



Rounds Notes is a monthly report from Sea Rogers Williams VMD, the views expressed are not necessarily that of the National Marine Life Center. Information in Rounds Notes should be considered confidential and used solely to benefit the health of aquatic animals everywhere.

November 6, 2008

Rounds Notes 3: 5- 6 (2008)

Headlines News: Takin' a bite out of ~~time~~ brine

It took some doing but we finally have all the Diamond back terrapins eating or at least mouthing at food. Thanks to Brian and JoAnne for their hard work, cheerleading the volunteers, and championing the efforts. Also thanks to Don Lewis for walking us through this difficult time with the hatchlings. Initially, twice a day the terrapins are placed into feeding bowls and offered food items. Brownie is the smallest and slowest on the uptake terrapin we have, and

getting this species to start eating is a challenge. Brian set-up a live incubator to raise sea monkeys to stimulate their appetites. As it turns out their not actually primates, but a crustacean named *Artemia salina*, and the movement seem to help our terrapins find their way to eat.

The Diamond backs are classic omnivores of their marshy homes, and will eat a variety of food items. We will continue to monitor weight and size, some initial weight loss was inevitable but weights have stabilized for Blackie and Blueberry.

We've also purchased a min/max thermometer and record humidity in their environment daily. Brian also made little huts that they can use to control their body temperature.



Sea Turtles



Brian has been hard at work getting two interim sea turtles systems and multiple tanks ready if we are called upon to help with a high demand for tank space with this year's cold stun sea turtle season, which has already started. An injured and cold Kemp's is at the New England Aquarium in critical shape. With mild weather and a slow steady drop in the temperature of Cape Cod Bay it's hard to know how many sea turtles will require assistance and rehabilitation this year, we'll find out soon enough.

Sea Turtles at Large

No reports from Lavender, let's hope she calls home in the near future.

Red Bellied Cooters.

No problems here, these little ones are all eating and growing. We have started to offer ReptoMin an aquatic turtle supplement with calcium and vitamin C once a week. Water qualities are now done every Monday and we will establish a base line for this system, although the entire water is replaced frequently.

Safety Seals (health and safety tips around the center)

With terrapins in house the water cooler will be moved out of far corner in the terrapin room and into the conference / break room.

Under the Microscope

Several cases have been processed at the center this week, we received parasite samples from a Gervais beaked whale, which died in the surf in NJ from the Marine Mammal Stranding Center. This is a very rare event and provided a specimen that James Mead from the Smithsonian thought was in the best condition he had ever encountered. The cause of death was not determined, but no one seems to know for sure how the cement came to encase the old whales fluke.

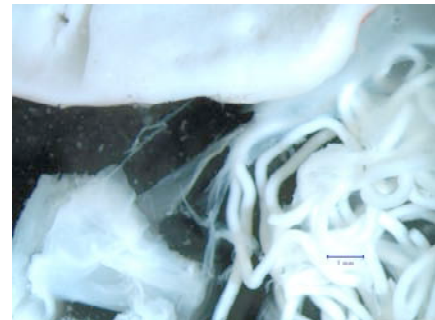
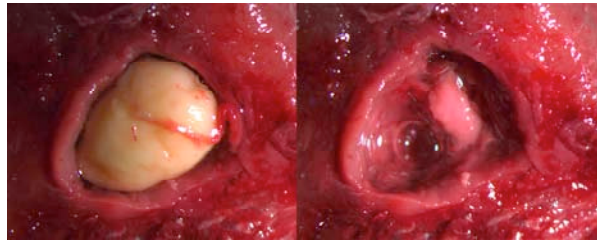
I examined a lung nodule but could not find the cause. The parasites were not related to the stranding and were the typical cetacean tetraphyllidean meroceroids

Phyllobothrium delphini and *Monorygma*

grimaldii. While this a very rare stranding, as are most beaked whales, these parasites have been reported in the literature to occur in this species, so not much new-to-science here. These cestode (tapeworm) larva (meroceroids) encyst in dolphins and whales (and occasionally seals) and will only complete their life cycle (i.e. actually turn into a tapeworm) in large pelagic sharks that eat these marine mammals.

What is kind of interesting-to-science concerning these parasites is that like most animals they are named for their adult form (the tape worm) which has never been described, or more likely is well know, but not related to their other earlier life stages. This means that these two parasites can't possibly be named correctly. It's common for a single species of a parasite to be given different formal scientific names for each life stage, but this is clearly an error. DNA may come to the rescue and it appears that they both belong to the same genus which is likely *Clistobothrium*. Formal proof and renaming of these parasites, which are well known to anyone who does a lot of cetacean necropsies, has not happened yet, but now you'll be well prepared for when it does.

I have also examined intestinal cysts from a Green sea turtle, a tapeworm from a Sea Raven, Gray seal lice, and some nematodes from the liver of a Kemp's sea turtle. It's good to have the lab space up and working.



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