

Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats



Standing Committee

Recommendation n° 7 (1987) of the standing committee on the protection of marine turtles and their habitat

(Adopted by the Standing Committee on 11 December 1987)

The Standing Committee of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, acting under the terms of Article 14 of the convention,

Having regard to the aims of the convention to conserve wild flora and fauna and their natural habitats ;

Recalling that Article 3 provides that each Contracting Party shall take the necessary steps to promote national policies for the conservation of wild flora, wild fauna and natural habitats, with particular attention to endangered and vulnerable species, especially endemic ones, and endangered habitats ;

Recalling that Article 4, paragraph 3, provides that the Contracting Parties undertake to give special attention to the protection of areas that are of importance for the migratory species specified in Appendices II and III and which are appropriately situated in relation to migration routes, as wintering, staging, feeding, breeding or moulting areas ;

Considering that more knowledge on the biology of marine turtles is required ;

Recognising that education of the general public and special target groups is a necessary step for marine turtle conservation ;

Considering that marine turtles present in the Mediterranean are seriously endangered as a result of deterioration of their nesting beaches by tourism, direct killing, accidents in fishing nets and capture in long-line fishing, having experienced a drastic reduction in their number in the last year.

Recommends that the relevant Parties embark without delay on the following work :

1. give adequate legal protection or appropriate assistance for protection to the main nesting beaches for marine turtles and enforce the conservation measures where they exist, in particular in Zakynthos (Greece) ; Dalyan, Akyatan and Yumurtalik (Turkey) ; and Lara, Toxefra, Polis and Latsi (Cyprus) ;
2. avoid any new touristic or other development in important nesting areas. If it is unavoidable, any new construction should be subject to an environmental impact assessment carried out from the start in collaboration with all interested groups (scientists, local authorities, decision-makers). Wherever there are already constructions, strict regulations should be applied so as to respect the ecological needs of sea turtles ;
3. promote a co-ordinated research programme on marine turtles, setting the following themes as priorities :
 - mapping of nesting densities ;
 - location of feeding and wintering areas and migratory routes ;
 - effects of different forms of fishing and pollution on turtle populations ;

– biological studies on artificial hatcheries so that this solution may be used if needed ;

4. intensify co-operation between all the states directly concerned and, in collaboration with relevant scientific societies and international organisations (EEC, UNEP, IUCN), provide appropriate means (financial and other) to achieve efficiency ;
5. promote information campaigns addressed to the general public and relevant target groups (schoolchildren, fishermen, tour operators, tourists and local and regional authorities), especially in sensitive areas ;
6. enforce present regulations concerning commercialising marine turtles and their derivatives.