

TAMMAR WALLABY MORTALITY ALERT 21 JANUARY 2011

Mortality events have been reported in captive Tammar Wallabies (*Macropus eugenii*) in the Canberra (ACT) and Newcastle (NSW) region over the past 2 months, with clinical signs and post mortem findings similar to Tammar Sudden Death Syndrome which has been previously investigated by the Australian Registry of Wildlife Health (The Registry) (Rose et al in press).

Date of onset: November 2010

Location: 1 reserve and 2 research and breeding facilities in Canberra, ACT and 1 research and breeding facility at Newcastle, NSW

Mortality rates: ranging from 25 – 40% of total populations, ongoing mortality in some populations, no obvious age or sex predilection

Population husbandry: No recent changes in husbandry for any of the populations concerned, multiple large enclosures affected, only tammars effected despite co-location with other macropods in some instances, reportedly high incidence of mosquitoes, midges and rats in some locations

Clinical signs: sudden death, moribund and paddling (rare)

Gross pathology: accelerated autolysis, excellent body condition, no lesions, pulmonary haemorrhages, or multisystemic haemorrhages

Tammar Sudden Death Syndrome (TSDS) has been documented in multiple outbreaks of mortality in Tammar Wallabies from NSW, QLD and ACT since 1998. The causative agent has been identified as a virus from the Orbivirus genus. A second event was described from the western Sydney region in December 2007. Orbiviruses may be spread by midges and mosquitoes and mortality events are associated with the increase in biting arthropods following periods of high rainfall.

Sudden death, mass mortality in multiple locations following heavy rainfall, a lack of clinical symptoms and gross post mortem findings from the current mortality events are consistent with previous outbreaks. Although most animals have been found devoid of post mortem lesions, a proportion of animals have pulmonary haemorrhage or multisystemic haemorrhage. Further investigations are underway to confirm the diagnosis in these recent mortality events.

Please contact the Registry if you have any cases of sudden mortality in Tammar Wallabies (arwh@zoo.nsw.gov.au). Please also report the event to your state or territory Australian Wildlife Health Network representative (www.wildlifehealth.org.au).