

WILDLIFE INCIDENT UNIT

15/23



Original thinking... applied

WILDLIFE INCIDENT REPORT

INCIDENT NUMBER 15/23
PART OF STUDY WIIS23
REGIONAL NUMBER W/23/06
OTHER REFERENCES 28-B0176-02-23
SENDER APHA Carmarthen VIC
LOCATION Crickhowell
Brecknockshire
GRID REFERENCE SO2316
INCIDENT DATE 11 February 2023
SUSPECTED CAUSE OF INCIDENT electrocution
DATE OF REPORT 18 May 2023

REPORTING OFFICER [REDACTED]
SIGNED : [REDACTED]

NUMBERS AND SPECIES INVOLVED
2 buzzard

COPIED TO [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

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Samples received		Date received	Sample identifier
100908	buzzard	23/3/23	APHA: 28-B176-02-23
100908	buzzard	23/3/23	APHA: 28-B176-02-23
100909	buzzard	23/3/23	APHA: 28-B176-2-23
100909	buzzard	23/3/23	APHA: 28-B176-2-23

Summary of field data

Two buzzards have been found dead in a sheep field. The informant reports that the sheep had been checked the day before and the buzzards were not there. There is a road running along side the field and the informant believes the buzzards were thrown over the hedgerow. A site visit was made and both buzzards had numerous visible wounds/injuries and one buzzard was missing both its legs. There were overhead cables over the field where the buzzards were found and there are no known game shoots in the area. The buzzards were seized and taken to a private vet for x-ray by a police officer. X-ray confirmed the buzzard with missing legs also had a broken wing, with a visible wound also present. The x-ray of the second buzzard showed no obvious fractures. There was no visible evidence that either bird had been shot. The carcasses were stored frozen at the local police station until they could be transported to the APHA. This is a rural area surrounded by farmland and possible farm buildings.

Summary of post mortem report

Two buzzards had swabs taken for AI testing and no viral RNA was detected. Bird one was of unknown sex in good condition with mild autolysis. There was white chalky material on the tips of the wing feathers of the left wing. There were blackened feathers, skin and subcutaneous tissue on the right wing around exposed bone on the distal part of a humeral fracture. There was a 6cm longitudinal area over the ventral radius on the right wing with blackened feathers - exposed dry, blackened subcutaneous tissue with a singed appearance. Two of the tail feathers appeared singed. Both legs were missing from the proximal tarsometatarsus. The right leg had a clean-cut end of bone, the edges of the bone on the left leg were blackened. There was a complete open fracture of the right humerus mid-shaft, and the wing was attached to the body by a strand of tissue. There were multiple blood clots surrounding the liver and throughout the peritoneal cavity. Most of the clots were between the liver and the heart. There was a very large amount of crop content extending throughout the oesophagus to the oral cavity and proventriculus. There was pale pink slightly chunky material with the appearance of meat and multiple worms. There was pasty grey material in the proventriculus and gizzard and a light brown pasty content throughout the intestines. There were blood clots around both lungs and the heart. There were blood clots around the cranial poles of the kidneys. Bird two was of unknown sex in fair body condition with mild autolysis. The humerus was fractured with bone ends protruding through the skin of the left wing. There were blackened feathers and dry blackened subcutaneous tissue surrounding bone ends of the fracture. There was black singeing of feathers over the olecranon. Over the right elbow there was exposure of subcutaneous tissue and blackening of surrounding feathers. Over the right hip, there was 4cm diameter area that was bald and with exposed subcutaneous tissue that was dry and blackened. There was a complete open fracture of the mid left humerus and black discolouration of the bone ends. There were small blood clots throughout the peritoneal cavity. There was a very large amount of worms in the crop. There was a large amount of brown pasty material in the proventriculus and gizzard. There was brown pasty small intestinal content. There were blood clots in the airsacs. Other organs examined were unremarkable (endocrine system not examined).

Analysis : metaldehyde & carb (LC) analysis suite

100908	stomach contents	no metaldehyde & carb (LC) detected	detection limit	0.02	mg/kg
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Analysis : organophosphate analysis suite

100908	stomach contents	no organophosphate detected	detection limit	1	mg/kg
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Analysis : rodenticide & chloralose analysis suite

100908	liver	brodifacoum	confirmed	0.062	mg/kg
100908	liver	bromadiolone	confirmed	0.00064	mg/kg
100908	liver	difenacoum	confirmed	0.041	mg/kg
100909	liver	brodifacoum	confirmed	0.0069	mg/kg
100909	liver	difenacoum	confirmed	0.0014	mg/kg



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Conclusion

It was initially suspected that these buzzards had been poisoned. Laboratory analysis for a range of likely pesticides has been undertaken on the submitted samples. These tests have detected and confirmed a residue of brodifacoum and difenacoum in the liver of both of these buzzards and one buzzard also had a residue of bromadiolone. However, the amounts found are likely consistent with exposure levels only and will not have contributed to the death of these buzzards. Therefore, it is likely that these buzzards died from electrocution, given these results, the presence of power lines and the examination findings.