

Pathology Report

Submitter Ref.: H335	Date Sent: 24/10/2024	Accession No.: 64168
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To: [REDACTED]
DOC
Christchurch

Report Sent:
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Species: Cetacean	Breed: Hector's Dolphin	
Age: Adult	Sex: Female	
Owner:		Type: Post Mortem
ID: H335		Prev. Accn.:
Submitted:	At Risk:	Affected: Dead:

History

Seen from the air on Ashworths Beach on 13 Aug 2024. Recovered from beach and carried back to vehicle by [REDACTED]. Frozen at Mahaanui and sent to Massey for necropsy.

Gross Findings

This adult female dolphin was thawed for necropsy. She was assessed as being in poor body condition, with prominent lateral vertebral processes and pronounced concavity of the lumbar muscles. Blubber depths were 9mm dorsal, 10mm lateral and 11mm ventral. Her standard length was 1.362m and she weighed 38.9kg.

The body was in a good state of post mortem preservation (code 2) with only minimal superficial skin slippage and early discolouration of the intermandibular skin. There were multiple linear indentations on both sides of the body caused by the packaging material. A few rake marks were present. There were no recent lacerations and no encircling/net impressions.

The teeth were severely worn, with the maxillary teeth on both sides worn down to the gums. There was abundant sand in the oral cavity and pharynx.

The right sternal lymph node was markedly enlarged (2-3 x normal) and wet on cut surface. The lungs were well inflated with rib impressions bilaterally. The surface was mottled red/pink, with focally extensive areas of moderately well demarcated, firm, dark red collapsed parenchyma. Scant froth was adherent to the tracheal mucosa. There were no gas bubbles in or around the kidneys. The right adrenal gland was slightly enlarged. No chyle was present in the intestinal lymphatics. The stomach contained several small pieces of kelp in the glandular and squamous compartments, along with a few copepods and moderate numbers of nematodes. No prey hard parts or flesh were present.

The mammary glands were well developed with no milk evident on incision. Multifocal tiny white flecks were present on cut surface. The uterus had linear striations, with several poorly demarcated segments of dark red/purple discolouration. The right ovary was active, while the left was smooth.

Microbiology

Lung culture - no growth on blood agar or MacConkey agar

Diagnosis

Disease - severe pneumonia (unknown cause)

Comments

This dolphin was in very poor body condition. She had an extremely severe pneumonia, which is likely to have impacted her ability to forage and either directly or indirectly led to her death. Fungal and bacterial culture on lung tissue produced no growth, and immunohistochemistry for toxoplasma was negative.

The uterus in this dolphin had 'stretch marks', which indicate that she has had a calf or calves in the past. Her mammary gland was well developed but wasn't producing milk at the time of her death (i.e. she wasn't nursing a calf at the time she died).

Date: 02/12/2024	Pathologists: [REDACTED]
Students:	