



MEDASSET
Mediterranean Association
to Save the Sea Turtles

Agenda Item 5.3:

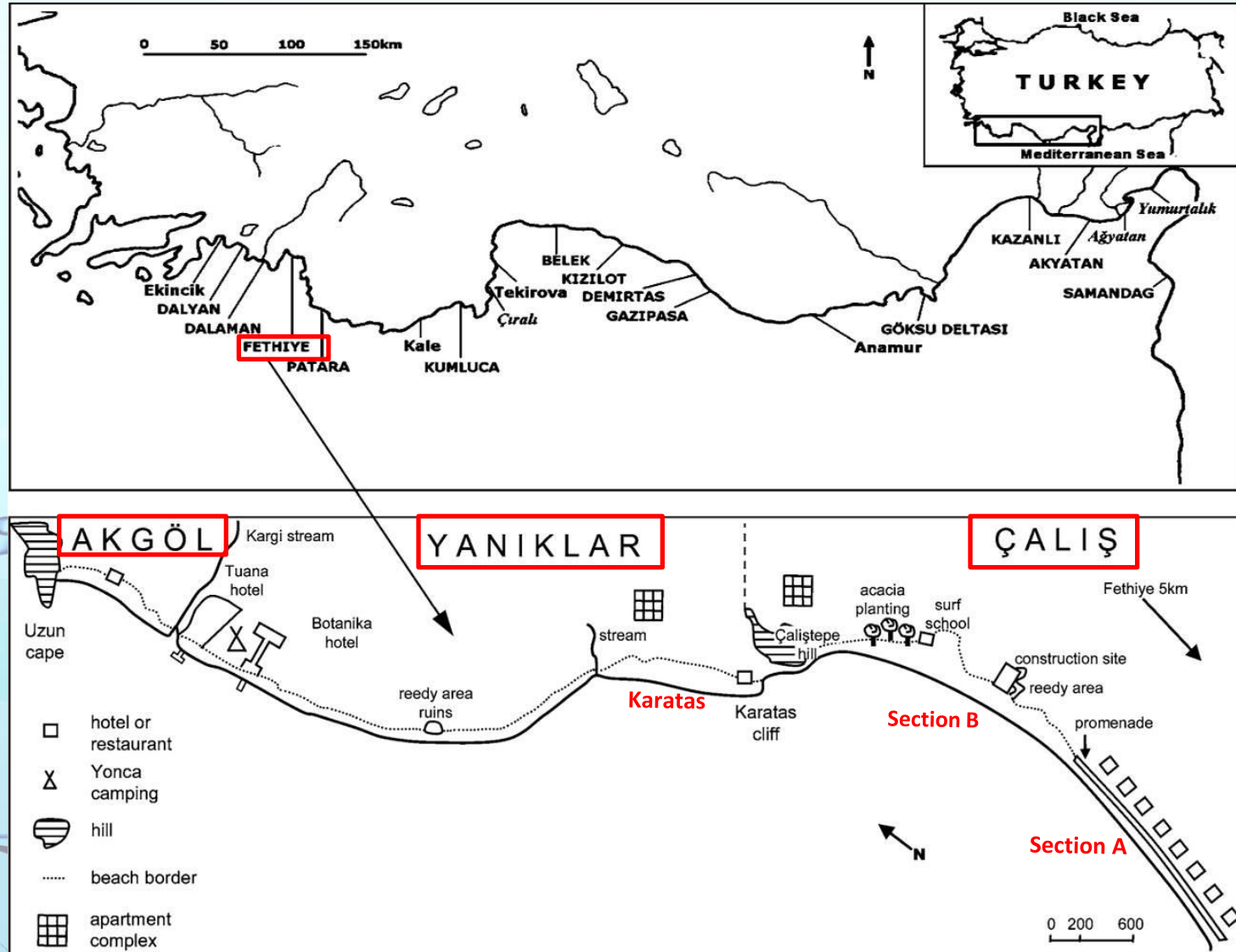
On-the-spot appraisal/File open

**Degradation of nesting beaches
in Fethiye SPA (Turkey)**

Report & Recommendation

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

Fethiye Specially Protected Area



Top: Location of Fethiye among important nesting beaches in Turkey

Bottom: Fethiye nesting beach sub-subsections.

Source: Ilgaz et al., 2007; developments after 2006-7 are not shown in the map

Bern Convention & Fethiye SPA

Relevant Recommendations:

- **Recommendation No 8 (1987)** on the protection of marine turtles in Dalyan and other important areas in Turkey
- **Recommendation No 12 (1988)** concerning the protection of important turtle nesting beaches in Turkey
- **Recommendation No 24 (1991)** on the protection of some beaches in Turkey of particular importance to marine turtles
- **Recommendation No. 66 (1998)** on the conservation status of some nesting beaches for marine turtles in Turkey:
 - *Reassess tourism investment projects [...];*
 - *Improve control of the effects on the beaches of local tourism, secondary summer homes, caravans, camping and other activities [...]*
 - *[...] fully implement the protection status of SPAs;*
 - *[...] enforce legislation against illegal **sand extraction**; assure penalties are dissuasive*
 - *[...] Regulate and, where necessary, prohibit **speed boats, jet skis and para-gliding** during the nesting season; ensure respect of low speed limits set and **reinforce controls***
 - **Fethiye: - secure the remaining unbuilt beach plots against development**

Bern Convention & Fethiye SPA Timeline

- **2009: Complaint filed : coastal buildup and lack of management**
- **2010: Complaint discussed at Standing Committee Meeting**
=> Commitments made for improved protection
- **2011: Few management measures implemented**
- **2012: Management measures not sustained & coastal buildup**
=> Commitments made for improved protection
- **2013: No improvement, further habitat damage & coastal buildup**
=> Case file opened
- **2014 : No improvement, further habitat damage & coastal buildup**
=> on-the-spot appraisal in 2015

Fethiye SPA nesting beaches

2015 Conservation Problems

- **No guarding or local management unit**
- **Motorised watersport activities & fishing close to the shore**
- **Light pollution**
- **Lack of beach furniture management**
- **Camping & bonfires**
- **Sand extraction**
- **Insufficient signage**
- **Litter & sewage**
- **Bush & tree planting on nesting beach**
- **Uncontrolled people & vehicle access**
- **Build-up of undeveloped beach zone**

Recommendation No. 66 (1998) not implemented

Fethiye SPA nesting beaches

2015 Improvements

- **Start of nest monitoring in May**
- **New signs on 1 beach**
- **Vehicle access control in 1 beach through ditches**
INAPPROPRIATE METHOD
- **Removal of some structures (not all)**
RE-INSTALLED AFTER ON-THE-SPOT APPRAISAL
- **Reduction of beach furniture (in some sections)**
REVERSED AFTER ON-THE-SPOT APPRAISAL
- **A few lights turned off**
REVERSED AFTER ON-THE-SPOT APPRAISAL
- **Beach furniture management (in some sections)**
MOSTLY REVERSED AFTER ON-THE-SPOT APPRAISAL

Fethiye SPA nesting beaches

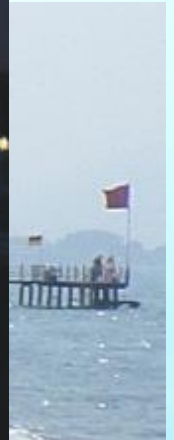
Coastal zone build-up: Rec. No. 66 not implemented



**Wetland & beach destruction: planting on sandy zone, buildings & new road
=> Nesting zone destroyed & disturbances increased**

Fethiye SPA nesting beaches

2015 Conservation Problems



Development of remaining unbuilt nesting beach zones continues



Light pollution in previously pristine beach: cabana lights, two security lights and main building lights shine on nesting sand and washed cars on the nesting beach.

Fethiye SPA nesting beaches

2015 Conservation Problems

2010



August 2015



Wooden hut has become a snack bar with cement patio, wooden pavilions, permanent shades, tables and volleyball court on nesting beach

July 2015 on-the-spot appraisal



April 2015

In the sandy section next to the business, trees have been planted and there is camping in tents that are supplied with light bulbs

Fethiye SPA nesting beaches

2015 Conservation Problems



Camping on nesting beach

Snack bar places sunbeds, umbrellas and wooden pavilions inside the nesting zone.

Next to the snack bar, tents with light bulbs are used by owners & visitors.

Bar & tent lights are not switched off at night
(photo taken from Yaniklar beach).



No management, No enforcement, No zoning, Prime nesting area degraded

Fethiye SPA nesting beaches

2015 Conservation Problems

Early July 2015

4 Wooden pavilions with light bulbs

Bar



Inside the nesting hotspot, a business installed a snack bar, picnic table and wooden pavilions. Users insert umbrellas in sand in the nesting zone



July 2015



August 2015

Pavilions and bar that were removed for the on-the-spot appraisal, were reinstalled in August



August 2015

New snack bar & picnic shade

Fethiye SPA nesting beaches

2015 Conservation Problems



Beach furniture is managed only on 1,5 km of nesting beach



No management on remaining 6,5 km of nesting beach

Nesting zone occupied by beach furniture, walkways and carpets



Fethiye SPA nesting beaches

2015 Conservation Problems



Carpets, volleyball courts, permanent pavilions, fixed sunshades on nesting beach. Sunbeds are not removed/stacked at night

Fethiye SPA nesting beaches 2015 Conservation Problems



Fethiye SPA nesting beaches

2015 Conservation Problems

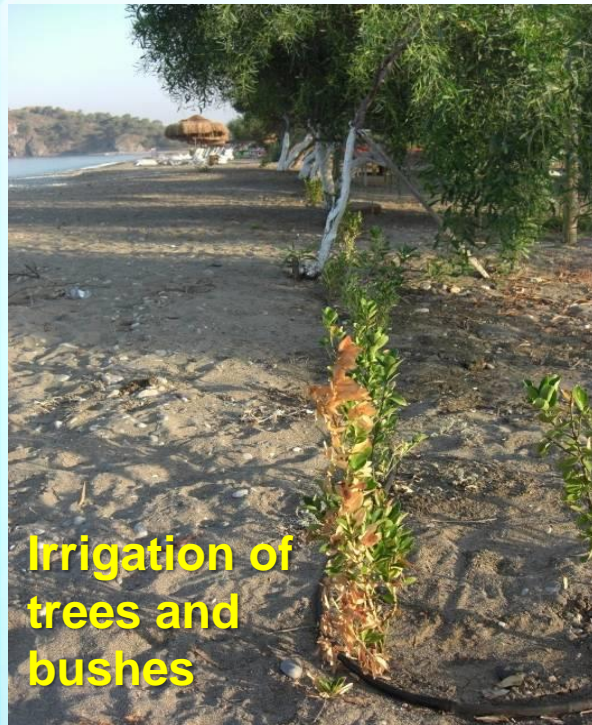


Litter remains a severe problem on most beaches.



Fethiye SPA nesting beaches 2015 Conservation Problems

**Trees & bushes planted inside
the nesting zone
reduce available habitat and
destroy nests**



Fethiye SPA nesting beaches

2015 Conservation Problems



Left top & bottom: **Sand extraction.**

Right top & bottom: **Vehicles access on nesting beaches**

Fethiye SPA nesting beaches 2015 Conservation Problems



Speeding boats too close to the shore, are a frequent problem in the SPA, as the marine area is not patrolled regularly.



Fethiye SPA nesting beaches

2015 Conservation Problems



Shipyard Plan (Source: 2011 project leaflet)



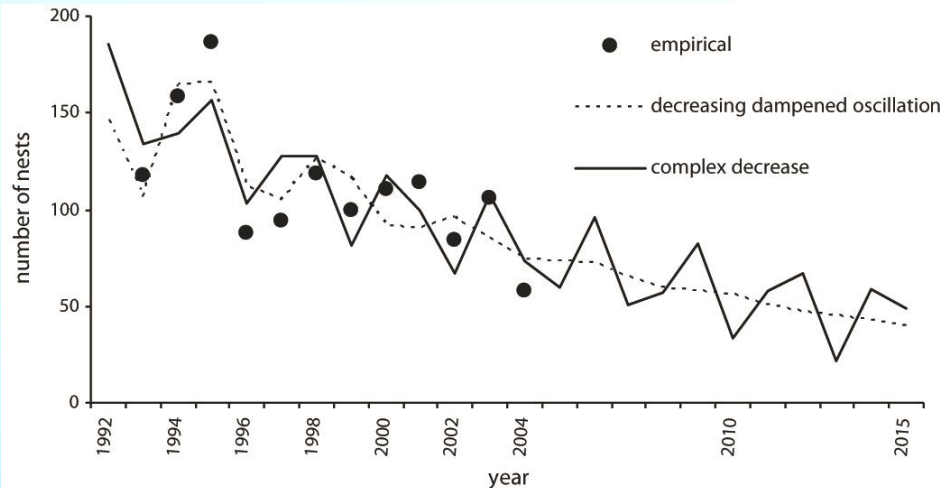
SPA zoning plan foresees a shipyard

Approved on 12.01.2015 by Ministry of Environment & Urban Planning.

Scaled 1/25.000

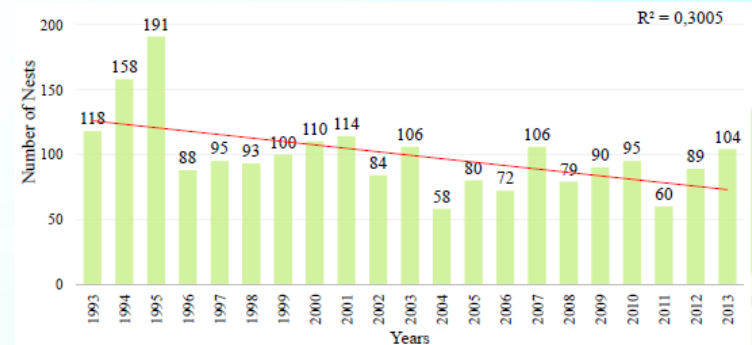
Map supplied by Karaot Solidarity local volunteer group

Fethiye SPA: scientists warn about impacts of conservation & management problems



Source: Ilgaz et al 2007

LONG TERM MONITORING OF LOGGERHEAD TURTLES ON FETHİYE BEACH, TURKEY: POPULATION STILL DECLINE



Source: Katilmis et al 2014



Source:
Özdemir et al 2011

“Remaining wetlands should be defended against human activities. Constructions must be forbidden in wetlands and surroundings [...] A boat yard should not be allowed”

Economic Analysis of Fethiye-Göcek Special Environmental Protection Area

PRESSURES:

- Intensive use of turtle nesting beaches
- Excessive, uncontrolled development

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Enforcement
- Improved management
- Sustainable tourism development

URGENT ACTION NEEDED

to protect Fethiye SPA & sea turtles

- **SPA management plan** describing permitted uses & activities
- **Enforcement of regulations & Guarding of SPA**
- **Unbuilt beach areas** secured against development & reclamation of **sandy areas**
- **No shipyard** on nesting beaches.
- **Removal of fixed structures, carpets, showers, trees & bushes** from nesting beach
- Application of strict penalties for illegal **sand extraction**
- **Information signs** at all major entry points on all beaches
- **Awareness raising**
- Effective **communication of rules** to stakeholders and businesses

During the entire nesting/hatching season:

- **Zoning & sunbed management** on all nesting beaches
- **Vehicle ban & visitor access** control. **Parking space** designation away from nesting beaches
- Ban of **bonfires, night parties, fireworks & camping**
- Switching off or screening of **lights** shining on nesting beaches
- Daily collection of **litter**. Illegal **sewage** discharge into sea closely monitored
- Regulation of **fishing & boat-based recreational activities**. Patrolling of marine area
- **Scientific nest monitoring** through multi-annual long-term projects instead of annual change of project teams

URGENT ACTION NEEDED

to protect Fethiye SPA & sea turtles

We urge the Standing Committee to adopt a new Recommendation in order to

- Reiterate & update past Recommendations,**
- Encourage & assist Turkish authorities to**
 - ✓ improve protected area management**
 - ✓ take remedial action to reverse habitat degradation**
 - ✓ protect the site from illegal and unsustainable development**
- We welcome the draft Recommendation and request that the Standing Committee considers MEDASSET's amendments that aim to improve and clarify measures.**
- We recognise the Turkish delegation's willingness to collaborate**
- We urge Turkey to implement the proposed Recommendation before May 2016**



Thank You
for your attention

MEDASSET

Mediterranean Association to Save the Sea Turtles

E-mail: medasset@medasset.org

Websites:

www.medasset.org | www.euroturtle.org

© SEA TURTLE PHOTOGRAPHY

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

Preamble:

Noting that the loggerhead turtle is a strictly protected species listed in Appendix II to the Convention and classified as endangered byis included in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, mainly as a result of degradation of their-nesting areas;

Measures:

1. Stop any further development of permanent structures (buildings, roads, shipyard, jetties/docks etc.) along the entire coast of the nesting site complex, in order not to reduce further the nesting habitat.
2. Along the entire coast, remove any structure (wooden paths, wooden pavilions, bars, platforms, showers, carpets, patios, etc.) from the nesting zone and former or current sand zones, especially in areas with relatively narrow beach width and/or in tracts with narrow sandy strips especially in the southern part,; and restore the sandy areas;
5. Map the whole Fethiye coast using long-term data, maps and imagery, to identify the past, current and potential most suitable zones for sea turtle nesting, and set a maximum percentage limit of sandy tracts where to allow touristic structures are allowed on the nesting beach and define (A) coastal tracts less suitable for turtle nesting, where beach furniture is allowed at appropriate densities and (B) coastal tracts adequate for turtle nesting, where beach furniture and access at night are not allowed. Enforce beach furniture removal/stacking at night along the entire nesting beach complex during the nesting/hatching season;
6. Prohibit the use of beach furniture and other structures or facilities anthropogenic material on the sandy zones of Akgöl beach, prohibit use of the core nesting area in the sandy northern end of the beach, and carry-out the necessary controls to check enforcement;
7. Reduce light pollution to a minimum along the whole coast: (i) remove all lights not strictly necessary, (ii) reduce the number of lights allowed for each business company, (iii) all lights considered as strictly necessary should be reduced in power and (iv) be red or orange-yellow, (v) all lights should be shaded in the direction of the beach. Further reduce lights after a certain time in the night, for not less than 50% of the dark time. Where possible, reduce height of lights, use motion sensors and native bushes/plants as light buffers on roads and properties; prohibit light show equipment use during nesting/hatching season

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS - Measures:

8. Build permanent barriers (not ditches) on the roads to prevent vehicles to from accessing the beach, designate parking spaces and official picnic areas away from the beach;
9. Regulate maritime traffic during the nesting/hatching season, by prohibiting any motorised traffic at appropriate distances near the coast, by setting speed limits and by foreseeing marked corridors for boats from the beach to open waters;
10. Set up long-term research and conservation programs conducted by a same permanent team recruited on a long-term perspective. This team should have adequate manpower to monitor the entire beach and protect all nests if necessary during the entire nesting/hatching season. The team should also assess across the years and with using the same comparable methods: (i) the disorienting effects of photo-pollution on hatchlings, (ii) disturbance of nesting females, and (iii) predation of nests (or attempts);
12. Ensure that adequate financial and human resources are allocated to both the controls and the management and monitoring of the beaches;
13. Improve information to the local community and tourists about sea turtle nesting and sustainable use of the beach. This should include effective communication of regulations (incl. regulations implementing the Recommendation) by the authorities to stakeholders and businesses, signs at all major beach entry points, and awareness campaigns aimed to the hosts guests of the big resorts, in collaboration with the owners and managers; Encourage beach hotels and businesses to support scientific teams;

Additions:

- Prohibit camping and bonfires and set appropriate time limits for the operation of beach bars at night during the nesting and hatching season.
- Define and enforce fines for noncompliance with above regulations
- Involve the local community in the protection and management of the protected area.
- Take measures to clean the beach and empty appropriately located bins on a daily basis, and ensure sewage is not discharged into the sea.