

# WILDLIFE INCIDENT UNIT

63/23



Original thinking... applied

## WILDLIFE INCIDENT REPORT

INCIDENT NUMBER 63/23  
PART OF STUDY WIIS23  
REGIONAL NUMBER W/23/12  
OTHER REFERENCES 28-B0073-06-23, 28-M0074-06-23, 28-B0071-06-23  
SENDER APHA Carmarthen VIC  
LOCATION Aberhosan  
Powys  
GRID REFERENCE SN7998  
INCIDENT DATE 15 June 2023  
SUSPECTED CAUSE OF INCIDENT unknown  
DATE OF REPORT 14 September 2023

REPORTING OFFICER [REDACTED]

SIGNED [REDACTED]

### NUMBERS AND SPECIES INVOLVED

2 wood mouse bait  
2 tawny owl chicks  
1 house sparrow

### COPIED TO

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

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Samples received		Date received	Sample identifier	
101055	house sparrow bait	13/7/23	APHA ref 28-B0071-06-23	
101056	wood mouse bait	13/7/23	APHA ref 28-M0074-06-23	
101057	wood mouse bait	13/7/23	APHA ref 28-M0074-06-23	
101058	tawny owl chick	13/7/23	APHA ref 28-B0073-06-23	
101058	tawny owl chick	tissues	13/7/23	APHA ref 28-B0073-06-23
101059	tawny owl chick	13/7/23	APHA ref 28-B0073-06-23	
101059	tawny owl chick	tissues	13/7/23	APHA ref 28-B0073-06-23

## Summary of field data

Two well fed tawny owl chicks in a nest box died within hours of each other. The informant had a camera on the nest box and noticed that the chicks had died. Concerned they may have died from rodenticide poisoning the informant collected the chicks and took them to the Wales Veterinary Science Centre (WVSC). A dead wood mouse and a house sparrow were found in the nest box and were collected by the informant. This is a rural area surrounded by arable fields with some livestock farming. There are patches of woodland in the area.

## Summary of post mortem report

Two tawny owl chicks were submitted dead for post-mortem examination. Oro-pharyngeal and cloacal swabs were taken for AI testing, no viral RNA was detected. Both chick 1 and chick 2 were of unknown sex and weight in fair body condition with moderate autolysis. A post-mortem had already been carried out by WVSC. The peritoneal cavities of both chicks were open from the ribs to the cloaca and the gizzards were open. The Stomach contents were in universal tubes labelled 32-B0017-05-23 1 and 2. Both tubes contained a firm dry mat of hair and fine fibre. The intestinal contents were brown and pasty. Other organ systems examined were unremarkable. The endocrine, genital and lymphoreticular systems were not examined. Postmortem examination was limited as the birds had been opened up previously. The contents of the universal pots and intestinal contents suggest the chicks had been eating prior to death. There were no other significant findings. Two mice and a sparrow were found in the nest box and submitted as suspect bait (28-M0074-06-23 and 28-B0071-06-23).

## Analysis : chloralose-alpha

101056	whole	no chloralose-alpha detected	detection limit	0.1	µg
101058	liver	no chloralose-alpha detected	detection limit	0.02	mg/kg
101059	liver	no chloralose-alpha detected	detection limit	0.005	mg/kg

## Analysis : metaldehyde & carb (LC) analysis suite

101056	whole	no metaldehyde & carb (LC) detected	detection limit	0.2	µg
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## Analysis : rodenticide analysis suite

101056	whole	no rodenticide detected	detection limit	0.1	µg
101058	liver	no rodenticide detected	detection limit	0.02	mg/kg
101059	liver	no rodenticide detected	detection limit	0.005	mg/kg

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## Conclusion

It was suspected that these owl chicks had been poisoned, given that they were from the same nest box, and had been well fed. The field report indicates that there was one wood mouse found in the nest box with a house sparrow, but the post mortem indicated that there were two mice and one house sparrow in the nest box. Two mice were received at the Fera lab for testing. It was thought that the wood mice and house sparrow found in the nest box may have been a source of poison. Rodenticide poisoning was suspected so laboratory analysis for chloralose and anticoagulant rodenticides only was undertaken on the liver of the owl chicks, and on a surface wash of one of the field mice, which was intact. However, no residues from the compound groups tested for were found. The cause of death of these owl chicks remains uncertain.

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