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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

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File open

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

REPORT BY THE GOVERNMENT

*Document prepared by
The Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs, Turkey*

- OCTOBER 2015 -

**REPORT OF GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY ON CASE FILE:
PRESUMED DEGRADATION OF NESTING BEACHES IN FETHIYE AND
PATARA, ON THE SPOT APPRASIAL**

In the context of Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) regarding Patara and Fethiye-Göcek Special Environmental Protection (SEPA) opening specific files related to marine turtle nesting sites and reports were examined. As it was known, Secretariat was informed about the studies and activities implemented in the regions during the spot appraisal visit accompanied by the ministry staff between the dates of 28 to 30 July 2015.

In parallel with the report prepared by Mr Paolo Casale and submitted to the Secretariat, General Directorate for Protection of Natural Assets of the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization (MEU), also prepared this report about problems, activities and difficulties in implementation of protection measures in Patara and Fethiye.

As presented in the report of on the spot appraisal, Patara SEPA marine turtles nesting site is still in an almost pristine condition regarding the habitat and the human use of the beach. Although population research and monitoring activities have been incessantly carried out by the scientific teams during the nesting period in the nesting sites every year, litter, and lack of informational activities, pressure of tourism activities remain as a major problem in the region. Patara SEPA has already the future of open area and it was seen that current problems of the area will be exceeded by the increment of protection measures.

Besides, as also declared in the report of on the spot appraisal, nesting areas were destroyed at low to high levels depending on the tracts; anthropogenic threats, intense tourism activities, light pollution and vehicle both terrestrial and marine areas have a negative impacts on nesting and breeding ratios in the Çalış-Yanıklar-Akgöl beach of the Fethiye-Göcek SEPA.

Intense tourism pressure, daily use activities and development of permanent structures along the coastal areas of Fethiye were among the issues reported to the Secretariat in the previous years by the Turkish Delegation have been caused to difficulties in the implementation and sustainability of conservation measures in the region. Barely, due to its relatively good condition and the higher number of nests, population research and monitoring activities were concentrated in Akgöl beach in the nesting period in 2015.

In addition, 1/5000 scale Master Plan and 1/1000 scale Implementation Plan proposals were disapproved to construct shipyard/ship dock in the tract of Akgöl-Karaot in order not to reduce further nesting habitat by the Ministry of Environment and Urbanisation (GDPNA) (dated 20.02.2015 and numbered 748 official letter).

Although we have legal base and project to eliminate current problems in Patara and Fethiye, it is important to increase staff number, capacity building and actively working in mid and long term protection in the areas.

- JANUARY 2015 -

**ORAL STATEMENT MADE BY THE DELEGATE OF TURKEY AT THE 34TH
STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING
ON COMPLAINT NO 2012/9: PRESUMED DEGRADATION OF NESTING
BEACHES IN FETHIYE AND PATARA**

To begin with Patara, it should be emphasized that the nesting beaches of marine turtles and village settlement area are 2 km apart from each other. The settlement plan for this area is in accordance with Patara Environmental Master Plan which was approved in 1991. The settlement plan was approved by the related institution, which is the Environmental Protection Agency for SEPAs (Special Environment Protection Areas).

The large-scale summer house construction project area is consistent with the settlement plan. Besides, the project size was reduced from more than 100.000 m² to 28.000 m², which is a 75 % decrease, and holiday house construction project was confined according to this decrease. Moreover, the settlement development was also directed in the opposite direction of the beach.

To increase public awareness at the site, tourists and daily users were informed by means of leaflets, handouts and signposts. Public meetings and training programs were carried out for the conservation of sea turtles and their habitats during the nesting season by the local authorities. As we look at the number of nests in the area within the last 20 years we see yearly fluctuations but the overall trend is on the rise.

As for Fethiye, which is a very well-known tourist center in Turkey, the Special Environmental Protection Area was established in 1988. The summer season population is more than 200.000, and there are lots of hotels along the coast. It is a pity that there is no local management unit in Fethiye SEPA, and that's why the control of the area is inadequate.

Nevertheless, although 2014 counts are not published yet, according to the results of 2013 counts, more than 8000 egg remaining in 250 nests were counted. About one third of the nests were caged against human activities and against predators. The observed hatching rate was 92 %. 12 nesting females were tagged and 3 of them were re-observed during the second nesting.

For the public awareness, monthly meetings with hotel owners and personnel have taken place and presentations were also made to the tourists and visitors. This public awareness campaign for both local and international tourists was active every night during the nesting season at Caretta Info Desk on Çalış beach.

In conclusion, Turkey has a broad experience in managing marine turtle sites. We have good examples of management of nesting sites by harmonizing sound scientific data with utilitarian perspective. Therefore it is guaranteed that we will create a solution for these areas, as well.