

Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats



Standing Committee

Recommendation No. 9 (1987) of the standing committee on the protection of *Caretta Caretta* in Laganas bay, Zakynthos (Greece)

(Adopted by the Standing Committee on 11 December 1987)

The Standing Committee of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, acting under the terms of Article 14 of the convention,

Having regard to the aims of the convention to conserve wild flora and fauna and their natural habitats ;

Recalling that Article 3 provides that each Contracting Party shall take the necessary steps to promote national policies for the conservation of wild flora, wild fauna and natural habitats, with particular attention to endangered and vulnerable species, especially endemic ones, and endangered habitats ;

Recalling that Article 4, paragraph 3, provides that the Contracting Parties undertake to give special attention to the protection of areas that are of importance for the migratory species specified in Appendices II and III and which are appropriately situated in relation to migration routes, as wintering, staging, feeding, breeding or moulting areas ;

Considering that the loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*) is seriously endangered mainly as a result of habitat loss in its nesting grounds, which suffer important deterioration as a result of touristic activities ;

Recognising the capital importance of Laganas Bay beaches for the survival of *Caretta caretta*, as they hold the highest known concentration of nests of this species in the whole of the Mediterranean basin ;

Welcoming the recent undertakings to :

a. create, under the authority of the prefect, a commission for the management and control of the marine turtle resource, where all the appropriate interests and organisations are represented ;

b. assure that no new hotel is built at less than two hundred metres from the sea at Kalamaki and eastern Laganas ;

c. ban the use of speedboats in the whole of Laganas Bay and set speed limits and appropriate corridors for other boats ;

d. control the noise level of the discothèque on Sostis islet ;

e. not authorise any plans to create a fish farm in Laganas Bay unless adequate environmental impact studies prove that turtle nesting and hatchling survival would not be affected ;

f. develop further the collaboration with the Sea Turtle Protection Society, helping to finance adequately the necessary research and useful information activities it carries out at present ;

Recognising the efforts of the government of Greece to control touristic development in the area and its will to preserve the quality of Laganas Bay for successful *Caretta caretta* breeding ;

Recognising the need for the adequate enforcement of the present presidential decrees and ministerial decisions regulating human activities in Zakynthos.

Recommends that the Government of Greece embark without delay on the following actions :

1. Remove the prefabricated houses in Dafni ;
2. Remove walls and concrete platforms built in the optimal sites for turtle nesting at Kalamaki and eastern Laganas beaches unless these are supporting the soil of existing dwelling places ;
3. As a matter of priority, acquire the hundred-metre band closest to the beach limit, wherever this land is not developed, in Kalamaki and eastern Laganas, and a band of appropriate land width in Sekania and Dafni ;
4. Set the legal limits of the public land on all beaches at Laganas Bay ;
5. Remove trees and ban and penalise the use of deck chairs, sunshades and pedalos on the nesting beaches of Gerakas, Kalamaki, eastern Laganas and Marathonisi ;
6. Close the access of vehicles to the beaches from all roads and effectively enforce this ban ;
7. Replace existing lights shining on the beaches or reorientate them in such a way that their impact on turtles is minimised ;
8. Assess the potential of Laganas Bay (except western Laganas beach) to qualify for a stricter protection category, such as marine park, natural park, natural monument or other appropriate legal term ;
9. Reassess the potential impact of the development of the village of Kalamaki and neighbouring areas on sea turtle nesting.