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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE  
AND NATURAL HABITATS

**Standing Committee**

30<sup>th</sup> meeting  
Strasbourg, 6-9 December 2010

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**Follow-up of Recommendations**

**Implementation of Recommendation No. 66 (1998)  
on the conservation status of some nesting beaches for  
marine turtles in Turkey**

**REPORT BY THE NGO**

*Document prepared by:  
Medasset*

**MEDASSET****Mediterranean Association to Save the Sea Turtles****MARINE TURTLE CONSERVATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN****Summary of follow-up actions to the Complaint submitted  
to the Bern Convention on 02-09-2009:****Turkey: Loggerhead turtles (*Caretta caretta*) in Fethiye**

Submitted to:

The 30<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Convention on the Conservation  
of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention)

Meeting of the Bureau

March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2010

Following the submission of a complaint regarding sea turtle conservation in Fethiye, Turkey, which was discussed at the Meeting of the Bureau in September 2009 (T-PVS (2009) 12), MEDASSET wishes to inform the Bureau on the following actions taken:

- A short film, “Turkey’s Sea Turtles in Trouble”, was filmed during September 2009 for MEDASSET, featuring the threats to Fethiye nesting beaches and the lack of environmental protection.
- With the approval of the Bern Convention Secretariat, the film was shown during a side-event to the Delegates of the 29th Standing Committee Meeting in November 2009. Information on the complaint was also distributed to the Delegates.
- The short film will be shown at the 30th Annual International Sea Turtle Symposium (ISTS) in April 2010 in Goa, India.
- Copies of the short film have been sent to Turkish Authorities (cover letter attached):
  - Mr. Mustafa Akincioglu – Deputy of General Director, Ministry of Environment
  - Prof. Dr. Hasan Sarikaya – Undersecretary, Ministry of Environment
  - Prof. Dr. Kemal Yalinkilic – General Director, Gen. Directorate of National Parks and Game-Wildlife
  - Mr Reyhan Akarsu - Nature Conservation Department Director, Ministry of Environment and Forestry
  - Mrs. Beyza Untuna – Consul General of Turkey in Greece
- Prompted by the receipt of the short film, correspondence was exchanged with the President of the Turkish Environmental Protection Agency for Special Areas (attached).
- MEDASSET is launching a campaign focused on tour operators and hotels operating at Fethiye, bringing the case to their attention and requesting information and proposing actions to protect the environment they operate in.
- Further filming at Fethiye will take place in 2010.

Following the 2010 nesting season, MEDASSET will submit further information to the Meeting of the Bureau in September, regarding the destruction occurring at Fethiye due to unplanned construction and developments to accommodate tourism.

**Sea turtle conservation measures in Fethiye**  
**Brief Recommendations:**

- Beach furniture and sports equipment must be stacked after sunset at the back of the beach during the nesting season; they should be sparsely stacked so as to not hinder the movements of adult turtles and hatchlings.
- Complete removal of false carpeting and of wooden walkways from the beaches.
- Protection of nests in situ and delineation of the area for beach users.
- Placement of a sufficient number of signs at more appropriate and visible locations to provide information to foreign and local visitors on the SPA, the sea turtles and on correct practices.
- Guarding of the nesting beaches.
- Regulation and mitigation of sound and light pollution. All lights that impact the sea turtles must be appropriately shaded or turned off at night during the nesting and hatching season.
- Uprooting of the introduced Acacia trees.
- Prohibition of vehicle access on the nesting beaches at all times, using simple barriers, gates or densely spaced wooden posts.
- Prohibition of beach access during the night (as well as beach parties and bonfires) during the nesting and hatching season.
- Zoning of the marine area and application of boat anchoring restrictions and speed limits. Banning of motorised water sports (water skiing, jetskis, banana boats, etc.) during the nesting and hatching season.
- Regulation of fishing activities.
- Correct waste management, including removal of rubbish from the beach, biological treatment of the hotel's residual water and monitoring of any illegal residual water discharges into the sea.
- Removal of any illegal structures from the nesting beaches.
- Prior regulation of new developments and new constructions through EIAs and in accordance with international treaties ratified by Turkey.
- No new drydock/harbour facility should be constructed in Akgöl.
- Restoration of degraded wetlands around the nesting area and prohibition of any further destruction of the natural ecosystem and wetlands.

## Marine Turtle Conservation in the Mediterranean

**Update on Loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*) Conservation Monitoring  
in Fethiye, Turkey  
August 13th 2010**

Submitted to:

Bureau Meeting of the Convention on the Conservation  
of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention)

**MEDASSET - The Mediterranean Association to Save the Sea Turtles**

A complaint was submitted to the Bern Convention Secretariat in August 2009 and discussed at the Bureau Meeting in September 2009 regarding the severe degradation of the nesting beaches at Fethiye, Turkey, due to unplanned construction and developments to accommodate tourism, resulting in a severe decline of nest number (Ilgaz *et al* 2007). Fethiye is a Specially Protected Area (SPA) and among the 12 most important *Caretta caretta* nesting beaches in Turkey (Margaritoulis *et al.* 2003).

No positive changes towards sea turtle protection were observed. Researchers report that nearly every year the recorded unsuccessful nesting attempts are twice as many as the nests made. Hatchling disorientation is evident. All nests in Çalış need cages otherwise hatchlings are either disorientated by the artificial lights, killed by vehicles, caught by dogs, or simply get lost between the sunchairs and the people which are on the beach at night.

With reference to Rec. No. 66 (1998) on the conservation status of some nesting beaches for marine turtles in Turkey, a brief description of the most serious incidents and additional developments documented during the 2010 nesting season follows:

- Dense beach furniture remained on the nesting beaches on a 24-hour basis, as reported in the 2009 complaint. (Fig 1 )
- Çalış nesting beach was heavily littered and a wooden platform was constructed on the beach by Çalış hotels (Fig. 2).
- No signs have been installed to inform visitors that the area is a SPA and a sea turtle nesting beach.
- “Suat’s Beach Bar” at Çalış nesting beach, part of the reported “Mutlu Restaurant”, provides new huge cushions for their guests that also remain on the nesting beach on a 24-hour basis.
- Plastic carpeting continues to be used at Çalış nesting beach by “Surf Café” and “Sunset Garden Beach Club” (formerly named “Sunset Café”, see Fig.16 in Complaint.). Large stones delineate the beach section occupied by “Sunset Garden Beach Club”. (Fig. 3)
- People freely access the nesting beaches during the night, vehicles and quad bikes roam the beaches on a 24-hour basis (Fig. 4 & 5). Specifically, in the section between “Surf Café” and “Sunset Garden Beach Club”, more than 70 cars were counted on one occasion! At Yanıklar, hotel guests and staff were seen on the beach during the night, lighting bonfires and littering the beach (Fig. 6).
- New bushes have been planted on the nesting beach at the section between “Surf Café” and “Sunset Beach Apartments” (Fig. 7), while trees have also been planted at the eastern end of the Çalış beach (Çalıştepe).
- “Lykia Botanika Fun Club’s” pier was illuminated by new, very bright lights. (Fig. 8).
- Fishing nets were set during the hatching season right in front of Yanıklar nesting beach, (Fig. 9).
- The decision to relocate the shipyard/drydock currently located within Fethiye town to Akgöl is reported to have been approved by the Turkish Authorities. (See attached article in “Land of lights” newspaper, 17-23 August 2010, Issue 316, p. 2). As mentioned in the complaint submitted in 2009, the project would permanently and irrevocably destroy the key nesting area of Akgöl

beach. This opposes all sea turtle conservation laws and Conventions and is fully incompatible with Fethiye's SPA-status. In 2007, 2008 and 2009, two-thirds of all nests in Akgöl were laid in the planned project area, i.e. on the sandy section at the end of the beach. In 2010, there were 36 nests at Akgöl, equivalent to almost half of all nests (73) laid at the entire specific beach stretch (i.e. Yanıklar + Akgöl). We are unaware of the existence of an Environmental Impact Assessment. This project can only mean the construction of new roads accessing the beach, major lighting installations, a whole complex of new buildings, structures in the sea to draw boats in and out of the water as well as mooring installations. Note: Akgöl is also referred to as "Karaot district".

- It has been reported that the Turkish Authorities have approved the bulldozing and destruction of the remaining part of the wetland in Çalış (on the right of the "Sunset Beach Apartments" complex built on the other part of the wetland in 2004) for the construction of a new hotel. (Fig. 10). The beach section directly in front of this area consists entirely of cobbles and is not a nesting area.

The section to the left of the "Sunset Beach Apartments" complex will also be the site of the construction of another hotel. The beach section in front of this area is one of the last untouched parts of the Çalış beach and nesting does occur on this beach section. (Fig. 10)

We are unaware of the existence of an Environmental Impact Assessment for these developments that will occur within the SPA.

- Construction of two large wooden huts on vertical tree-trunk stilts (Fig. 11) and planting of trees directly onto the beach is taking place approx. 50m from the waterline between the 'Surf Café' and 'Sunset Beach Apts'.
- Some carpeting at 'Surf Café' has been removed, which is the first positive development in 2010 (Fig. 10). However, carpeting placed by 'Surf Café' closer to the waterline and parallel to the sea has not been removed. Plastic carpeting on the beach is also used by another business further along the beach (Fig. 10).

Data on nest numbers and unsuccessful nesting attempts will be available in September 2010.

Since the last update submitted to the Bureau (March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2010), MEDASSET has sent letters and DVDs of the short film "Turkey's Sea Turtles in Trouble" to the major international tour operators active in Fethiye, as well as to the local hotels, restaurants and bars that affect the beaches. Leading international travel group TUI AG replied providing no information of substance, re-stating its commitment to sea turtle conservation and promising to send more feedback. Sunset Beach Club Apartments replied, denying the existence of nesting, and pledging to discontinue use of water sports equipment (sic), keep the beach empty at night (sic) and free of vehicles at all times.

## DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED

- (March 2010) Summary of follow-up actions to the Complaint submitted to the Bern Convention on 02-09-2009: Turkey: Loggerhead turtles (*Caretta caretta*) in Fethiye. Document attached.
- (September 2009) Complaint to the Bern Convention addressing the threats facing the loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*) nesting beaches in Fethiye, Muğla province of Turkey. Available online at:  
[http://www.medasset.org/cms/index.php?option=com\\_docman&task=doc\\_download&gid=176&Itemid=85&lang=en](http://www.medasset.org/cms/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=176&Itemid=85&lang=en)
- (2008) Published without a T-PVS reference: Sea turtle nesting beach degradation in Çirali and Fethiye, Turkey. Available online at:  
[http://www.medasset.org/cms/index.php?option=com\\_docman&task=doc\\_download&gid=153&Itemid=85&lang=en](http://www.medasset.org/cms/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_download&gid=153&Itemid=85&lang=en)

## RELEVANT RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE:

Recommendation No. 66 (1998) on the conservation status of some nesting beaches for marine turtles in Turkey



**SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

Fig.1: July 2010. Fethiye, SPA. Çaliş. Dense rows of beach furniture, some of which are too close to the waterline, remain on the beach during the hatching and nesting period, as reported in 2009, hindering nesting female turtles and/or hatchlings.



Fig 2: July 2010. Fethiye, SPA. Çaliş. New wooden viewing platform at Calis Beach Promenade. Note wet sand next to the wooden stakes due to irrigation of palms along the promenade.



Fig.3: July 2010. Fethiye, SPA. Çaliş. Surf Café and Sunset Garden Beach Club continue to use plastic carpets on the beach and large stones on the nesting beach.





Fig. 4: July 2010. Fethiye, SPA. Çalış. During the hatching and nesting period the section between Surf Café and Sunset Apartments was ploughed by a dredger for no obvious reasons.



Fig. 5: July 2010. Fethiye, SPA. Yanıklar. Vehicles continue to drive along the nesting beaches.





Fig. 6: July 2010. Fethiye, SPA. Yanıklar. Plastic bottles litter the entire beach.

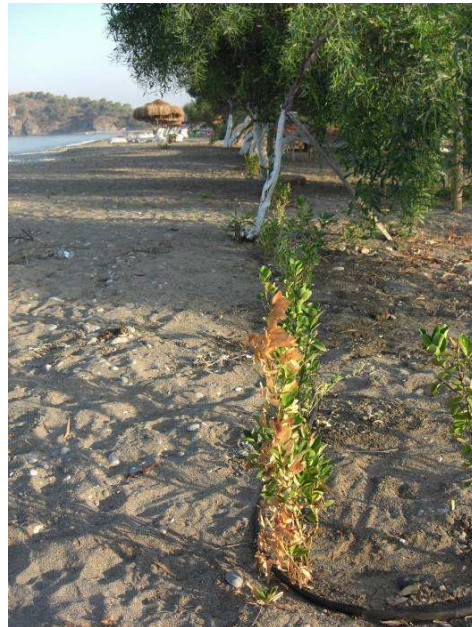


Fig. 7: July 2010. Fethiye, SPA. Çalış. Newly planted bushes next to tamarisk trees on the beach between Surf Café and Sunset Garden Beach Club.



Fig. 8: July 2010. Fethiye, SPA. Yanıklar. “Lykia Botanika Fun Club” pier’s new illumination with bright lights throughout the night.





Fig. 9: July 2010. Fethiye, SPA. Yanıklar. Fishing with nets close to the nesting beach during the hatching period.



Fig. 10: 2010. Fethiye, SPA. Çalis beach section.



Fig. 11: September 2010. Fethiye, SPA. Çalış. Construction is underway of two such wooden huts with tree-trunk stilts forced into the sand approx. 50m from the waterline between the 'Surf Café' and 'Sunset Beach Apts'.