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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

30th meeting
Strasbourg, 6-9 December 2010

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 GOVERNMENT

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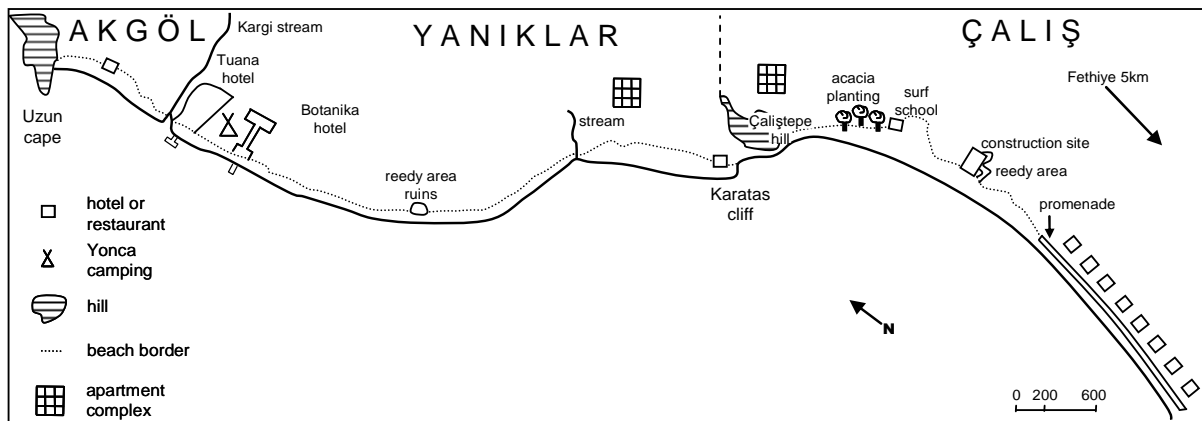
NESTING BEACHES FOR SEA TURTLES (*CARETTA CARETTA*) IN FETHIYE SPECIAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AREA (SEPA)

The beach is located in Fethiye Bay, Muğla Province, Turkey, and is approximately 8 km long (Figure 1). Three subsections were distinguished based on their features and on practical fieldwork considerations. The Akgöl beach subsection extends from Uzun Cape in the north to the mouth of Kargı stream in the south. It is approximately 1 km long and 50 m and more wide. The front of this beach consists of pebbles up to 2 cm in diameter. Behind this zone, the beach becomes much steeper and is composed of sand mixed with pebbles: sand is the dominant substrate at some places. Except for short stretches at both ends, this subsection is not suitable for nesting because a length of about 300 – 400 m is covered with pebbles. The hinterland here consists of farmland.

The second subsection (Yanıklar) extends from the mouth of the Kargı stream to the hill called Çalıştepe. This beach is approximately 4.5 km long and its width varies between 50 m and 80 m. The first few meters of the beach gently slope up from the sea and consist of pebbles. Behind this zone, sand becomes the dominant substrate. The hinterland here is a large wetland, mostly covered by a forest which is partly inundated until June. Several small creeks enter the sea along this beach subsection.

The third subsection extends from Çalıştepe to the end of the promenade of Çalış town (intersection between the main road and the beach). It is about 2.5 km long and 17 m to 19 m wide, delimited over about half its length by a concrete wall topped by a broad promenade. The promenade is lined by tourist infrastructures (hotels, restaurants, bars, etc.). The beach is completely sandy and flat along the promenade stretch (this is the turtle nesting area) but is steeper and consists of pebbles elsewhere.

Figure 1: The detail map of beach subsection of Fethiye.



As is known, Fethiye Special Environmental Protection Area (SEPA) is one of the most important nesting areas for turtles. However, the area is also an important tourism center.

Environmental Protection Agency for Special Areas (EPASA) has been trying to not only protect this area but also carry on tourism activities within the balance of conservation-use. Nevertheless, the fact that the area has very serious problems has been known by Our Agency. Our Agency has succeeded significantly in protection of other turtle nesting areas. But still there have been some problems in the turtle nesting area of Fethiye Special Environmental Protection Area (SEPA).

In order to ensure marine turtle conservation along our protected coastal areas, our Agency has launched a comprehensive biological monitoring programme on Fethiye beach (Çalış, Yanıklar, Akgöl) during the breeding season since 1996. These population counting works have been carried out in cooperation with the leading Universities of Türkiye which have considerable reputation in conservation practice, and distinguished NGOs. Moreover, the scale, conservation and management status of our Agency's responsibility areas are quite different from those of EU's SPAs, SACs, and UNEP RAC/SPA's Mediterranean SPAs, regarding total surface areas, namely their considerably

larger scale coverage in contrast to RAC/SPA's and EU's SPAs. Therefore, our PAs should not be merely considered as the small strict protection site units, they should rather be considered as being relatively larger buffer zones which encircled and protect small strict core zones as their larger scale buffers in order to ensure to controlling the pressures of various sectors around core zones.

We are dealing not only with the simple way conservation methods within a limited space, and scope, but also defining and implementing wisely determined management measurements to mitigating the impacts of various sector, including tourism, aquaculture, transportation, mine extraction, and agriculture exerted by the surroundings.

We are also doing our best for conserving the marine turtle species and the related species which are living together them to forming an intact, healthy ecosystem in such crowded mass tourism areas inhabited by many European citizens continuously and seasonally as tourists via taking serious measures around these hotels. As a result both marine turtle species and tourism have been sustainably continued. In addition, we have launched extremely sophisticated tourism (e.g. yacht) bay carrying capacity marine biodiversity impact projects exclusively in more susceptible ecosystems around the region.

Our Agency, UNDP Türkiye branch and the GEF Secretariat in Washington D.C. have launched a new GEF project on "The Strengthening Protected Areas Network of Turkey: Catalyzing Sustainability of Marine and Coastal Protected Areas". One of the pilot project sites is Fethiye-Göcek SEPA. During implementation period of the project next years, our Agency will concretely establish a protection and control unit to safeguarding improper marine and coastal activities strictly. Implementation of these protection measures expected to be accelerated in this SEPA starting from the mid of 2010.

In addition to these activities launched, Our Agency has been making some plans for the year 2010 in order to solve existing problems in the area. Major plans of these are;

- 1- In Fethiye SEPA, meetings will be held with participation of all relevant stakeholders and solutions will be developed together with local community.
- 2- Relevant parties in the area are tourism operators, hotel operators, local authorities, related public bodies, farmers and local community using the area and so on.
- 3- Conservation and use principles on the beach which is nesting area of turtles will be determined with the participation of related parties as the case in other beaches of Special Environmental Protection Areas.
- 4- Information activities related to species carried out in the previous years will carry on.
- 5- Lights of hotels on the beach side will be shadowed.
- 6- Control measurements will be taken for visitors exceeding carrying capacity of the area.
- 7- Control measurements regarding placing beach umbrella and sun beds on the nesting area will be taken.

Therefore, tourists will be able to use the area without damaging turtles during the day time. At night, it will be used by turtles.