

## CASE 2000-7

Submitted by: Alexandra I. Brower, DVM, and Barbara Crain, MD, PhD, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Baltimore, MD

### Clinical History:

This adult female Atlantic Bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*) was found stranded on Assateague Island. Physical exam revealed numerous healing skin lacerations located on the flukes, dorsum, and lateral body wall, suggestive of a shark attack in recent days to weeks. A focally extensive ulcerative dermatitis was located over the rostrum and peduncles. The animal was transported to the National Aquarium in Baltimore where she was treated for approximately five weeks. Her clinical course included a moderate to severe regenerative anemia, a non-healing ulcerative dermatitis, and a lymphopenia with rising eosinophilia. A month later, in spite of an excellent appetite and weight gain, the dolphin was seen suddenly struggling to breathe. Following this brief episode of apnea, she rolled over and sank to the bottom of the tank.

### Necropsy Findings:

Significant lesions found in the general necropsy included moderate focally extensive myocardial necrosis, lymphadenopathy, and granulomas in the lungs, stomach, spleen, lymph nodes and pancreas. Grossly, the brain showed an area of adherent, thickened meninges located along the ventral surface of the brainstem at the level of the left vestibulocochlear cranial nerve.

### Material Submitted:

One H&E stained section of ventral brainstem

### Points of Discussion:

1. Diagnosis
2. Causes of dolphin strandings