

WILDLIFE INCIDENT UNIT

140/21



Original thinking... applied

WILDLIFE INCIDENT REPORT

INCIDENT NUMBER 140/21
PART OF STUDY FSGD-213
REGIONAL NUMBER W/21/22
OTHER REFERENCES 28-B0097-08-21
SENDER APHA Carmarthen VIC
LOCATION Llanelli
Carmarthenshire
GRID REFERENCE SN5105
INCIDENT DATE 19 August 2021
SUSPECTED CAUSE OF INCIDENT background residue
DATE OF REPORT 16 December 2021

REPORTING OFFICER [REDACTED]

SIGNED : [REDACTED]

NUMBERS AND SPECIES INVOLVED

1 grey heron

COPIED TO



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Samples received		Date received	Sample identifier
100538	grey heron	1/9/21	28/B0097/8/21
100538	grey heron tissues	1/9/21	28/B0097/8/21

Summary of field data

A dead juvenile heron was found. There is a large pond in a 2 acre field and the fish, rudd, carp and stickle backs are provided with feed by the pond owner. Since December 2020, there has been an adult heron visit the area and more recently there has also been a juvenile heron. About two and half weeks ago the juvenile heron didn't move from the field and it was stood in the rushes and the pond. It was also acting oddly, such as not moving much and then it was found dead in the pond. The adult heron has not been seen since the death of the juvenile bird. The owner contacted the Police the following day and was advised to freeze the available heron carcase. It was noted that there was no weight to the carcase, even though there would be plenty for it to eat in the area, including fish, frogs and snakes. There was no evidence of trauma to the carcase and the finder wondered if it was lead poisoning. The case was also referred to Welsh Government and arrangements were made to transfer the carcase to the APHA. There is a reservoir nearby and trout fishing lakes.

Summary of post mortem report

A grey heron, female and weight 990g, emaciated body condition and mild autolysis was submitted for post-mortem. There were some urates visible at the vent. The pectorals were wasted. The proventriculus and gizzard contained fibrous dark content with one piece of long fibrous content. The large intestinal content was firm. The ovary was not active. No abnormalities of the remaining body system were seen.

Analysis : metaldehyde & carb (LC) analysis suite

100538	stomach contents	no metaldehyde & carb (LC) detected	detection limit	0.003	mg/kg
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Analysis : organophosphate analysis suite

100538	stomach contents	no organophosphate detected	detection limit	0.4	mg/kg
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Analysis : rodenticide & chloralose analysis suite

100538	liver	brodifacoum	confirmed	0.001	mg/kg
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Conclusion

It was suspected that this heron had been poisoned. Laboratory analysis for some likely pesticides has been undertaken on the submitted samples from the heron. These tests have detected and confirmed a small residue of brodifacoum in the liver of this heron, but the amount found is consistent with background exposure levels only. The heron was emaciated and had not recently consumed anything, apart from some fibrous material, so given these results the cause of death of it remains uncertain.

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