

WILDLIFE INCIDENT UNIT

25/25



Original thinking... applied

WILDLIFE INCIDENT REPORT

RESTRICTED

INCIDENT NUMBER 25/25
PART OF STUDY WIIS25
REGIONAL NUMBER W/25/02
OTHER REFERENCES 28-B0047-01-25
SENDER APHA Carmarthen VIC
LOCATION Aberaeron
Cardiganshire
GRID REFERENCE SN4859
INCIDENT DATE 14 January 2025
SUSPECTED CAUSE OF INCIDENT chloralose
abuse
DATE OF REPORT 14 May 2025

REPORTING OFFICER

SIGNED :

NUMBERS AND SPECIES INVOLVED

1 red kite

COPIED TO

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Samples received		Date received	Sample identifier
101712	red kite	7/3/25	APHA ref: 28-B0047-01-25
101712	red kite	7/3/25	APHA ref: 28-B0047-01-25
	tissues		

Summary of field data

A red kite was found dead between a field and a row of trees. A member of the Welsh Government wildlife team collected the carcass the day after the incident was reported, stored in a Welsh Government freezer for one night, then transported to the APHA by courier. The red kite appeared to be fresh and in good body condition. No other carcasses were seen in the area. Sheep were seen grazing a few fields away and there was no livestock in the field where the bird was found. This is a rural area surrounded by mixed farming practices, mainly arable with grazing for sheep, and pockets of woodland.

Summary of post mortem report

One female red kite in good condition with mild autolysis was submitted dead for post-mortem examination. The carcass was not weighed. Brain, cloacal and oro-pharyngeal swabs were taken for AI testing, no Influenza A viral RNA was detected. There was reddening of the muscle over the left side of the neck. There was irregular reddening of the skull especially round the right eye. The gizzard was filled with the partial remains of a rodent with tail and legs identifiable, and grey pasty material and fur. Intestinal content was pasty liquid. The kidneys appeared enlarged. There were multiple tiny nodules over the ovary. Other organ systems examined were unremarkable. Histological examination of the liver raised the possibility of mild granulomatous hepatitis, possibly due to avian tuberculosis. Further tests ruled out avian tuberculosis; mild granulomatous hepatitis considered likely to have been caused by larvae migrans. The red kite was in good condition and had recently eaten. The reddening on the skull and haemorrhages in the neck suggest trauma.

Analysis : chloralose analysis suite

101712	liver	chloralose	confirmed	18	mg/kg
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Analysis : rodenticide analysis suite

101712	liver	difenacoum	confirmed	0.03	mg/kg
101712	liver	bromadiolone	confirmed	0.0047	mg/kg
101712	liver	brodifacoum	confirmed	0.19	mg/kg

Conclusion

It was suspected that this red kite had been poisoned, though the postmortem observed some haemorrhaging that could be attributed to trauma. As the red kite had been feeding on a rodent, as noted in the post mortem report, laboratory tests for chloralose and a range of likely anti-coagulant rodenticides only have been conducted on samples submitted from this red kite. These tests have detected and confirmed a residue of chloralose in the liver of this red kite; the amount found is significant and likely to have contributed to the cause of death of this red kite. A residue of brodifacoum detected and confirmed in the liver of this bird is at a level often considered significant, but there were no indications of unexplained haemorrhaging on the postmortem report. It appears that the red kite was exposed to brodifacoum, probably as a result of secondary exposure from rodent control treatments in the area, but the chloralose residue is of greater significance. Smaller residues of difenacoum and bromadiolone detected and confirmed in the liver of this red kite are consistent with background exposure only. It is possible that - given that chloralose is an anaesthetic - this red kite may have been incapacitated leaving it vulnerable to a traumatic event. Given these results, the cause of death of this red kite is most likely due to exposure to chloralose, though trauma may also have been a factor. The source of exposure to chloralose for this red kite is uncertain, but it is likely to be from an abuse of the compound.