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Mediterranean Association  
to Save the Sea Turtles

## **Agenda Item: 5.1**

# **Greece: Threats to Marine Turtles in Thines Kiparissias**

**35th Meeting of the Standing Committee  
Bern Convention  
Wednesday 2 December 2015**

# Habitat Degradation due to Uncontrolled Development in a Protected Sea Turtle Nesting Area



- ✓ NATURA 2000 site: THINES KYPARISSIAS –GR2550005
- ✓ 2<sup>nd</sup> most important nesting beach for endangered *Caretta caretta* in the Mediterranean (at least 1200 nests every year)
- ✓ Extensive sand dunes system with *Juniperus spp*



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# Government Fails to Prevent Habitat Deterioration and Ensure Improved Protection

- ▶ **Aug 2010**                    - **MEDASSET Complaint to Bern Convention**
- ▶ **Oct 2012**                    - **EC Reasoned Opinion to Greece**
- ▶ **Nov 2012**                    - **Greece commits to take measures**
- ▶ **Summer 2013**           - **Degradation continues:**
  - Temporary measures not implemented
  - Protective legislation considerably delayed
- ▶ **Dec 2013**                    - **Case File opened at Standing Committee**
- ▶ **March 2014**                - **EC takes Greece to European Court of Justice**
- ▶ **July 2014**                    - **On-the-spot appraisal by Bern Convention experts**
- ▶ **Dec 2014**                    - **CoE Unanimously voted Rec. No 174**



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## ***Recom. No 1: National Park or equivalent Protection Status***



**The Ministry of Environment has not yet issued a new Presidential Decree to foresee appropriate protection status in an integrated manner for the whole area.**



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## ***Recom No 2: Permanent Prohibition of Construction***



- **Suspension of building permits in the core nesting area concerns only issuing of new ones**
- **Building of pre-existing houses hasn't been affected**
- **Urgent need for issuing of a relevant Presidential Decree**



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## ***Recom. No 3: Restoration of Original Dune and Forest Habitat***



- **No signs of dune restoration**
- **Mobile Barriers, previously placed on perpendicular roads, have been removed**



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## ***Recom. No 4: Adjustments to Existing Houses***



**No actions have been taken to reinstate destroyed dune ecosystems nor to reduce photo-pollution.**



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## ***Recom. No 5: No Agriculture. Dune Restoration***



**Cultivation of water  
melons and market  
vegetables continues on  
the dune area.**



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## *Recom. No 6: General Photo-Pollution*



**No efforts have been made to avoid photo pollution.**



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## ***Recom. No 7: Beach Equipment***



- **Beach furniture in Kalo Nero was fragmentary stacked for 43 days (7 July until 20 August)**
- **Illegal wooden platforms on the beach of Kalo Nero remain despite the demolition protocols issued by the Land Management Agency of Kalamata.**



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## ***Recom. No 8: Sand and Gravel Extraction***



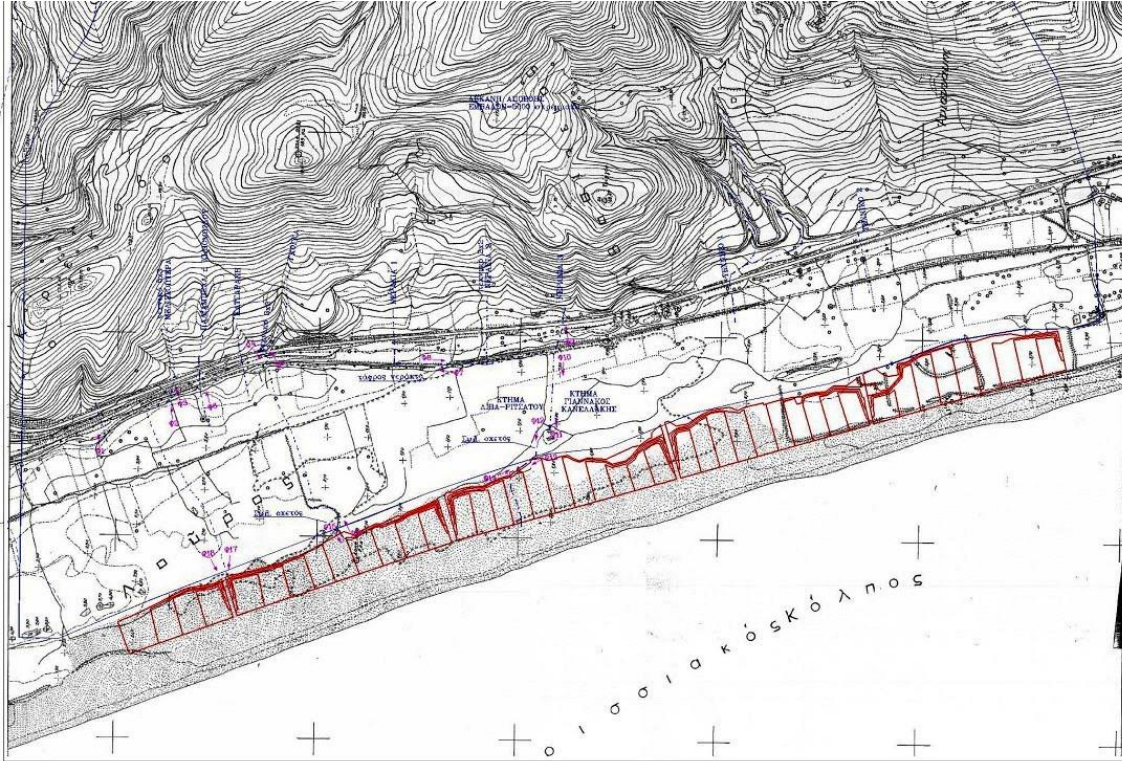
**Sand and gravel extraction. Due to reduction in public works as a result of the financial crisis, sand and gravel extraction was significant during the 2015 season.**



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## ***Recom. No 9: Further Building***



**Further building is expected to be addressed in the new Presidential Decree. If the relevant Presidential Decree is not issued on time, before May 2016, southern Kyparissia Bay will remain again without any protection, even a temporary one, from building interests.**



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## *Recom. No 10: Circulation of Vessels*



**Fishing with nets near the nesting beach is currently permitted, leading to sea turtles and hatchlings being caught during the reproductive season.**



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## ***Recom. No 11: Use of the Beach at Night***



- No measures to prevent people and cars from the beach at night
- No warning signs



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## ***Recom. No 12: Feral Dogs***



**Fewer attacks by feral dogs were recorded although, the Municipality of Trifylia didn't take any measures.**



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# Conclusions



- In 2015 there was no improvement in the protection and management of the sea turtle nesting beaches in Kyparissia.
- Threats identified led to the destruction of nests, unsuccessful nesting attempts, and mortality of hatchlings and adult turtles.



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# MEDASSET:

Calls on the Greek Government for:

**The urgent implementation** of the **Recommendation No. 174** of the Bern Convention

**The urgent issue of a new Presidential Decree** that would take into account the Recommendation No.174 of the Bern Convention and the decision 32/2015 of the Hellenic Republic Council of State, that will grant appropriate status to the area.

Calls on the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention:

**To follow up through the Greek Government** regarding progress made over the **issue of a new Presidential Decree.**



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**Thank you for your  
attention!**



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