WILDLIFE INCIDENT UNIT 33/24

WILDLIFE INCIDENT REPORT

Original thinking... applied

INCIDENT NUMBER 33/24

PART OF STUDY WIIS23

REGIONAL NUMBER W/24/07

OTHER REFERENCES 28-B0054-04-24

SENDER APHA Carmarthen VIC

LOCATION Ponterwyd
Cardiganshire

GRID REFERENCE SN7382

INCIDENT DATE 20 March 2024

SUSPECTED CAUSE OF INCIDENT background residue

DATE OF REPORT 17 July 2024

REPORTING OFFICER [redacted]

SIGNED : [redacted]

NUMBERS AND SPECIES INVOLVED

1 buzzard

COPIED TO

[redacted]

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Samples received			Date received	Sample identifier
101364	buzzard		24/4/24	APHA ref 28-B54-04-24
101364	buzzard	tissues	24/4/24	APHA ref 28-B54-04-24

Summary of field data

A buzzard was found dead near to a track in woodland. There appeared to be some damage to the skull of the buzzard. The carcase was stored frozen before being transported to the APHA lab for post-mortem. This is a rural area. The carcase was found on the edge of woodland surrounded by grassland with farm buildings, pockets of woodland, lakes and reservoirs nearby.

Summary of post mortem report

One female buzzard of unknown weight in fair body condition with moderate 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. The skin over the entire skull and ventral neck was severely autolyzed. The oesophagus contained a large number (~20-30 individuals) of 10-12 cm long worms. The gizzard contained a moderate fill of brown, soft contents. The intestinal content was pale and soft throughout. The ovary was active. Examination of all other organ systems was unremarkable. The endocrine system was not examined. This adult female Common Buzzard had many earthworms in the oesophagus. Whilst earthworms form part of the normal diet of buzzards, particularly where other prey items are scarce, they were present in unusually high numbers. No worms were found in the gizzard. It is difficult to determine whether this was an obstruction of the oesophagus, or whether the bird may have died soon after consuming the worms (i.e., if the worms were 'balling' and present in vast numbers). An obvious cause of death was not evident; however, autolysis may have masked more subtle gross pathology, particularly of the head. The history provided states damage to the skull, but no damage to the skull bones was found. The skin over the head was noticeably more autolysed than other sections, and therefore it was not possible to assess for any wounds or superficial trauma.

Analysis : metaldehyde & carb (LC) analysis suite

101364	stomach contents	no metaldehyde & carb (LC) detected	detection limit	0.04	mg/kg

Analysis : organophosphate analysis suite

101364	stomach contents	no organophosphate detected	detection limit	0.2	mg/kg

Analysis : rodenticide & chloralose analysis suite

101364	liver	bromadiolone	confirmed	0.00023	mg/kg

Conclusion

It was suspected that this buzzard 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 bromadiolone in the liver of this buzzard. However, the amount found is consistent with exposure levels only and is not considered to be the cause of death of the bird. Post-mortem examination indicates that the bird may have died after eating an excess of earthworms that may have balled up in the oesophagus of this bird causing an obstruction, but this is uncertain. Therefore, the cause of death of this buzzard remains unknown.

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