WILDLIFE INCIDENT UNIT 40/24

WILDLIFE INCIDENT REPORT

Original thinking... applied

INCIDENT NUMBER	40/24
PART OF STUDY	WIIS23
REGIONAL NUMBER	W/24/06
OTHER REFERENCES	28-B0006-05-24
SENDER	APHA Carmarthen VIC
LOCATION	Uwchmynydd Caernarfonshire
GRID REFERENCE	SH1425
INCIDENT DATE	18 March 2024
SUSPECTED CAUSE OF INCIDENT	starvation
DATE OF REPORT	25 July 2024

REPORTING OFFICER [redacted]

SIGNED [redacted]

NUMBERS AND SPECIES INVOLVED

1	common buzzard
2	rabbit carcase (bait?)

COPIED TO

[redacted]

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Samples received			Date received	Sample identifier
101450	rabbit carcase (bait?)		3/5/24	APHA ref: 28-M0007-05-24
101451	rabbit carcase (bait?)		3/5/24	APHA ref: 28-M0007-05-24
101460	common buzzard		16/5/24	APHA ref 28-B006-05-24
101460	common buzzard	tissues	16/5/24	APHA ref 28-B006-05-24

Summary of field data

A buzzard was found alive but ill, described as being lethargic, on a coastal footpath. The incident was reported to the Police Rural Crime Team, who attended the site. The police found two rabbit carcases - one that showed signs of predation - in the area, but no buzzard. Two days later the buzzard was found dead. This is a rural area, near to a coastal path with farmland, mostly livestock forming, some associated farm buildings and some holiday parks nearby.

Summary of post mortem report

One male common buzzard of unknown weight in emaciated condition with severe autolysis was submitted dead for post-mortem examination. Brain, cloacal and oral swabs were taken for AI testing, no Influenza A viral RNA was detected. On the skin there were bald patches a few cm in size either side of ventrum, with dried blood adhered to the feathers at the edge of the bald patch on the left side of the body. There was very poor pectoral muscling. In the alimentary system the proventriculus and gizzard contained a moderate fill of soft dark brown material with fibrous strands of plant material throughout. Proximally in the small intestine a section approximately 10cm long was full of ~10 thick, pale worms ranging in size from a few cm to 10cm long. The remaining intestinal tract contained brown liquid. There was very pale brown thick liquid in the cloaca. The cardiovascular system contained an increased volume of pericardial fluid. Examination of all other organ systems was unremarkable. The endocrine and lymphoreticular systems were not examined. This juvenile male buzzard was in emaciated body condition and had an infestation with intestinal worms which have been identified as the large roundworm Porrocaecum sp. It is likely that the GI tract helminth infestation contributed to the bird's poor condition, and that this buzzard ultimately died due to emaciation.

Analysis : metaldehyde & carb (LC) analysis suite

101450		no metaldehyde & carb (LC) detected	detection limit	0.2	µg

Analysis : organophosphate analysis suite

101450		no organophosphate detected	detection limit	2	µg

Analysis : rodenticide & chloralose analysis suite

101460	liver	brodifacoum	confirmed	0.012	mg/kg
101460	liver	bromadiolone	confirmed	0.0026	mg/kg

Conclusion

It was suspected that this buzzard had been poisoned, given its behaviour before death, and that the rabbits were suspected baits. The post-mortem observation indicated the buzzard was emaciated and had an infestation of intestinal worms. Laboratory analysis for chloralose and anti-coagulant rodenticides only was undertaken on the submitted samples from the buzzard. These tests have detected and confirmed small residues of bromadiolone and brodifacoum in the liver of this buzzard. Given the size of these residues, they are consistent with background exposure only. Given the emaciated condition of the bird reported on the post-mortem, cause of death of this buzzard is most likely from starvation.

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