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Postmortem report for

INTERPRETATION:

1. Severe babesiosis with likely renal and hepatic complications
2. Protein-Energy Malnutrition

MACROSCOPIC PATHOLOGY

1. The carcass was labelled with hospital admission number A63866 and the postmortem performed at the wildlife unit of the SPCA Cape of Good Hope on the morning of the 22nd of July 2025.
2. The carcass was that of an adult Fox Terrier, intact female in very poor body condition. The paws are covered in sand.
3. The spinous process, ribs and spine of the scapula are prominent.
4. There are numerous ticks noted on the skin, some of which are moving.
5. The oral mucous membranes are severely pale and slightly yellow.
6. The mammary glands are developed but no milk is present.
7. The neck region shows broken hair shafts (consistent with a collar).
8. On opening the carcass, the entire carcass shows marked yellow discolouration (icterus).
9. The lungs are pink and well aerated.
10. The liver shows marked accentuated lobulation and yellow discolouration.
11. The spleen is markedly enlarged
12. The urinary bladder is filled with dark red coloured urine.
13. The blood smear shows 4+ babesia parasites within the erythrocytes. Only a mild monocytosis is noted.
14. No other pathology was noted in the remaining organs.

COMMENT

The carcass shows changes typical of severe babesiosis (anaemia, splenomegaly, icterus, haematuria) and this was positively confirmed on blood smear. Canine babesiosis is caused by infection with a protozoal parasite (*Babesia canis rossi*) which is typically transmitted via infected ticks. In this case, there were numerous ticks noted on the skin. Incubation period for the disease is 7-10 days after inoculation. Prevention is based on ectoparasite control with appropriate ectoparasiticide using the protocol appropriate for the product used. This is a progressive infection causing severe anaemia due to intravascular haemolysis of red blood cells. This can overwhelm both hepatic capacities to metabolise freed haemoglobin, (noted clinically as yellow icterus) and overwhelm the resorption capacity of the kidney (hence haematuria). In this case, the anaemia was severe and in long standing cases, complication become more common. There are numerous potential complications but, in this case, I suspect severe hepatopathy as well as possibly acute renal failure. Regardless, if left untreated, death is inevitable. The dog was also in very poor body condition. The exact cause is difficult to determine and may be

multifactorial. It could be secondary to lactation as well as a due to fever associated inappetence from the babesiosis. However, please establish if this bitch was given an adequate lactation diet prior to death.

Your sincerely

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