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26/EC

APHA Ref. No. 26-B0002-01-19

RSPCA (Birmingham)



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| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Sender's Ref. | Not Given |
| Previous Ref | Not Given |
| Owner | N/A |
| CPHH | N/A |
| Date Received | 02/01/2019 |
| Date of Sampling | 02/01/2019 |
| Case Vet | Not Given |
| Species / Breed | Mixed Avian Species / Mixed Avian |
| Sex / Age | Mixed / Adult |
| Samples | Animal Presented Dead x 5 |
| Sub. Reason | Diagnostic Casework |

REPORT 1 (PRELIMINARY)

HISTORY

Deaths of water birds were reported at Brookvale Park, Erdington, West Midlands, B23 7AG approximate grid reference SP09333 90993. Approximately 20 to 30 birds were reported to have died over two weeks including three coots, one tufted duck, two Canada geese, one domestic type goose and the remainder Mute swans. Birds have been found dead or been found weak with droopy wings leading to inability to fly and walk. Some have been taken to RSPCA Wildlife Hospital and Vale Wildlife Hospital for treatment and some have died or been euthanased at the lake. Botulism was suspected from the clinical signs. The water level on the lake has been decreasing and the reason for this is being investigated. Bird 1 was euthanased at Brookvale Park. Bird 4 had been hospitalised at the RSPCA on 27th December and was euthanased on 30th December. An x-ray revealed several metallic particles in the gizzard and it was described as very ataxic. Bird 5 was hospitalised at the RSPCA on 27th December and had a lead level of '>600'. It died on 28th December.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

| Identification (RSPCA ref) | Sex | Age | Weight (kgs) | Body Condition | Degree of Autolysis | Submitted Live/Dead/Frozen |
|--|--------|-------|--------------|----------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| Bird 1: Mute swan | Male | Adult | ~8.5kg | Fair to good | Moderate | Dead |
| Bird 2: Canada goose | Female | Adult | ~4.5kg | Good | Moderate | Dead |
| Bird 3: Coot | Male | Adult | ~0.5kg | Good to fat | Moderate | Dead |
| Bird 4: Mute swan Metal ring: ZY 8384 (331276) | Female | Adult | ~7kg | Good | Moderate | Dead |
| Bird 5: Mute swan (331278) | Male | Adult | ~10kg | Good | Moderate to severe | Dead |

NECROPSY FINDINGS

Skin and subcutis and musculoskeletal system:

Bird 1: Well feathered with brown faecal staining around the tail and vent. Pododermatitis with swelling and ulceration of the foot pads.

No charges applied

‡ - Test subcontracted; opinions given and interpretations of the result are outside the scope of UKAS accreditation.

† - Not UKAS accredited; opinions given and interpretations of the result are outside the scope of UKAS accreditation.

§ - Accredited under Flexible Scope.

For further details of the test methods used, and other terms and conditions, please refer to the APHA Website.



Bird 2: Clean and well feathered carcass with a large amount of subcutaneous fat and well developed pectoral muscles.

Bird 3: Clean and well feathered carcass with a large amount of subcutaneous fat.

Bird 4: Pink material around the head and staining the feathers of the neck, drip set in left hind leg, brown faecal staining around the vent, metal ring present on left leg, a good amount of subcutaneous fat.

Bird 5: Well feathered with brown faecal staining around the vent. A large amount of subcutaneous fat present.

Peritoneal cavity:

The gall bladder was full of bile in all birds with extensive enlargement in Bird 3, the coot.

Alimentary system:

Bird 1: Corn/grain in the oropharynx and a small amount in the proventriculus. Gritty material in the gizzard and soft brown intestinal contents.

Bird 2: The proventriculus was empty and there was gritty material in the gizzard. Minimal lower intestinal contents, large amount of fat surrounding the lower intestines.

Bird 3: A small amount of gritty material in the gizzard, a large amount of fat surrounding the intestinal tract and minimal brown contents in the lower intestine.

Bird 4: Pink material in the oropharynx and oesophagus and pale fine sandy material in the gizzard with at least three small bits of metallic material approximately 4-5mm long, probably wiring. Brown fluid and mucus in the gut with a few cestodes adherent to the lower intestinal tract mucosa.

Bird 5: Clear fluid in the upper oesophagus and accumulation of green plant material partially impacted in the lower two-thirds of the oesophagus and proventriculus. The gizzard contained gritty material and there was pale brown fluid in the remainder of the intestinal tract which was relatively autolysed.

Respiratory system:

Bird 1: A small amount of mucus was present in the trachea.

Bird 5: Marked autolysis with greying of the lung tissue.

Cardiovascular system:

Bird 5: There was a slight increase in pericardial fluid.

Lymphoreticular system:

Bird 4: Moderately enlarged spleen.

Examination of the remaining systems was unremarkable apart from changes associated with autolysis.

WORK IN PROGRESS

Matrix (M) gene RRT-PCR - screening test for M gene of all influenza A viruses x 10

COMMENTS

Overall the birds were in relatively good bodily condition with good reserves of body fat but, apart from Bird 5, there was minimal food material in the intestinal tracts. Bird 5 was recorded as having a lead level >600 although I am not sure what the units are, I assume this was suspected to be a case of lead poisoning. Impaction of the oesophagus with food material is often associated with lead poisoning.

The clinical history of lack of obvious gross lesions in the others is suggestive of avian botulism. We will initially screen for avian influenza and consider further testing when that is complete.

I understand that there are concerns about the low water level in Brookvale Park and also there may still be carcass remains around the edge of the lake particularly on the island which would be a good source of toxin. I enclose a link to information about avian botulism, one of the key principles in the early stages is to remove all carcass material and rotting organic material and improve the water quality. I would be interested to receive

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further information about how this is progressing and discuss clinical findings in the live birds at the RSPCA Hospital.

<http://apha.defra.gov.uk/documents/surveillance/diseases/avian-botulism.pdf>

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04/01/2019