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Dear

Buzzard, wood mouse and red legged partridge remains found near Valehouse Reservoir, Derbyshire, and the possibility of secondary poisoning in this incident

Thank you for your enquiry and interest in this case. You ask for advice from Natural England as to whether the death of this buzzard could have been caused by secondary poisoning resulting from the buzzard consuming a mouse which had died from a legitimate rodent control programme.

The evidence in this case does not suggest the buzzard died from secondary poisoning arising from the legitimate use of an alphachloralose containing rodenticide.

Chemical analysis of the dead buzzard identified residues of chloralose at a level likely to have caused death. Chloralose was also detected on the remains of the Red legged partridge, suggesting it was a poison bait.

The dead wood mouse found near the buzzard had not been scavenged and thus was not the source of poisoning. Residues of anticoagulant rodenticides (Difenacoum, Brodifacoum and Bromadiolone) detected in the Buzzard were at very low levels and not consistent with poisoning.

The evidence therefore suggests that the Buzzard died as the result of the deliberate and illegal use of a high concentration of chloralose on a partridge bait, rather than through secondary poisoning from a different legally applied source.

Currently authorised low concentration (approximately 4%) alpha-chloralose containing rodenticides are authorised for indoor use only, and lead to the rapid immobilisation of mice (due to the narcotic effect). This in conjunction with the distance of the Buzzard from the nearest building (approximately 500 m) does not support a conclusion of secondary poisoning via an alpha-chloralose treated mouse.

I hope this provides the information you require.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "E.J. Blane" followed by a diagonal slash.

Dr Ed Blane
National Coordinator for the Wildlife Incident Investigation Scheme
HM Inspector Health and Safety Executive