



Pathology Consultation Report – University of Florida

Submitting institution: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Contact person: Allen M. Foley, Ph.D. Wildlife Biologist Patient name/number:	Species: <i>Caretta caretta</i>	
	Sex: Female	Age: Subadult
	Path number: None	
	Date submitted: 6/20/06	Copy to:
	Contact information: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Fish and Wildlife Research Institute Jacksonville Field Laboratory 6134 Authority Avenue, Building 200 Jacksonville, Florida 32221 Tel. 904-573-3930 Fax. 904-573-4982	

Strand date: 06/05/06	Death date: 06/05/06	STSSN_ID: JMS2006060501
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Case summary:

Synopsis of relevant reports and correspondence: This turtle was caught by the relocation trawler "Jana Lin" and was found to be lethargic and unresponsive. Resuscitation was unsuccessful. See incident report and incidental take form for further information.

Necropsy was performed at the Marine Mammal Pathobiology Laboratory in St. Petersburg, Florida. The carcass was stored frozen and thawed prior to examination.

Gross findings:

General: Examined is a subadult female loggerhead turtle in good nutritional condition. The carcass has been previously frozen and there is a moderate degree of postmortem autolysis. Adipose stores are ample and the body is well-muscled.

Integument: Rare small barnacles are adhered to the integument of the head and extremities.

Musculoskeletal: No significant findings.

Coelomic cavity: The coelomic cavity contains approximately 500 mls of dark red fluid. All visceral organs are discolored and have a reddish tinge (postmortem change).

Adrenal glands: No significant findings.

Gall bladder: No significant findings.

Liver: No significant findings.

Spleen: No significant findings.

Kidneys: No significant findings.

Urinary bladder: No significant findings.

Gonads: Immature ovaries.

Thyroid gland: Small numbers of spirorchiid trematode (*Neospiroorchis* sp.) eggs are scattered throughout the gland.

Parathyroid glands: Not examined.

Thymus: No significant findings.

Respiratory: The larynx, trachea and bronchi are clear. The lungs are mildly congested and diffusely light and soft.

Cardiovascular: No significant findings.

Digestive tract: There is a small shallow ulcer on the tip of the tongue that measures 0.4 cm in diameter. Also, a small (0.3 cm diameter) ulcer is present at the junction of the esophagus and stomach and is covered by tan exudate. The stomach contains fragments of large hermit crabs and partially digested segments of a hollow viscus. Additional hermit crabs and large portions of gastropod are present within the small and large intestine. The distal colon contains well-formed green-brown fecal material. Rare spirorchiid trematode eggs are scattered within the submucosa of the entire small and large intestine.

Nervous system: Four small spirorchiid trematode egg masses (largest measures 2.0 x 1.0 mm) (*Neospiroorchis* sp.) are multifocally distributed within the meninges over the forebrain and there are 3-5 associated adult spirorchiids within meningeal vessels.

Final Diagnoses (gross examination only):

1. BODY AS A WHOLE: HISTORY OF RECENT CAPTURE IN TRAWLER NET
2. BODY AS A WHOLE: UNDETERMINED CAUSE OF DEATH
3. BRAIN, MENINGES: SPIRORCHIIDIASIS (*NEOSPIRORCHIS* SP.) (SMALL NUMBERS)
4. THYROID GLAND: SPIRORCHIIDIASIS (*NEOSPIRORCHIS* SP.) (SMALL NUMBERS)
5. TONGUE: FOCAL ULCER
6. ESOPHAGEAL-GASTRIC JUNCTION: FOCAL ULCER

Comment:

Assessment of this case was limited to gross examination due to autolysis and prior freezing. A definitive cause of death could not be determined. Given the circumstances of death, primary considerations include asphyxia associated with submersion, occult trauma, exertional injury or combination thereof. Although water was observed to flow from the mouth by field personnel, there was no evidence of seawater aspiration in the lungs or airways. In addition,

there was no gross evidence of trauma upon complete postmortem examination, which included evaluation of the central nervous system. Nutritional condition was excellent and the turtle had fed very recently, which are indicators that activity was normal within the recent interval. Also, there was no gross evidence of significant underlying disease to indicate that the health of this turtle was compromised prior to the cause of death. Small numbers of spirorchiid trematodes were observed in the meninges, thyroid gland and gastrointestinal tract. These parasites are very common and the numbers observed in this case are interpreted as within background levels (incidental) for a wild loggerhead turtle. The small ulcers on the tongue and esophagus were very minimal findings and were not significant. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Prepared by:

Brian A Stacy, DVM, Diplomate ACVP
Small Animal Clinical Sciences
University of Florida
College of Veterinary Medicine
StacyB@mail.vetmed.ufl.edu
(352) 392-4700 ext. 5788