

Pathology Report

Submitter Ref.: H343	Date Sent:	Accession No.: 64540
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To: [REDACTED]
Christchurch
Email:

Report Sent: 18/03/2025
Copy To:

Species: Cetacean		Breed: Hector's Dolphin	
Age: Neonate		Sex: Female	
Owner: Department of Conservation		Type: Post Mortem	
ID: H343		Prev. Accn.:	
Submitted:	At Risk:	Affected:	Dead:

Gross Findings

This neonatal calf was shipped frozen and was thawed before necropsy. The body was in a good state of post mortem preservation (early code 2). Body condition was assessed as moderate, with a slight concavity at the neck as is common in beachcast neonates. The calf was had a folded dorsal fin, fetal folds, and a fresh umbilical stump with no evidence of healing. The skin was mottled with small (3-10mm) indentations, likely from pebbly substrate. The standard length was 674mm and the dolphin weighed 6.2kg. Blubber depths were 14 dorsally, 12mm laterally and 12mm ventrally.

The stomach contained a minimal amount of watery pale tan fluid. The large intestines contained abundant meconium.

The lungs bilaterally were pale pink and very well inflated, with faint rib impressions and a faint striped pattern of congestion, particularly on the right lung.

There were no gross lesions in any of the other body systems.

Provisional Diagnosis

Death due to consequences of maternal separation

Comments

This very young calf had been born alive, as evidenced by the well inflated lungs, but had not lived for long, as we can tell from the empty stomach, the fresh umbilical stump and the presence of a large amount of meconium (fetal feces) in the colon. Death was most likely due to the physiological consequences of maternal separation (e.g. hypothermia and metabolic disturbances). There was no gross evidence of a disease process in this calf, but the tissues will be processed for histological examination and a further report will be sent if anything significant is found.

Date: 18/03/2025	Pathologists:
Students:	