

Strasbourg, 28 September 2015  
[files43e\_2015.docx]

T-PVS/Files (2015) 43

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE  
AND NATURAL HABITATS

**Standing Committee**

35<sup>th</sup> 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 Oğuz TÜRKOZAN, IUCN Specialists Group - Observer to the on-the-spot appraisal*

## PERSONAL VIEW

- August 2015 -

The travel for the assessment was started on 27<sup>th</sup> of July from Aydın and I reached there late since I made a stop in Fethiye. On 28<sup>th</sup> the program started with the meeting and followed by field excursions on different sections of the Patara beach. In the same day after 10pm night patrol was realized in order to see the light pollution and beach use. On 29<sup>th</sup> we moved to Fethiye and realized a meeting in the afternoon at 2pm. Just after the meeting we patrolled the Çalış beach subsection. In the same day, we patrolled the Çalış, Yanıklar and Akgöl beach subsections in order to see light pollution and beach use during the night. On 30<sup>th</sup> of July Yanıklar and Akgöl beach subsections were patrolled during the day. For all beach visits personel car was used and at some parts beaches were patrolled on foot. My general view about the assessment and suggestions are presented below.

### PATARA

Patara beach is one of the most important nesting grounds of loggerhead turtles with historical background and sand dunes in Turkey. The following problems were determined and suggestions are presented for the solutions.

- There exists a great authority gap. There are no beach guards who will control the beach regulations during the day and at night. Urgently, at least two beach guards should be hired.
- There are wooden poles for the regulation of the deck chairs and umbrellas usage on the beach. In front of these wooden poles the usage of umbrellas and deck chairs are free and behind it is nesting zone. However, there are no visible signs on the beach showing these regulations on the beach. There should be big visible signs informing the people.
- As we informed the area used by deck chairs and umbrellas of the beach coffee is sometimes extended depending on the numbers of visitors on the beach. This could be done but with the suggestions of marine turtles workers at the area and of course with a good organization.
- The entrance of the vehicles (Fig. 1) and horse riding are long been one of the most important problems of the Patara beach. This could be prevented with barriers to the points where beach can be reachable and of course with beach guards. However, the most effective way will be a penalty fee. I believe this penalty fee will completely solve the problem.
- A direct road from the summer houses (Fig. 2) to the beach is another problem. This provides uncontrolled access to the nesting beach. It seems that people have been using this area as a picnic ground and leaving all of their litter on the beach. This part of beach also includes incredible sand dunes (Fig 3), which are important part of this ecosystem.
- A beach bar (Pink Beach) with a swimming pool was allowed at the western end of the beach next to the Eşen River however it was partly removed since such a kind of construction is not suitable on the nesting beach. The logic of this permission was to provide the control of this area especially against to the entrance of vehicles and horse riding and also provide the cleaning of the beach. The swimming pool area was covered with sand with barrels bordering the pool area and the hut was left on the beach (Fig. 4). If having such a place will help (it could be) the regulation in this area this could be allowed but with a new certain rules starting with the maximum amount of deck chairs and umbrellas used, the border of maximum area that will be used, no swimming pools, no night usage, no lights etc...
- Patara beach consists of two beach subsection and almost 14 km in length. In addition to beach work public awareness is very important. However, public awareness on the beach was limited due to personnel number (only 3 people) working on the beach. The reason for this is the limited funding. For an effective conservation management the personnel number should be at least 6 people (4 for the beach work and 2 for awareness).
- The public relations with the local people are one of the most important issues of conservation biology studies. However, it is impossible to construct a reliable relation in a short term. The system of the Turkish Authority is to give the nesting beach studies on annual basis to the

companies based on a tender. Furthermore, the company can work with any biologist. This means every year a different research group could come and work on the beach even with no conservation management or marine turtle conservation knowledge. With this way you cannot provide healthy communication with the locals. Therefore, the system should be changed and the beaches should be given for longer terms (at least 3 years or longer) to the real marine turtle conservation experts. Furthermore, the involvement of the local people to marine turtle conservation in the area should be provided.

- I personally heard that some locals organize beach walk for turtle monitoring and provide income. This kind of uncontrolled beach patrols should be definitely stopped. However, in order to provide the involvements of the locals and hotels to the conservation studies the experts working on the beach can offer controlled patrols together for limited number of people with certain rules. The experts even can train couple of locals as a guide. In the future these people could organize a guided tours for marine turtles and provide income for the whole village.
- Camping and night access near Esen river and Ozlen beach is another important issue. Such kind of management problems only can be solved by scientific supervision.

## **FETHİYE**

- As in Patara here also exists a great authority gap. There are no beach guards who will control the beach regulations during the day and at night. Urgently, at least four beach guards (two for Çalış and two for Yanıklar) should be hired.
- The regulation of the deck chairs and umbrellas during the day and collection of them during the night are two main problems on Çalış beach. Depending on the beach wide and nesting spots the deck chairs should be maximum in two rows (Fig. 5) and removed before it get dark.
- At night the people are moving on the beach and removing collected deck chairs to the middle of the beach and sitting on the beach. This should be strictly controlled during the nesting season and not allowed.
- The beach has been used as a picnic ground both during the day (Fig. 6) and at night. The beach use as a picnic ground during the day should be well organized at the western end of the Calis beach and Karataş beach. The people using these areas are leaving their garbage directly on the beach, which is not good for nesting females and hatchlings. Barbecue places could be located far behind the beach for the public use and picnic activities should be limited to those places but not allowed on the beach. For the night such activities should be prohibited.
- The beach bars with big loud speakers and severe light pollution are the problems of Çalış and Yanıklar beach subsections. These should not be allowed during the breeding season.
- It was surprising to see a great new hotel construction (Barut Hotel) at the southern end of the Yanıklar beach. This part was one of the main nesting spot of the loggerhead turtles on the beach. It was a pity that the beach was occupied with large wooden pavilions (Fig. 7). I think the area where the deck chairs will be located, the size of the area used and the beach use at night strictly organized with the support of a marine turtle expert. Large wooden cabanas and wooden walking paths limiting the marine turtle nesting in the area should be removed.
- The jetties of the hotels on Yanıklar beach subsection carries strong lights during the night and the people staying in the hotel walk on the beach. This is my personnel observation on the 27<sup>th</sup> of July with Majesty Holiday Village. However, there was no light during our visit. The people staying in these hotels should be informed and not allowed on the beach their selves and strong lights on the landing stages should not be used.
- The northern end of the Akgöl beach subsection is the nesting hotspot of the Fethiye. This part is uncontrollably used with deck chairs and umbrellas. In the middle of the same subsection wooden cabanas were located on the nesting zone. There was a strong light coming from this area at night. The construction of shipyard on this beach subsection should not be allowed.

In conclusion, there is a severe protected area management gap (there is no PA management team/unit, no guards it's just the 3 biologist who are managing/protecting) for both beaches and it should be improved.



***Figure 1: The vehicle entrance near Eşen River on Patara beach***



***Figure 2: Summer houses that have direct access to Patara beach***



***Figure 3: Sand dunes at the end of uncontrolled road reaching the beach***





***Figure 4: Beach hut left on the beach by Pink Beach Bar***



***Figure 5: Beach use during the day on Çalış beach, Fethiye***



***Figure 6: Beach use at Karataş beach (camping and picnic)***



*Figure 7: Wooden cabanas and walking paths of Barut Hotel*