

WILDLIFE INCIDENT UNIT

56/23



Original thinking... applied

WILDLIFE INCIDENT REPORT

INCIDENT NUMBER 56/23
PART OF STUDY WIIS23
REGIONAL NUMBER W/23/10
OTHER REFERENCES 28-B0028-06-23
SENDER APHA Carmarthen VIC
LOCATION Llanymynech
Montgomeryshire
GRID REFERENCE SJ2622
INCIDENT DATE 13 May 2023
SUSPECTED CAUSE OF INCIDENT background residue
DATE OF REPORT 13 September 2023

REPORTING OFFICER

SIGNED :

NUMBERS AND SPECIES INVOLVED

1 common buzzard

COPIED TO

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Samples received			Date received	Sample identifier
101033	common buzzard		22/6/23	28-B0028-06-23
101033	common buzzard	tissues	22/6/23	28-B0028-06-23

Summary of field data

A buzzard and a chick were found dead at the bottom of a cliff by a member of the public. Two empty meat trays were also found at the bottom of the cliff. The informant reported the incident to the rural crime team. When the rural crime team visited the incident site only the remains of the buzzard were found. The buzzard was collected and stored in a WG freezer, before being sent to the APHA. Peregrine falcons nest on the rocks nearby. There is a history of raptor persecution in the area; in 2019 a peregrine falcon was shot in this area. There were rumours of a local pigeon fancier group that are opposed to peregrine falcons. This is a rural area with a mixed farmland.

Summary of post mortem report

A buzzard of unknown sex in fair body condition with severe autolysis was submitted dead for post-mortem examination. Oro-pharyngeal and cloacal swabs were taken for AI testing, no viral RNA was found. The feathers were missing over the breast and sternum. The pectoral muscles were missing. In the alimentary system, there was scant red-brown semi-liquid material in the oropharynx along with one dead red-brown insect larva, approximately 8mm in length. The oesophagus and proventriculus were empty. There was approximately 3cm³ of brown fibrous material in the gizzard. The small and large intestines were autolysed and disintegrating, containing scant brown liquid. In the nervous system, the brain was semi-liquid. No further abnormalities were detected on examination of the remaining body systems. The endocrine and genital systems were not examined. The cause of death of the buzzard could not be established on gross examination. The carcass was severely autolysed and appeared to have been scavenged prior to submission.

Analysis : metaldehyde & carb (LC) analysis suite

101033	liver	no metaldehyde & carb (LC) detected	detection limit	0.04	mg/kg
101033	stomach contents	no metaldehyde & carb (LC) detected	detection limit	0.03	mg/kg

Analysis : organophosphate analysis suite

101033	stomach contents	no organophosphate detected	detection limit	2	mg/kg
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Analysis : rodenticide & chloralose analysis suite

101033	liver	difenacoum	confirmed	0.046	mg/kg
101033	liver	brodifacoum	confirmed	0.0033	mg/kg

Conclusion

It was suspected that this buzzard had been poisoned, given the circumstances - the buzzard was in a fair body condition, found dead with a chick near to empty meat trays. There is history of raptor persecution in the area - albeit against peregrine falcons known to nest in the area - which increased the suspicion that the buzzard had been poisoned. Laboratory analysis for a range of likely pesticides was undertaken on the submitted samples from the buzzard; the chick and meat trays were not available for testing. These tests have detected and confirmed residues of difenacoum and brodifacoum in the liver of this buzzard. However, the amounts found are consistent with exposure levels only and they are not considered to be the cause of death of the bird. Therefore, the cause of death of this buzzard remains uncertain.

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