



Cetacean Necropsy

Step by Step Checklist

1 External evaluation

1. Take a full set of external pictures ----- ☐
2. Take all external measurements ----- ☐
3. External evaluation (condition, nutrition, sex, skin, eyes, oral cavity) ----- ☐

2 Remove external layers

4. Remove the skin, blubber & mammary gland (formalin, frozen) ----- ☐
5. Check for parasites in the blubber and fascia (70% Eth) ----- ☐
6. Collect the prescapular LN (formalin, frozen) ----- ☐
7. Remove the scapula (frozen for x rays) ----- ☐
8. Remove & sample the epaxial muscles (formalin, frozen) ----- ☐

3 Internal evaluation

In situ evaluation & organ removal

9. Open the abdominal cavity ----- ☐
10. Check for thoracic negative pressure (puncture the diaphragm) ----- ☐
11. Open the thorax (cut the ribs) ----- ☐
12. Open the pericardial sac ----- ☐
13. Take picture (tricavitary view) ----- ☐
14. Reflect the tongue ----- ☐
15. Cut the hyoid apparatus, collect thyroid gland (formalin) ----- ☐
16. Collect the mandibular LN (formalin, frozen) ----- ☐
17. Remove the pluck (tongue, esophagus, trachea, lungs, & heart) ----- ☐
18. Collect a sample of thoracic rete mirabile (formalin, frozen) ----- ☐
19. Remove the intestines, stomach and spleen ----- ☐
20. Remove the liver and diaphragm ----- ☐
21. Collect the adrenal glands (formalin) ----- ☐
22. Remove the kidneys ----- ☐
23. Remove the urinary bladder, uterus/prostate, & gonads ----- ☐
 - a. Collect urine if present (yes __, no __) ----- ☐

Organ evaluation and sampling

24. Thoracic pluck
 - a. Tongue (formalin) ----- ☐
 - b. Esophagus (formalin) ----- ☐
 - c. Trachea and laryngeal tonsil (formalin, frozen) ----- ☐
 - d. Lungs, pulmonary LN (formalin, frozen), (parasites frozen, 70% Eth) ----- ☐
 - e. Heart (formalin, frozen) ----- ☐
 - f. Thymus (if present) (formalin, frozen) ----- ☐



25. Liver (formalin, frozen) ----- ☐
26. Diaphragm (formalin) ----- ☐
27. Urinary system
- a. Kidneys (formalin, frozen), urinary bladder (formalin)----- ☐
28. Reproductive system
- a. Females:
- i. Uterus (formalin, frozen) ----- ☐
- ii. Ovaries (formalin frozen) ----- ☐
- iii. Placenta (formalin, frozen) ----- ☐
- b. Males:
- i. Testis (formalin, frozen) ----- ☐
- ii. Penis (formalin, frozen) ----- ☐
- iii. Prostate (formalin, frozen) ----- ☐
29. Gastrointestinal system and spleen:
- a. Spleen (formalin, frozen) ----- ☐
- b. Stomach:
- i. Content (frozen) ----- ☐
- ii. Parasites (70% ethanol) ----- ☐
- iii. Wall of S1, S2, S3 (formalin) ----- ☐
- c. Intestines, pancreas, mesenteric lymph node:
- i. Duodenum and pancreas (formalin, frozen) ----- ☐
- ii. Mid intestine (jejunum, ileum) (formalin, frozen) ----- ☐
- iii. Distal intestine (colon, rectum) (formalin, frozen) ----- ☐
- iv. Mesenteric lymph node (formalin, frozen) ----- ☐

Head and brain

30. Collect CSF at the AO joint (frozen) ----- ☐
31. Open AO joint, collect fluid and swab surface (frozen) ----- ☐
32. Collect synovium, joint capsule (formalin, frozen) ----- ☐
33. Extract the brain (half formalin, half frozen) ----- ☐
34. Collect CSF from lateral ventricle (frozen) ----- ☐
35. Eyes (1 formalin, 1 frozen) ----- ☐
36. Ear (formalin), parasites (70% Eth) ----- ☐
37. Pterygoid sinus (formalin, frozen), parasites (70% Eth) ----- ☐