

WILDLIFE INCIDENT UNIT

26/07

WILDLIFE INCIDENT REVISED REPORT

RESTRICTED



CENTRAL SCIENCE
LABORATORY

INCIDENT NUMBER 26/07
PART OF STUDY PGD-270
REGIONAL NUMBER W/07/05
OTHER REFERENCES 28/B116/4/07
SENDER VLA Carmarthen
LOCATION Stackpole
Pembrokeshire
GRID REFERENCE SR9796
INCIDENT DATE 12 April 2007
SUSPECTED CAUSE OF INCIDENT chloralose-alpha
abuse
DATE OF REPORT 3 September 2007

REPORTING OFFICER

SIGNED :

NUMBERS AND SPECIES INVOLVED

1 pigeon carcase (bait?)
1 peregrine

COPIED TO

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Samples received

			Date received	Sample identifier
68436	peregrine	tissues	17/4/07	28/B116/4/07, sample 1
68440	pigeon carcase (bait?)	tissues	17/4/07	28/B116/4/07, sample 2

Summary of field data

A freshly dead peregrine was found alongside a partially plucked pigeon on a public footpath in a wood. The incident was reported to the National Trust who collected the birds and passed them on to the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW). The CCW in turn reported the incident to the WAG. It is known to the CCW that the local population of peregrines has collapsed from an average of seven breeding pairs to only one in the past few years, it is suspected that the birds are suffering from persecution. A pigeon fancier is known to live approximately half a mile away from the incident site and more are known to live in the area. The following day a very large lorry was seen not far from the incident site carrying racing pigeons, presumably for release. It is known that pigeon fanciers from Ireland often release pigeons in the area. This incident occurred on the edge of woodland, which is surrounded by agricultural land. There is sheep, cattle and some arable farming in the area.

Summary of post mortem report

A male peregrine was submitted weighing 600 g. Blood was present at the beak in the mouth. The crop and gizzard contained muscle, feather and a small amount of grain. No other gross abnormalities could be detected. Suspicious that trauma may have been involved in the death of the peregrine. A male pigeon was submitted. The head was separate from the body and no neck was present. Feathers were removed from over the chest. Blood was present in the mouth. No other gross abnormalities could be detected. Although this was a suspected bait, tissues were removed from it and submitted for analysis.

Analysis : carbamate (LC) analysis suite

68436	gut	no carbamate (LC) detected	detection limit	0.1	mg/kg
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Analysis : chloralose-alpha analysis suite

68436	kidney	chloralose-alpha	confirmed	16	mg/kg
68440	kidney	no chloralose-alpha detected	detection limit	0.2	mg/kg

Analysis : rodenticide analysis suite

68436	liver	no rodenticide detected	detection limit	0.005	mg/kg
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Analysis : strychnine analysis suite

68436	gut	no strychnine detected	detection limit	0.6	mg/kg
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Conclusion

It was suspected that this peregrine had been poisoned, possibly from feeding on the pigeon carcase. Laboratory analyses for a range of likely pesticides has been undertaken on some of the submitted samples. These tests have detected and confirmed a residue of alphachloralose in the kidney of the peregrine. The amount found is significant and is likely to be the cause of death of the peregrine, even though the post-mortem noted some signs consistent with trauma. Given the location and circumstances of this incident it seems likely that abuse of alphachloralose has occurred, possibly using a pigeon carcase. Some further tests on the pigeon will be attempted, but the whole carcase would have been preferable for this test. A further report will be issued when this result is available.

A further test on some tissue removed from the pigeon carcase has been completed and no residue of alphachloralose was found. However, as this was suspected to be a poisoned bait, the entire carcase should have been used for this analysis.