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Difficult labours with fatal consequences in bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*) from the Adriatic Sea

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Introduction

difficult labour (dystocia) - important role in human and veterinary obstetrics

- main causes: abnormal fetal positions, fetal abnormalities, disorders in the form and function of the reproductive tract of the mother
- in wild animals proceed unassisted and they can end fatal for the fetus, mother or both

Bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*) in the Croatian part of the Adriatic Sea

- the only resident marine mammal species
- number of animals: around 200 adult individuals and around 20 cubs
- estimated number of birth per year in population: between 15 and 20 dolphins



Study area, Croatian part of the Adriatic Sea is marked red

Materials and method

- since 1990 till 2010 - we examined 139 carcasses of the bottlenose dolphin found in the Croatian part of the Adriatic Sea

Results and discussion

- dystocia with fatal consequences was observed in five cases (females ranged from 6 to 22 years):
 - abnormal fetal positions (dolphin No 8 and 159)
 - fetal congenital abnormality (dolphin No 183)
 - dystocia could not be observed but there were evidences of a difficult labour in form of a prolapsed uterus (dolphin No 17) and prolapsed vagina and urinary bladder (dolphin No 35)



Dolphin No 8



Dolphin No 17



Dolphin No 183



Dolphin No 159

- estimated total number of births of bottlenose dolphins in Croatian part of the Adriatic Sea since 1990 was between 270 and 360

- calculation: dystocia with fatal consequences appears in between 1.4% to 1.9% of all births in the bottlenose dolphin from the Croatian part in the Adriatic sea

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