ISSN: 2456-2912
NAAS Rating (2025): 4.61
VET 2026; 11(1): 487-488

www.veterinarypaper.com
Received: 28-10-2025
Accepted: 29-11-2025

Dr. Ezhil Vadhana P
Veterinary Assistant Surgeon,
Department of Animal Husbandry,
Tamil Nadu, India

Karthi A
Veterinary Assistant Surgeon,
Department of Animal Husbandry,
Tamil Nadu, India

Sasikala R
Veterinary Assistant Surgeon,
Department of Animal Husbandry,
Tamil Nadu, India

Mahalakshmi N
Veterinary Assistant Surgeon,
Department of Animal Husbandry,
Tamil Nadu, India

Vignesh K
Veterinary Assistant Surgeon,
Department of Animal Husbandry,
Tamil Nadu, India

Corresponding Author:
Dr. Ezhil Vadhana P
Veterinary Assistant Surgeon,
Department of Animal Husbandry,
Tamil Nadu, India

Silent victim of poaching: Postmortem findings in a gunshot-dead spotted deer: A case report

Ezhil Vadhana P, Karthi A, Sasikala R, Mahalakshmi N and Vignesh K

DOI: https://www.doi.org/10.22271/veterinary.2026.v11.i1g.3004

Abstract
A female spotted deer was brought to postmortem examination by the forest department officer and external examination revealed the presence of 3 penetrating wound near the cranio-facial region. Postmortem findings suggested that death of the animal might be due to hypovolemic shock.

Keywords: Spotted deer, traumatic injury, hypovolemic, hypovolemic shock

Introduction
The term wildlife includes both flora and fauna in its natural environment, which reserves the most important element for ecological and biodiversity balance of earth (Rana and Kumar, 2023) [2]. Its constant depletion due to human activities like poaching and trafficking of wildlife species, creates a major disturbance in ecological balance. Slaughtering deer for venison and antlers and road traffic accidents (Ramanamurthy *et al*., 2021) [1], pose a huge risk in its population. The present case study reports the postmortem findings in a gunshot-dead spotted deer.

Case history and observation
A female spotted deer was brought to post mortem examination (Figure 1) by the forest department officials stating that the deer was shot dead and found alongside the road. Upon external postmortem examination, three deep penetrating wounds were noticed on the left cranio-facial region.

Materials and Methods
Postmortem examination was carried out and several gross lesions were recorded in various organs. During postmortem examination, impression smears of various organs were taken, air dried and giemsa staining was performed.

Results and Discussions
External examination revealed the presence of two deep penetrating wound (Figure 2) on the left side of maxilla and nasal bone, and another deep punctured wound on the left jugular furrow which in turn was mutilating the underlying structures. Punctured wound was noticed on the anterior part of the oesophagus in the neck region, and the oesophageal mucosa was found to be haemorrhagic. No traces of gun powder or gun particles could be traced. Heart chambers contained scanty blood clots. Lung was pale in color with multifocal areas of emphysema. Liver was pale in color. Capsule of the kidney could be peeled off easily. Rumen contained partially digested ingesta and the intestine was ballooned with semi-solid ingesta. Lesions suggested that death of the animal might be due to hypovolemic shock. Impression smears revealed postmortem invaders of pathological significance.

Fig 1: A female spotted deer brought for postmortem examination

Fig 2: External examination showing gunshot wound on the cranio-facial and neck region

Conclusion

Penetrating and punctured wounds sequel to gunshot, resulted in the rhexis of major blood vessels (jugular vein, common carotid artery) in the neck region leading to blood loss and resulting in hypovolemic shock. In addition, internal lesions indicated that the organs underwent hypovolemic shock, which in turn lead to death of the animal.

Conflict of Interest

Not available

Financial Support

Not available

Reference

1. Ramanamurty RV, Sujatha K, Nasreen A. Postmortem findings in an accidentally injured spotted deer (*Cervus axis*): A case report. Pharma Innov J. 2021;SP-10(9):364-366.
2. Rana AK, Kumar N. Current wildlife crime (Indian scenario): major challenges and prevention approaches. Biodivers Conserv. 2023;32(5):1473-1491.
3. Munro R, Munro HMC. Some challenges in forensic veterinary pathology: A review. J Comp Pathol. 2013;149(1):57-73.
4. Cooper JE, Cooper ME. Introduction to veterinary and comparative forensic medicine. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing; 2007.
5. Merck Veterinary Manual. Shock (hypovolemic shock) in animals. Kenilworth (NJ): Merck & Co.; 2018.
6. Fowler ME, Miller RE. Zoo and wild animal medicine. 8th Ed. St. Louis: Elsevier; 2019.

How to Cite This Article
Vadhana EP, Karthi A, Sasikala R, Mahalakshmi N, Vignesh K. Silent victim of poaching: Postmortem findings in a gunshot-dead spotted deer: A case report. International Journal of Veterinary Sciences and Animal Husbandry. 2026;11(1):487-488.