

Algal bloom wildlife post-mortem report



Government
of South Australia

Department for
Environment and Water

Species – Shy albatross

Date collected – 29 March 2026

Location – Basham Beach Lookout, Port Elliot.

History relating to the animal

An adult female shy albatross (*Thalassarche cauta*) was found dead and collected from Basham Beach Lookout, Port Elliot on 29 March 2026.

Clinical examination

The bird was already dead and so could not be examined prior to death.

Necropsy

The bird was in poor body condition and weighed 3.6 kg. There was marked atrophy (wasting) of both pectoral muscles (chest muscles used for flight). There were moderate post-mortem autolytic changes (decomposition after death). There was no ingesta (food material) in the proventriculus (bird's upper gut) or ventriculus (muscular part of gut that grinds food, often containing stones). The intestines contained scant pasty ingesta (food material). There were multiple dark black plaques sized 1-2 mm in diameter over the surface of the right lung.

Tissues were collected for histopathology (looking at tissues under the microscope for more detailed information), and testing for avian influenza, Newcastle disease, and brevetoxins and other algal biotoxins (a possibility due to the algal bloom).

Histopathology

Samples from every major body system were examined under the microscope. Tapeworms were found in the small intestine. The other organs examined were unremarkable (no evidence of disease processes).

Virology

Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing for avian influenza and Newcastle disease was negative.

Brevetoxins

No samples were above the limits of reporting.

Other algal biotoxins

No samples were above the limits of reporting.

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Summary

An adult female shy albatross was found dead. Laboratory examination revealed the bird had long-term weight loss, but the cause of weight loss and death could not be determined. Tapeworms (gut parasites) were found in the small intestines, which is a common finding in wild birds. It is suspected that poor nutrition contributed to the animal's weakened condition, possibly due to reduced food availability in the environment, although this could not be confirmed. Testing for avian influenza and Newcastle disease was negative. Brevetoxins and other algal biotoxins were also not detected.

PATH RESULTS: ALBATROSS SHY, (Wi) [REDACTED]

From [REDACTED]

Date Thu 02/04/2026 3:30 PM

To [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Report Addressee:

[REDACTED]

Tested on 01/04/26
Reported on 02/04/26 16:00
Referred on 31/03/26 **by:** [REDACTED]

Owner:
ALBATROSS SHY
BASHAM BEACH LOOKOUT
PORT ELLIOT 5212

Animal/s:
Wild Birds

DOB: N/A

Collected: 31/03/26 00:25

Subm.No: [REDACTED]

Lab No.: [REDACTED]

Samples tested as received

NECROPSY REPORT
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS 2/4/2026

CLINICAL HISTORY

This is a summary of the clinical history from the request form. Please refer to the request form for the full clinical history.

One shy albatross was collected on 29/3/2026 at Basham Beach lookout Pt Elliot.

SAMPLES SUBMITTED

One dead adult female shy albatross, *Thalassarche cauta*

NECROPSY FINDINGS

The bird is in poor body condition, weighs 3.6 kg and there is marked atrophy of the pectoral muscles. There are moderate post-mortem autolytic changes. There is no ingesta in the proventriculus or ventriculus. The intestinal tract contains scant pasty ingesta. Multifocally over the serosal surface of the right lung there are variably sized 1-2 mm diameter dark black plaques.

GROSS SUMMARY

Chronic weight loss
Possible bacterial or mycotic pneumonia

SAMPLES COLLECTED & TESTING

Formalin-fixed tissues will be processed for histopathology.
A quote for biotoxin testing (lipophilic toxins, paralytic shellfish toxins and brevetoxins) on liver, heart, lung, kidney, brain are pending. There was insufficient weight of spleens (each less than 500mg) for biotoxin testing.

Liver, spleen, heart, lung, kidney, brain, cloacal and tracheal swabs in virus transport medium are stored at -80 degrees Celsius

COMMENTS

Chronic weight loss and possible bacterial / mycotic pneumonia contributed to morbidity from the bird but the cause for the weight loss and the bird's death are not found based on gross examination. Could decreased feed abundance associated with the variable *Karenia* sp. algal bloom be a contributing factor to the weight loss. Histopathology will clarify if there is bronchopneumonia.

[REDACTED]

Report Addressee:

[REDACTED]

Tested on 01/04/26
Reported on 02/04/26 16:00
Referred on 31/03/26 **by:**

[REDACTED]

Owner:
ALBATROSS SHY
BASHAM BEACH LOOKOUT
PORT ELLIOT 5212

Animal/s:
Wild Birds

DOB: N/A

Collected: 31/03/26 00:25

Subm.No: [REDACTED]

Lab No.: [REDACTED]

Samples tested as received

COMMENTS 2/4/2026

Cloacal and tracheal samples will be tested by AI and NDV PCR.

[REDACTED]

Specialist Veterinary Anatomic Pathologist

[REDACTED]

Validated by [REDACTED]

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PATH RESULTS: ALBATROSS SHY, (Wi) [REDACTED]

From [REDACTED]

Date Tue 28/04/2026 7:30 PM

To [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Report Addressee:

[REDACTED]

Tested on 01/04/26
Reported on 28/04/26 20:00
Referred on 31/03/26 **by:** [REDACTED]

Owner:
ALBATROSS SHY
BASHAM BEACH LOOKOUT
PORT ELLIOT 5212

Animal/s:
Wild Birds

DOB: N/A

Collected: 31/03/26 00:25

Subm.No: [REDACTED]

Lab No.: [REDACTED]

Samples tested as received

HISTOPATHOLOGY

REF: [REDACTED]

CLINICAL HISTORY

1 x Shy Albatross collected on 29/3/26 at 3:27pm at Basham Beach Lookout, Port Elliot.
Collected by DEW Ranger in fresh condition.
Stored in fridge and arriving at [REDACTED] via overnight courier transport on 31/3/26.

MACROSCOPY

Pot labelled [REDACTED] and organs listed below

A = heart + muscle + ovary

B = kidney + liver + lung

C = proventriculus, ventriculus, trachea, duodenum, jejunum, colonD - G = brain

Ed

MICROSCOPY

Jejunum: There are cross sections of cestodes in the jejejunum.

Those organs not described are unremarkable.

DIAGNOSIS

Jejunum: Enteric cestodiasis

COMMENTS

There are no remarkable findings to explain the cause of weight loss and death. Enteric cestodiasis is a normal finding in albatross.

[REDACTED]

Specialist Veterinary Anatomic Pathologist

[REDACTED]

Validated by

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Report Addressee:

[REDACTED]

Tested on 01/04/26
Reported on 28/04/26 20:00
Referred on 31/03/26 **by:**

[REDACTED]

Owner:
ALBATROSS SHY
BASHAM BEACH LOOKOUT
PORT ELLIOT 5212

Animal/s:
Wild Birds

DOB: N/A

Collected: 31/03/26 00:25

Subm.No: [REDACTED]

Lab No.: [REDACTED]

Samples tested as received

SUMMARY DIAGNOSIS
No diagnosis is concluded

COMMENTS
There are no remarkable findings to explain the cause of weight loss and death.

Biotoxin and brevetoxin testing is in progress.

[REDACTED]

Specialist Veterinary Anatomic Pathologist

[REDACTED]

Validated by [REDACTED]

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PATH RESULTS: ALBATROSS SHY, (Wi) [REDACTED]

From [REDACTED]

Date Thu 02/04/2026 5:30 PM

To [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Report Addressee:

Tested on 01/04/26
Reported on 02/04/26 18:00
Referred on 31/03/26 **by:** [REDACTED]

Owner:
ALBATROSS SHY
BASHAM BEACH LOOKOUT
PORT ELLIOT 5212

Animal/s:
Wild Birds

DOB: N/A

Collected: 31/03/26 00:25

Subm.No: [REDACTED]

Lab No.: [REDACTED]

Samples tested as received

MOLECULAR DIAGNOSTICS

INFLUENZA A RNA PCR (REAL TIME REVERSE TRANSCRIPTASE)

Specimen type: Cloacal & Tracheal swab aggregated in VTM

SPECIMEN ID	Type A	H5	H7
ALBATROS	Not detected		

Validated by [REDACTED] Laboratory Scientist.

ALBATROSS SHY
BASHAM BEACH LOOKOUT
PORT ELLIOT 5212

Wild Birds

DOB: N/A

11/11/2016

██████████

Samples tested as received

MOLECULAR DIAGNOSTICS

NEWCASTLE DISEASE VIRUS RNA PCR (REAL TIME REVERSE TRANSCRIPTASE)

Specimen type: Cloacal & Tracheal Number of specimens: 1
 swab aggregated in VTM

SPECIMEN ID	F Gene	M Gene	L Gene
ALBATROS	Not detected	Not detected	Not detected

CERTIFICATE OF ANALYSIS

Customer:

Address:

Contact:

Submission Description:

Sample Received Date:

Contract Number:

Client Order Number:

Program/Quote Reference:

Avian

30/04/2026

Biotoxin and Brevotoxins

Sample(s) analysed as received. Sampling date and time data supplied by the client. The document shall not be reproduced except in full.

Additional information relating to this submission can be found in the sample receipt notification.

This report supersedes any previous reports with this submission number.

Many tests specify a holding time which gives the recommended timeframe by which a sample should be preserved/extracted and/or analysed after the sample is taken.

Holding time information can be found on the AST website <https://analyticalservices.tas.gov.au/our-services/containers-samples-and-submissions>.

Whilst every effort is made to analyse samples within these timeframes, situations can occur where this is not possible.

Where a test has been conducted outside the recommended sample holding time this should be taken into account when interpreting results.

The results in this report were authorised by:

Name

Position

Chemist

Test Information:

Method ID

Test Description

Date Commenced:

3411

Lipophilic Toxins in Shellfish by LC-MS/MS

09-06-2026

3411A

Brevetoxins in Shellfish by LC-MS/MS

02-06-2026

3416

PST in Biota by LC-MS/MS (Boundy Method)

09-06-2026

Chemistry Test Results (Biota - Food)			Sample Description	Lung	Kidney	Brain	Heart	Liver
			Sampled Date/ Time	31/03/26 0:00	31/03/26 0:00	31/03/26 0:00	31/03/26 0:00	31/03/26 0:00
Method ID	Analyte	Units		465250	465251	465252	465253	465254
3411	AZA1	mg/kg WMB		<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
	AZA2	mg/kg WMB		<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
	AZA3	mg/kg WMB		<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
	Domoic Acid	mg/kg WMB		<0.05	<0.05	<0.05	<0.05	<0.05
	DTX1 Free	mg/kg WMB		<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
	DTX1 Total	mg/kg WMB		<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
	DTX2 Free	mg/kg WMB		<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
	DTX2 Total	mg/kg WMB		<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
	GYM	mg/kg WMB		<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
	Homo-YTX	mg/kg WMB		<0.02	<0.02	<0.02	<0.02	<0.02
	OA Free	mg/kg WMB		<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
	OA Total	mg/kg WMB		<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
	PnTx-G	mg/kg WMB		<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
	PTX2	mg/kg WMB		<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
	SPX1	mg/kg WMB		<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
	Total DST	OA eq. mg/kg		<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
	YTX	mg/kg WMB		<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
3411A	Brevetoxin 1	mg/kg WMB		<0.10*	<0.10*	<0.10*	<0.10*	<0.10*
	Brevetoxin 2	mg/kg WMB		<0.02*	<0.02*	<0.02*	<0.02*	<0.02*
	Brevetoxin 3	mg/kg WMB		<0.02*	<0.02*	<0.02*	<0.02*	<0.02*
3416	C1	STX.2HCl eq. mg/kg		<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
	C2	STX.2HCl eq. mg/kg		<0.02	<0.02	<0.02	<0.02	<0.02
	C3	STX.2HCl eq. mg/kg		<0.02	<0.02	<0.02	<0.02	<0.02
	C4	STX.2HCl eq. mg/kg		<0.02	<0.02	<0.02	<0.02	<0.02
	dcGTX1	STX.2HCl eq. mg/kg		<0.02*	<0.02*	<0.02*	<0.02*	<0.02*
	dcGTX2	STX.2HCl eq. mg/kg		<0.02	<0.02	<0.02	<0.02	<0.02
	dcGTX3	STX.2HCl eq. mg/kg		<0.02	<0.02	<0.02	<0.02	<0.02

* NATA accreditation does not cover this result

Chemistry Test Results (Biota - Food)		Sample Description	Lung	Kidney	Brain	Heart	Liver
		Sampled Date/ Time	31/03/26 0:00	31/03/26 0:00	31/03/26 0:00	31/03/26 0:00	31/03/26 0:00
Method ID	Analyte	Units	465250	465251	465252	465253	465254
3416	dcGTX4	STX.2HCl eq. mg/kg	<0.02*	<0.02*	<0.02*	<0.02*	<0.02*
	dcNEO	STX.2HCl eq. mg/kg	<0.02	<0.02	<0.02	<0.02	<0.02
	dcSTX	STX.2HCl eq. mg/kg	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
	doSTX	STX.2HCl eq. mg/kg	<0.01*	<0.01*	<0.01*	<0.01*	<0.01*
	GTX1	STX.2HCl eq. mg/kg	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
	GTX2	STX.2HCl eq. mg/kg	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
	GTX3	STX.2HCl eq. mg/kg	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
	GTX4	STX.2HCl eq. mg/kg	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
	GTX5	STX.2HCl eq. mg/kg	<0.02	<0.02	<0.02	<0.02	<0.02
	GTX6	STX.2HCl eq. mg/kg	<0.02	<0.02	<0.02	<0.02	<0.02
	NEO	STX.2HCl eq. mg/kg	<0.02	<0.02	<0.02	<0.02	<0.02
	STX	STX.2HCl eq. mg/kg	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01
	Total PST	STX.2HCl eq. mg/kg	<0.10	<0.10	<0.10	<0.10	<0.10

* NATA accreditation does not cover this result