

Strasbourg, 13 June 2018
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T-PVS/Files(2018)26

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

38th meeting
Strasbourg, 27-30 November 2018

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**Follow-up of Recommendations Nos. 182 and 183
(2015) on Presumed degradation of nesting beaches
in Fethiye and Patara SPAs (Turkey)**

- REPORT BY THE GOVERNMENT -

*Document prepared by
the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization, Turkey*

RECOMMENDATION NO. 183 (2015)**ON THE CONSERVATION, MANAGEMENT, AND RESTORATION OF FETHIYE NESTING BEACHES**

Your reference letter and the related attachment about the special file on Fethiye sea turtle nesting beach being in the Fethiye-Göcek Specially Protected Area under the scope of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats were carefully examined by relevant authorities. The current conservation measures and situation of the beach is summarized below.

Turkish Ministry of Environment and Urbanization has been implementing conservation measures on Fethiye Nesting Beaches. These implementations have been reviewed and updated according to the Recommendation No 183. A timetable is prepared for the ongoing and planned conservation actions and presented as follows;

1. A local office of the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization, General Directorate for the Protection of Natural Assets has been established in 2017 in Fethiye. 16 permanent personnel was entrusted in the office. All the conservation measures will be controlled by the Ministry staff. The financial support for monitoring and conservation studies is provided by the Ministry as well.
2. Development of permanent structures is not allowed on the nesting zone of the beach. Seasonal prefabricated structures are built behind the nesting zone. The visitors of the beach and seasonal enterprises will be informed by the conservation team during the months May, June and July.
3. Sand extraction is forbidden by the law and illegal sand extraction is subject to the fine.
4. Plantation areas will be determined by the end of July. Actions decided will be declared during the meeting in September 2018.
5. The detailed map of the nesting zone including 2018 nest data will be prepared by the second week of August.
6. Beach furniture is only allowed on particular areas during the day time. Beach furniture are collected by the tourism facility areas during the night.
7. Permanent barriers were built, and vehicle access is restricted and/or prohibited during the breeding season.
8. Maritime traffic will be monitored during June and July. A maritime traffic map and a plan will be prepared by the end of August.
9. Sea turtle monitoring and conservation projects are funded by the Ministry and the project have been conducting by sea turtle researchers from universities. The monitoring and conservation studies started by the 1st of May 2018. The team will be on site until the end of September 2018. Conservation and monitoring studies have been conducted continuously for the last 20 years.
10. Camping and bonfire is prohibited on the nesting beaches. Educational programs will be carried out during June, July, and August. Screening and/or changing lights to low pressure sodium lamps will be offered to the cafes and restaurants during 2018 season. Implementation of this conservation measure will be achieved during spring 2019.
11. The municipality is the main responsible body for cleaning beach and cleaning bins on the beach. Beaches are cleaned regularly. The main problem is daily visitors.

Hotels and touristic businesses are also responsible for cleaning the beach. The litter found on the beach is exceptional and removed in a day by responsible parties.

12. Fethiye Beaches are being monitored by a team from Sea Turtle Research, Rescue and Rehabilitation Center (DEKAMER) during the nesting season. The Coast Guard is also helping protecting the bays around Fethiye. In addition, local branches of the Ministry Forestry and Water

Affairs, The Ministry of Environment and Urbanization, and DEKAMER extend the monitoring area towards Göcek. Any illegal operation (eg. sand extraction) or stranded sea turtle is reported by local networks to the related authority.

13. Public awareness activities have been continuing in the area by the research team with our ministry's support during the monitoring and conservation project. Research team started "Turtle Friendly Enterprise" certification program in Fethiye in 2016. These studies will be developed, and education programs will be carried out between June and September for the next four years by Research team in Fethiye. The program includes training programs at hotels, cafes and bars, beach business and in the schools.

14. All turtle nests are protected during the implementation of monitoring and conservation projects.

The conservation studies that carried out by the ministry and the research team is summarized below;

- Sea turtle nests have been located and protected by grid cages against predation. and by prism cages for informing beach users to be cautious on the beach.
- Nests under inundation risk were relocated to the safer location on the beach.
- The researchers and volunteers implemented the sea turtle awareness activities. Tourism staff facilities, e.g. hotels, restaurants, cafes, locals and tourists was started to be informed about sea turtle biology and conservation.
- Informative signboards were placed on the beach. In addition, a total of 20 small sized informative signboards were placed in the entrances of the beach.
- The road extending to Çalış Hill from the minibus station was closed to vehicle traffic throughout the year.
- An info-desk is open every day from 21:00 to 23:00.
- The studies, started in 2016 for reducing light pollution on and around the nesting beaches, still continue. The research team and volunteers will make one to one interview with tourism facilities from June to September around Çalış Beach for extensification of red-light use.
- A new lighting post was proposed to the municipality and tourism facilities. Negotiations are still ongoing.
- In order to prevent the entrance of vehicles to the beach in the Çalış Beach, beach entrances were closed with landscaping work in cooperation with the related NGO's.
- Predation rate at Yanıklar subsection is high in comparison with other sections. Using grid cages against predation is not enough to protect the nests. Therefore, side cages were placed around the top grid cage for increased protection of nests.

Recent developments on protection measures in Fethiye are summarized below;

- Tourism facilities on the nesting beaches are relocating or folding the sunbeds at the end of the day to avoid blocking turtle emergence during the night.
- A representative from a local NGO (Çalış-Der) is informing people to avoid entering to the beach after 20:00. Personal belongings, vehicles and equipment (tent, umbrella, boat) are not allowed to be used on the nesting beaches.
- Water connections of shower cabins that heavily wet the nesting beach were cut and those cabins have been used as dressing cabin.
- Marine vehicles of watersports on the beach is another problem for Fethiye Beach. The situation was discussed with watersport managers to reevaluate the use of these vehicles. Watersports were forced to relocate the vehicles to the upper part of the beach at night.

RECOMMENDATION NO.182 (2015)
**ON THE CONSERVATION OF *CARETTA CARETTA* AND ITS HABITAT AT
PATARA**

Your reference letter and the related attachment about the special file on Fethiye sea turtle nesting beach namely in the Patara Specially Protected Area under the scope of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats were carefully examined by relevant authorities. The current conservation measures and situation of the beach is summarized below.

Turkish Ministry of Environment and Urbanization has been implementing conservation measures on Patara Nesting Beaches. These implementations have been reviewed and updated according to the Recommendation No 182. A timetable is prepared for the ongoing and planned conservation actions and presented as follows;

1. Adequate financial and human resources were allocated for the control, management, protection and enforcement of regulations in Kaş (Patara beach) and its environs. A local office of the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization, General Directorate for of Natural Assets was established in 2017 in Kaş City (Patara) and 4 experienced staff was entrusted in the local office.
2. Patara Beach is being monitored by the university's research team during the nesting season. Sea turtle monitoring and conservation project was funded by the Ministry. The monitoring and conservation studies were commenced by the 1st of May 2018. The team will be on site until the end of September 2018. This monitoring studies has been executed incessantly in the last 20 years. In addition, monitoring team and experts from the Kaş City directorate are keeping the beach under close monitoring between May and September.
3. Any illegal operation eg. sand extraction, fishing with nets in front of the beach, camping on beach and riversides, horse riding and 4x4 or quad safaris on the nesting beach; will be deterred in cooperation and collaboration by the staff of Ministry and Kaş Municipality. Vehicle access was restricted and/or prohibited during the breeding season.
4. Development of permanent structures is not allowed on the nesting zone of the beach. Seasonal prefabricated structures are built behind the nesting zone. Beach furniture is only allowed on particular areas during the day. Beach furniture is collected by the tourism facilities during the night. The visitors are informed by the staff of Ministry and research team during the months May, June, July and August.
5. The Kaş and Seydikemer municipalities are the main responsible bodies for cleaning beach. Cleaning of the beaches is controlled by the staff of Ministry and Municipality.
6. Human settlement area, about 2 km far away from the beach, is within the boundaries of village settlement area. The Ministry approved the 1/5000 and 1/1000 Implementation Plans that were prepared by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and endorsed by the Antalya Culture and Natural Heritage Protection Regional Council and with the condition that protection and use balance to be considered and in line with the 1/25000 scale Patara Environmental Master plan that was approved in 1991.

The large scale holiday house construction project area is within Gelemiş settlement border and in consistent with 1/1000 scale Implementation Plan. Of all plans approved previously were reduced approximately 75% - from 106.000 m² to 28.000 m² and holiday houses construction was confined according to this. There is no new settlement buildings other than given in this plan.

The conservation studies carried out by the Ministry and the research team is summarized below;

- Sea turtle research and monitoring project has been incessantly carried out on Patara nesting beach by different university members since 1990.
- All kinds of legal measures are taken to ensure that to protect the natural structure of the Patara beach. (i) Construction of permanent structures, roads, buildings etc. is not allowed on the nesting/hatching beach. (ii) Extent and use of furniture on the beach are controlled at daytime.

Beach furniture is removed by the tourism facilities at nights. (iii) Barriers are placed at the beach entrances to prevent vehicle entry. (iv) Lighting of the beach is forbidden. (v) Fishing activities are controlled. (vi) The beach is used for tourism purposes at daytime, but after 20.00 pm, entrance to the beach is forbidden. (vii) Horse riding on the beach and vehicle entrance (4x4, quad safaris etc) to the beach is forbidden.

- The beach is monitored by permanent personnel and volunteers during the breeding season. Sea turtle nests have been located and protected by grid cages against predation (crab and fox) and by prism cages for informing visitors to be cautious on the beach. The nests under high predation pressure are transported in the appropriate zones.
- As far as possible, nests are carried to appropriate places where human densities are low or does not exist. The rest are protected by surface cages and warning plates. In addition, permanent and voluntary staff is engaged in information activities on the beach. They are conducting informative activities twice a week and at certain hours during the breeding season.
- Informative signboards are placed at the entrance and appropriate locations on the beach. They are renewed every year.
- Information about the beach is communicated to the permanent Turkish Sea Turtle Committee Members every year. In addition, this information is shared in the Sea Turtle Symposium, is held every two years. During the season, daily information is also shared with relevant members via the WhatsApp communication network and email.