

# Pathology Report

Submitter Ref.: H321	Date Sent: 08/12/2023	Accession No.: 62906
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To: [REDACTED]  
Department of Conservation  
Christchurch

Report Sent: 15/12/2023

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Species: Cetacean	Breed: Hector's Dolphin		
Age: Adult	Sex: Male		
Owner:			Type: Post Mortem
ID: H321			Prev. Accn.:
Submitted:	At Risk:	Affected:	Dead:

## History

Caught at sea

## Gross Findings

This dolphin was sent chilled via airfreight.

Standard length = 1260mm

Weight = 39kg

Blubber depths = 18mm dorsal; 18mm lateral; 16mm ventral

Summed testicular mass (with epididymis) = 1076g

The dolphin presented in good body condition and a good state of post mortem preservation, with only minimal skin slippage on one side. There were numerous lacerations over the body surface, varying in depth from very superficial (1-2mm deep) to, more rarely, extending into the superficial blubber (4-5mm deep). These lacerations were mostly linear, with occasional curved ones. Many had a finely 'wavy' outline, and they were frequently arranged in parallel clusters. Lacerations were more common on the ventral surface. There were no encircling impressions or lacerations to leading edges of the dorsal fin, fluke or flippers.

The lungs were well inflated, with rib impressions on the pleural surface. Moderate numbers of parasite granulomas were scattered throughout the pulmonary parenchyma, but no lungworm were grossly evident in airways. The cut surface was mottled with red and paler pink patches. Airways contained a small amount of fluid but no froth. Within the heart here were two small (2-3mm) firm white pedunculated structures attached to the endocardium just below one of the aortic valves. Tiny white opaque foci were also present in the cordae tendinae.

The intestinal lymphatics were opaque (presence of chyle indicating recent feeding). The stomach contained abundant semi-digested fish flesh and bones, and the large intestine contained pale gritty fecal material. The testes were well developed, with abundant seminal fluid oozing from cut surfaces, and within the bladder.

## Diagnosis

Known bycatch

## Comments

The gross necropsy findings in this dolphin are consistent with our recent findings for bycaught animals from trawl vessels: an apparently healthy dolphin in good body condition, a stomach full of recently ingested fish, well-inflated lungs with minimal fluid in the airways, and numerous lacerations over the body surface.

The information we have been able to get from this dolphin is invaluable in our ongoing work to better characterise lesions of dolphin bycatch in NZ fisheries, which in turn will hopefully help us assess beachcast dolphins for evidence of bycatch. This is particularly important since bycatch lesions can vary with species and with fishery types, so that we can't rely on findings from overseas - we need solid evidence from the NZ context.

I have collected a full set of tissues for histology and for molecular disease surveillance testing. If the histological

examination shows anything interesting I will send an addendum report, but at this stage there is a clear cause of death diagnosis.

Date: 15/12/2023	Pathologists: [REDACTED]
Students:	