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PRELIMINARY TEST RESULTS

This afternoon we received results from initial domoic acid tests which indicate some levels of domoic acid in the pelicans. While 3 out of the 6 birds tested were positive for domoic acid, we cannot conclude that the neurotoxin is the primary cause of the widespread illness.

Samples of phytoplankton collected recently from the waters off of Santa Barbara to Newport Beach were also tested. 5 out of 14 samples indicated very low concentrations.

These are the first of many test results expected. Additional blood and tissue samples are being tested and we anticipate more information within the next two weeks.

“We are very appreciative of the rapid test results from the Dave Caron Lab at USC. We believe these results are significant but do not explain all the signs we are seeing in the pelicans. We are seeing a number of conditions that are not typical of domoic acid toxicity or a domoic acid event. Therefore, we are continuing to collect and test samples, keeping an open mind and considering all possibilities,” according to Dr. Heather Nevill, DVM, IBRRC’s veterinarian leading the groups investigation.

Due to the great distribution of ailing pelicans (Baja to WA), and the fact that most of the pelicans are thin, as opposed to being of good body weight (typical in a domoic acid event), this indicates to us that domoic acid is likely playing a secondary role to a larger problem.

We will keep everyone apprised as information comes in.

To locate the nearest rescue organization or to report dead pelicans the public is encouraged to phone the California wildlife hotline 866-WILD-911.

To date we have recorded 265 reports of dead or ailing pelicans from Baja California, Mexico to WA with over 100 brown pelicans receiving treatment.