on this calf was healed. There were no fetal whiskers present (but skin in this area was missing), and the dorsal fin was not folded.

There were several linear lacerations and skin tears: 1.5cm incision perpendicular to the fluke margin, on the dorsal aspect of the right fluke; 4cm incision at the level of the dorsal fin on the left flank; two slightly curved 1-2cm incisions cranial to this, also on the left flank.

There was softening and swelling of the intermandibular tissue, with undermining and 'fractures' of the mandibular skin. The soft tissues of the right side of the face, throat and head were glistening and dark red (haemorrhage and oedema). There was a spiral fracture of the body of the right mandible, with further fractures of the right occipital bone and orbit. The right cerebral hemisphere was dark red (contusion).

The stomach and rectum were empty. The lungs were inflated.

Diagnosis

Acute severe blunt trauma (head) with multiple fractures and brain contusion

Comments

Death in this calf was due to severe blunt trauma. Possible causes are a boat strike or an orca attack.

There were also several linear skin wounds on the calf's body, however it wasn't possible to determine whether these occurred before or after death.

Date: 01/02/2023	Pathologists: [REDACTED]
Students:	