

Strasbourg, 23 September 2015
[files42e_2015.docx]

T-PVS/Files (2015) 42

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

35th meeting
Strasbourg, 1-4 December 2015

File open

**Presumed degradation of nesting beaches in
Fethiye, Patara and Akgol (Turkey)**

**- OBSERVER'S REPORT FOLLOWING THE
ON-THE-SPOT APPRAISAL –**

(25-30 June 2015)

*Document prepared by
Mr Yakup Kaska - Observer to the on-the-spot appraisal*



Prof Dr. Yakup KASKA - Member of MTSG

PERSONAL REPORT

Dr Yakup Kaska - Observer On-the-spot appraisal to Patara and Fethiye SPAs (Turkey)
28-30 July 2015

This report reflects my observations and experiences since 1988, as my volunteering on those beaches as student and later as researcher.

Patara Beach Nesting Potential

Patara beach is one of the three best (Dalyan, Akyatan and Patara) protected beaches in Turkey. Patara Beach has been identified as a Special Environmental Protection Area in 1990, and in 2007 the boundaries of the protected area were expanded. The Patara Special Environmental Protection Area covers an area of 189.81 km². Patara Beach stretches over 14 km and the approximate width of the beach is 500 meters. The number of nests is fluctuating from a minimum of 33 (1994) to a maximum of 239 (2013). This is partly due to natural fluctuation of nest numbers but mainly due to late starting of the beach monitoring (i.e, after the University Semester generally around the first two weeks of July). The working team usually misses the first month of nests, if they are not predated some of them can be recorded later in the hatching season. I can see one of the main problem for Patara is starting date of the beach monitoring and the lack of enough manpower. The team should be minimum 10 volunteers and they should monitor the beach at night as well. I also suggest two official night guards should also patrol the beach. There were only three students when we visited the beach and one supervisor just came for the meeting and left even before our visit to the beach. I strongly recommend to conduct the beach monitoring with local, national and international volunteer support. The other issue with Patara is nearly 1/3 of the beaches are predated by foxes, the night patrol and number of more volunteers patrolling the beach minimizes the predation. The other problems with the nests are inundation of the nests due to structural changes of the beach. I recommend relocating of the nests close (within 50 meters zone) to the sea to further inland and or to a hatcheries that will be set up on different parts of the beach. The hatching success reported were around 40% which is mainly inundation and heavy predation. These efforts (regular night monitoring, early starting of the beach surveys and relocation of the nests close to the sea) will increase the hatching success.

I also suggest to carry out a scientific study on the beach erosion due to afforestation of the sand dunes due to stop sand accumulation on historic ruins that is done in 1987. These acacia trees are now grown and keeping the sand movements inland but blocking sand movements towards to the sea and causing the beach side lowering and the planted sides are turn to the sand hills. This cause main inundation of the nests on the beach. I suggest mechanical solutions should be considered during the winter months and firebreak type of sand corridors should be also designed.

The other problems mentioned in the reports are not directly related to the nesting and hatching success of the sea turtles on Patara beach. They have secondary links to the conservation of the sea turtles. The vehicle access to the beaches can be solved and rubbishes can regularly collected and the guided tours can also be a solution to the tourists' interests to see the sea turtles.

Fethiye beach Nesting potential

Fethiye is an important nesting site for sea turtles in Turkey. Fethiye beaches are located at the southwest part of Turkey's Mediterranean coast and divided into three separate subsections (Calis, Yaniklar and Akgol). The total length of these three beaches is 8 km. The problems vary among the subsections but intensive tourism and recreational activities, various tourism facilities, light and noise

pollution, fishing, abundant pleasure watercraft, sand extraction, beach traffic, agricultural activities, and natural and domestic animal predation are the main problems faced on Fethiye beaches. Fethiye can be seen as an optimal case study for Mediterranean sea turtles because it is subject to all negative anthropogenic factors affecting sea turtle populations here. A recent analysis of us regarding the nesting loggerhead population trend, based on the number of nests (1993-2004), showed a fluctuating but decreasing trend in Fethiye. We can not make Fethiye beaches as a perfect beach for sea turtles but try our best to minimize these impacts. I produced a table for problems and their solutions.

Specific problems observed and/or present	Suggested Solutions
Beach usage at night	Monitoring and conservation studies for population of sea turtles in beaches of Fethiye-Göcek have been continuing since 1989. These conservation studies have been continuing by involvement of many universities. The team is changing from one year to another and the implementations are starting every year. The guards should be hired for the night in addition to the scientific monitoring -working team.
Sun-bed umbrella usage	There should be only two rows of the beach umbrellas allowed on Çalış beach. The first row is at the back, within the 3 meters from the wall behind the beach. The second row is near the sea and within the five meters from sea. All the beach-chairs, in this second row, should be taken to the back row at nights. The beach zone between these two rows of umbrellas should be closed to the usage of umbrellas and/or beach chairs.
Ship-yard construction	The Government officials already stated that they cancelled to build on Akgol beach. The current situation ship-yard is also causing pollution to the bay, it should be moved and reconstructed but possible not on the beach section, may be a better location after the Akgol beach, there are more suitable sites.
Water falling from showers to the beach.	Water uses from beach showers was channelled for not directly run off onto the nesting beach. About this subject FETAB personals are patrolling the beach and making the necessary warnings. It was observed that some cases due to blockage of the pipe, the water is falling to the beach. This may casuse the embryonic mortality if it falls on the nest.
Night lightening on the beach	All the visible lights of the hotels and restaurants from the beaches should be removed, screened and/or painted as black after contact with them. The additional bush flowers and/or small plants can put on the pavement as additional screening.
New Hotel constructions and/or new facilities on the beach and beach shaping.	They should apply EIA but the private lands and private facilities on the beach seem to be not controllable. Mechanical beach ploughing should only be allowed before the nesting season in April. No beach sand removal or any alteration in the beach structure, If someone want to make some illegal activity to do this, scientific working team, night guards together with Government representatives should stop illegal activities.
Litter on the beach	Before the nesting season, FETABs director (which facilitates the sunbeds and umbrella usage), a regular collection of litter on the beach should be done and officials should also check this is properly done.

Vehicle access to the beach	Access of vehicles to the beach should be stopped either putting a barrier, cement blocks, wood posts etc. A car parks should be also designed by the Municipality at the back of the beach on Calis beach, so that drivers should park their cars.
Tree plantation on the beach, carpets,..etc	Carpets placement on the beach and planting of trees should not be allowed in the sea turtle nesting area. The trees alter the temperature of the sand and also roots can cause the mortality of the embryos.
Water sports and fishing activities	The fisherman and motorized water sports ownerships should be explained all code of conduct and they have a long list of rules they have to be obligated at the beginning of nesting season. Any illegal activities if it is found and seen by the project team, cost guards (tel:158 free phone) should immediately be informed.
Beach signs and information	At the beginning of nesting season, More information signs should be placed on main public entrances and important places of nesting beach.
Regular control of the beach by Government Authorities.	I believe this Bern Convention's visit to the site with authorities also helped to improve many issues mentioned above. I therefore suggest regular visits to the site should continue every nesting season with the team of scientific board.

I hope these suggestions are good for the sea turtles on the beach to mitigate the negative impacts from touristic development.

Prof. Dr Yakup KASKA
Pamukkale Univeristy, Turkey.
MTSG-IUCN