

WILDLIFE INCIDENT UNIT

145/21



Original thinking... applied

WILDLIFE INCIDENT REVISED REPORT

RESTRICTED

INCIDENT NUMBER 145/21
PART OF STUDY FSGD-213
REGIONAL NUMBER W/21/24
OTHER REFERENCES 28-B0137-09-21
SENDER APHA Carmarthen VIC , North Wales
Police
LOCATION Halkyn, Rhosesmor
Flintshire
GRID REFERENCE SJ2267
INCIDENT DATE 15 September 2021
SUSPECTED CAUSE OF INCIDENT bendiocarb
abuse
DATE OF REPORT 15 August 2022

REPORTING OFFICER [REDACTED]

SIGNED :

NUMBERS AND SPECIES INVOLVED

2 buzzard
1 bird carcase (bait?)
1 knife sample

COPIED TO [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

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Samples received	Date received	Sample identifier
100555 buzzard	7/10/21	28/B0137/09/21 : DJA3
100555 buzzard tissues	7/10/21	28/B0137/09/21 : DJA3
100556 bird carcase (bait?)	7/10/21	25/B0137/09/21 : DJA2
100720 knife sample	26/5/22	DJA/05

Summary of field data

The Police received a report of two dead buzzards in a field. There was video footage where two buzzards were seen about two metres apart and with the remains of an unidentified bird, which might be a poisoned bait, between them. Someone is also seen using their foot to nudge one buzzard carcass, which was on its back with one wing stretched out. Following this action, the buzzard moves and so it is still alive, but clearly unwell. The Police attended the scene within an hour of the report and collected the remains of an unidentified bird, which was labelled DJA2 and suspected to be a bait. They also recovered the remains of a recently deceased buzzard, which was labelled DJA3. The other buzzard seen in the video was standing up and it eventually flew away despite the best efforts of the attending police officer and RSPCA officer. The collected carcasses were stored in a freezer at the Police station. The case was reported [REDACTED] and the Police suspect that the baited bird had been dropped by a buzzard, rather than deliberately placed at the location. The case was reported to Welsh Government and arrangements were made to transfer the carcasses to the APHA. There is a nearby shoot and there is land for sheep grazing.

During a search [REDACTED] a knife with some white powder residue was found and this was later submitted to Fera for testing.

Summary of post mortem report

A cold box was received and labelled W/21/24, barcode 70276 and it contained two evidence bags: P06591852 - Court exhibit no. DJA2 1 x bird remains - which was treated as a bait and not examined; P06591674 - Court exhibit no. DJA3 1 x dead buzzard, juvenile. The dead buzzard was of unknown sex and fair body condition with a moderate autolysis. There was moderate pectoral musculing. The proventriculus contained pale pink soft tissues with thick white strands and small fragments of bone. The gizzard contained thick dark green material with a few pale pink soft tissues and one dark brown feather with a pale band. Multiple long segmented worms present in the small intestines. There was pink mucoid liquid in the proximal trachea. The genital system was unidentifiable. All other organ systems examined were unremarkable. The endocrine system was not examined.

Analysis : metaldehyde & carb (LC) analysis suite

100555 stomach contents	bendiocarb	confirmed	1.2	mg/kg
100556	bendiocarb	confirmed	15000	µg
100720	bendiocarb	confirmed	0.049	µg

Analysis : organophosphate analysis suite

100555 stomach contents	no organophosphate detected	detection limit	0.3	mg/kg
100556	no organophosphate detected	detection limit	10	µg

Analysis : rodenticide & chloralose analysis suite

100555 liver	difenacoum	confirmed	0.0044	mg/kg
100555 liver	bromadiolone	confirmed	0.002	mg/kg
100555 liver	brodifacoum	confirmed	0.0054	mg/kg

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Conclusion

It was suspected that this was a typical raptor poisoning scenario, with possibly two buzzards affected, although one bird flew away and is presumed to have recovered. Laboratory analysis for a range of likely pesticides has been undertaken on the submitted samples. These tests have detected and confirmed a residue of bendiocarb in the stomach content of the buzzard, which consisted of a mass of partly digested meat. There were also residues of brodifacoum, difenacoum and bromadiolone detected and confirmed in the liver of this buzzard, but these are considered to be background exposure levels only. Analysis on the suspected bait material is outstanding, but from the results to date it appears that at least one buzzard has died following the exposure to bendiocarb. A revised report will be issued if residues are found on the suspected bait, but given the analytical findings so far and the supporting information the abuse of bendiocarb is suspected.

The additional tests on the bird remains have been completed and a residue of bendiocarb was detected and confirmed from a surface wash of the sample. The sample consisted of two wings and bones, some dead insects, with a small amount of flesh on the bones and some feathers on the wings and weighed 232g in the bag. Therefore, the abuse of bendiocarb, by lacing a bird bait, is confirmed as the likely cause of this incident.

A black handled kitchen knife with crime number 21000643519 was submitted for testing and there were signs of powder and dirt on the handle, but this part of the knife was not extracted to preserve any evidence. There were possible signs of powder noted on one part of the blade and the rest of it appeared to be fairly clean (photographs were taken). The blade was ultrasonicated in solvent and a small residue of bendiocarb was detected and confirmed. Therefore, testing has confirmed that this knife was contaminated with bendiocarb.

This replaces the earlier restricted reports issued on the 20 December 2021 and 28th April 2022.

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