

WILDLIFE INCIDENT UNIT

66/06



CENTRAL SCIENCE
LABORATORY

WILDLIFE INCIDENT REPORT

RESTRICTED

INCIDENT NUMBER 66/06
PART OF STUDY PGD-230
REGIONAL NUMBER W/06/19
OTHER REFERENCES 29/B265/04/06
SENDER VLA Aberystwyth
LOCATION [REDACTED]
Anglesey
GRID REFERENCE [REDACTED]
INCIDENT DATE 21 April 2006
SUSPECTED CAUSE OF INCIDENT chloralose-alpha
abuse
DATE OF REPORT 14 August 2006

REPORTING OFFICER [REDACTED]

SIGNED : [REDACTED]

NUMBERS AND SPECIES INVOLVED

1 peregrine
1 feathers suspected bait

COPIED TO



Sand Hutton * York

YO41 1LZ * U.K.

Tel: +44 (0)1904 462000

Fax: +44 (0)1904 462111

Website: www.csl.gov.uk

E-mail: science@csl.gov.uk

Direct Phone Number 01904 462456
Direct Fax Number 01904 462251

E-mail: wiiis@csl.gov.uk

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Samples received			Date received	Sample identifier
63852	peregrine	tissues	25/5/06	29/B265/04/06 : 1
63853	feathers suspected bait		25/5/06	29/B265/04/06 : 2

Summary of field data

A man found a dead peregrine falcon on an area of coastal heath whilst out walking his dog. He contacted the RSPB who in turn contacted the police. The peregrine was lying face down on the ground with three piles of pigeon feathers nearby. The peregrine was in good bodily condition, with a small amount of flesh eaten from its breast. Its wings were folded in and its beak tucked under its breast. It was reasonably fresh. The dog walker's father farms the land and he hadn't heard of any rumours about active pigeon fanciers that may have taken action against peregrines in the area. The dog walker took photographs of the site and collected some of the feathers. A site visit was conducted, but there were only three or four feathers remaining at the site. About 200m further along the coast three piles of pigeon feathers were seen. These appeared to be spots where a raptor (peregrine?) had plucked pigeon carcasses. The police said that they didn't know of any peregrines in the immediate vicinity and that they do not nest at a nearby power station as far as they know. They are not aware of any pigeon fanciers in the area. There has been some problems with nesting peregrines a little further away on the cliffs, but this was a case of the chicks taken for falconry rather than direct action against the birds. This is an area of coastal heath with cattle and sheep farming.

Summary of post mortem report

An adult female peregrine falcon was submitted, weighing 790g, in a good bodily condition. There was a patch of bear skin ventrally over the caudal pectoral muscles. There were large holes over both shoulders dorsally and a smaller hole on the left side caudally over the ribs. The holes were between 2-4cm in diameter and possible a result of scavenging. The crop was full of muscle tissue and traces of feathers. The gizzard was full of matted dark brown material. The intestinal contents were mucoid. Part of the left lung and the left kidney were missing. There was congestion and blood staining of the brain. The reproductive, cardiovascular and musculo-skeletal systems were unremarkable. Other systems were not examined. The cause of death was not apparent.

Analysis : carbamate (LC) analysis suite

63852	stomach contents	no carbamate (LC) detected	detection limit	0.2	mg/kg
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Analysis : chloralose-alpha

63852	kidney	chloralose-alpha	confirmed	1.8	mg/kg
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Analysis : organophosphate analysis suite

63852	stomach contents	no organophosphate detected	detection limit	0.2	mg/kg
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Analysis : rodenticide analysis suite

63852	liver	no rodenticide detected	detection limit	0.05	mg/kg
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Analysis : strychnine

63852	stomach contents	no strychnine detected	detection limit	1.0	mg/kg
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Conclusion

It was suspected that this peregrine had been poisoned. Laboratory analysis for a range of likely pesticides has been undertaken on the submitted samples. These tests have detected and confirmed a residue of alphachloralose in the kidney of this bird. Although the amount found is quite small, it is still considered to be significant and the probable cause of death of the peregrine. It seems likely that the peregrine was feeding on a bird prior to death, but there was only a few feathers remaining and these have not been analysed. It appears that the abuse of alphachloralose, possibly using a pigeon carcass, has occurred at this location.