

WILDLIFE INCIDENT UNIT

27/08

WILDLIFE INCIDENT REVISED REPORT

RESTRICTED



CENTRAL SCIENCE
LABORATORY

INCIDENT NUMBER 27/08
PART OF STUDY PGD-310
REGIONAL NUMBER W/08/05
OTHER REFERENCES 26/80504/02/08
SENDER VLA Shrewsbury , VLA Aberystwyth

LOCATION [REDACTED]
Montgomeryshire

GRID REFERENCE [REDACTED]

INCIDENT DATE 30 September 2007

**SUSPECTED CAUSE
OF INCIDENT** chloralose-alpha
abuse

DATE OF REPORT 14 October 2008

REPORTING OFFICER [REDACTED]

SIGNED:.. [REDACTED]

NUMBERS AND SPECIES INVOLVED

- 1 buzzard
- 4 partridge carcass (bait?)
- 2 sample

COPIED TO

[REDACTED]

Sand Hutton • York

YO41 HZ • U.K.

Tel: +44 (0)1904 462000

Fax: +44 (0)1904 462111

Website: www.csl.gov.uk

E-mail: info@csl.gov.uk

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Samples received			Date received	Sample identifier
72963	buzzard	tissues	12/3/08	VLA No: 26/80504/02/08
76436	sample		26/9/08	29/80138/09/08: SL-1 Pest X
76437	partridge carcase (bait?)		26/9/08	29/B0138/09/08:SL02
76439	sample		26/9/08	29/B0138/09/08 : SL03 Emtyl
76443	partridge carcase (bait?)		26/9/08	29/80138/09/08: SL4
76454	partridge carcase (bait?)		26/9/08	29/B0138/09/08: SL05

Summary of field data

A dead buzzard was found at a nature reserve in September 2007. This buzzard was taken to a veterinary centre and was stored in a freezer until the Incident was reported to a Wildlife Trust. The Trust took the bird to the VLA in Shrewsbury. There have been previous suspected poisoning incidents associated with this site. A dead buzzard was collected from the area in November 2007, but it was too decomposed for samples to be taken.

A follow-up visit to a local gamekeeper was made. On arrival the keeper was carrying two dead partridges and it then became apparent that he was carrying a container. The container was Pest X - alphachloralose and both partridges and the container were bagged for analysis. Vehicles and outbuildings were also searched. There was a large quantity of loose gamefeed, buckets of antibiotics and Jaguar rodenticide found in a building. A container of Emtryl powder was found in a cardboard box, together with packs of ammunition; the container was retained for analysis. Two dead partridges were found on the roof of two pens and these were also collected. It was reported that the partridges were laced with rat poison to control rats.

Summary of post mortem report

A buzzard, of undetermined sex and weight 1.42kg, was submitted for post-mortem. It was in fair body condition with severe autolysis, although the bird had been well feathered, some of the skin was decomposing. Tissues were relatively autolysed and some subcutaneous fat was present. The bird had been well-muscled, but the muscles were autolysing. The liver was pale and autolysed. Abdominal fat was present. Food material, consisting of small feathers, small pieces of pink pale muscle tissue and a few pieces of grit were present in the pharynx, crop, proventriculus and gizzard. Some pieces of the tissue, approximately 2cm x 1cm had the appearance of gizzard. A significant quantity of the material was present in the upper digestive tract. The remainder of the intestinal tract below the gizzard was autolysed and contained very little material. Pink fluid was present in the trachea and the lungs were dark red associated with autolysis. The brain was semi-liquid and the eyes sunken and pale grey. Examination of other systems were unremarkable apart from changes associated with autolysis. A detailed examination was not possible due to the autolysis of the tissues, but there were no gross signs to suggest trauma. A significant quantity of food material was present in the upper digestive tract, but no abnormal colouring was noted.

Analysis : carbamate (LC) analysis suite

72963	gizzard	no carbamate (LC) detected	detection limit	0.2	mg/kg
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Analysis : chloralose-alpha

72963	kidney	chloralose-alpha	confirmed	4.5	mg/kg
76436		chloralose-alpha	confirmed	960000	mg/kg
76437		chloralose-alpha	confirmed	30	µg
76439		chloralose-alpha	confirmed	620000	mg/kg
76443		chloralose-alpha	confirmed	1400	µg
76454		chloralose-alpha	confirmed	22000	µg

Analysis : metaldehyde

72963	gizzard	no metaldehyde detected	detection limit	0.09	mg/kg
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Analysis : organophosphate analysis suite

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72963	gizzard	no organophosphate detected	detection limit	0.5	mg/kg
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Analysis : rodenticide analysis suite

72963	liver	no rodenticide detected	detection limit	0.03	mg/kg
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Conclusion

It was suspected that this buzzard 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 alphachloralose in the kidney of this buzzard. The amount found is significant and is likely to be the cause of death of the buzzard. At present, the source of the alphachloralose is uncertain and abuse is suspected, but this incident occurred sometime before it was reported to WAG.

The further samples submitted have been tested. The Pest X container was confirmed to be alphachloralose and this was also found in the container labelled Emtryl. Residues of alphachloralose were confirmed in all the partridge carcasses tested, but the amount found in one of these was small. The carcase with the small residue was from one of the birds being carried by the gamekeeper. Alphachloralose has been applied to partridge carcasses and some was also not stored in the original container. Therefore, it appears that abuse of alphachloralose has occurred at this location.

This replaces the earlier restricted report issued on the 9 June 2008.