

On September the 19th a juvenile common seal (*Phoca vitulina*) was found on the river Ebro's delta. This is a protected area on the Catalanian coast where there have never been sightings of this species. Some fishermen saw the seal around 19:00h, resting on the sandy shore zone, and apparently it did not show any signs of harm. The official organization responsible for the assistance and rehabilitation of marine animals in Catalunya (Spain), CRAM Foundation, was alerted, but when the veterinarians and rescue team arrived to the site, the seal had returned to the water. Early the next morning, the rescue team came back to the area and were able to locate the seal nearby. They were able to assess its health state and they confirmed a very poor nutritional condition, weakness and alterations of its behaviour and respiratory pattern. They decided to take the seal urgently to the rehabilitation centre located in Premià de Mar (Barcelona) where they would be able to continue the assessment and start the appropriate treatments. Unfortunately the animal died en route to the rehabilitation centre so instead it was taken to the University (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona) where the pathology specialists could make the post mortem exam in order to find the cause of death.

The post-mortem exam revealed the seal was a young female weighing 15 kg and measuring 95 cm in length. It showed a serious intestinal impaction in the cecum, 26 cm long, fibrinous enteritis, a serious parasitism by nematodes in the stomach that produced a diffused gastritis and lung collapse. Further microbiology and histopathology exams are currently being carried out by experts on these subjects. The Common seal (*Phoca vitulina*) lives in Arctic and Subarctic waters of the Pacific and Atlantic seas and this event is completely unusual in the Mediterranean area, so further investigations are currently being carried out in order to find the causes by which the seal could travel to this latitude. It is unknown how a female that has not yet reached the adult state could be found in Catalanian waters.