

## Agenda Item 6.2: Possible Files

### Turkey: Habitat Destruction in Mersin, Anamur Beach



40<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee  
Bern Convention  
30<sup>th</sup> Nov – 4<sup>th</sup> December 2020

# ANAMUR SEA TURTLE NESTING SITE

- 12.7km sea turtle nesting beach
- **2<sup>nd</sup>** most important sea turtle nesting site in Turkey & **4<sup>th</sup>** in the Mediterranean<sup>1</sup>
  - Nests/yr Average = **733**<sub>2</sub>
  - Recent years have recorded 1,000+ nests
- The natural habitat of the creek is an important area for the **Critically Endangered** Mediterranean subpopulation of the **Soft Shell Nile Turtles (*Trionyx triunguis*)**
  - Entire Mediterranean subpopulation estimated to be **less than 1000** adult individuals



<sup>1</sup>IUCN MTSG report *Sea turtles in the Mediterranean*, 2010; Hochscheid et al. 2018. *Sea Turtles in the Mediterranean Region: MTSG Annual Regional Report*

<sup>2</sup>Hochscheid et al. 2018. *Sea Turtles in the Mediterranean Region: MTSG Annual Regional Report*

# LEGISLATIVE PROTECTION OF ANAMUR

- **Recommendation No.66 (1998) on the conservation status of some nesting beaches for marine turtles in Turkey on 4<sup>th</sup> December 1998.**
  - **Measure No.1** Necessitates **Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs)** to be carried out for projects.
  - **Measure No.4** Assure **inter-ministerial compliance** for marine turtle conservation
  - **Measure No.5** Urgent & stringent measures to **enforce legislation against illegal sand extraction.**
  - **Species Protection** Anamur Beach: To Prohibit sand extraction & Secure remaining unbuilt beach plots against development.
- **Turkish Ministry of Environment & Forestry Circular No:B.18.0.DMP.0.01.03/831.02 Oct 2009**
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Degree Conservation Areas. (The Protection Zone)
    - (b) Prohibits alteration of the land (digging/filling)
    - (c) No alterations to the sand (removal or additions)
    - (d) Prohibits any kind of motorised vehicles on beach (1<sup>st</sup> May – September)
    - (g) Requirement of Ministerial permission from Environment & Forestry Ministry for projects

# KARAAĞAÇ - HABITAT DESTRUCTION OF NESTING BEACH

Pre-Allocated Area of Karaağaç Picnic Area – c.4.660m<sup>2</sup>



**GoogleEarth Image 19.07.2017: BEFORE** construction-natural habitat at Karaağaç Beach



**GoogleEarth Image 05.11.2019: AFTER** construction-loss of protected nesting habitat.

# KARAAĞAÇ – DESTRUCTION OF ADJACENT SAND DUNE SYSTEM & DUMPING OF SOIL



# KARAAĞAÇ - INTRODUCTION & IRRIGATION OF ALIEN FLORA SPECIES



# KARAAĞAÇ – **LOSS** OF NESTING HABITAT & **FAILED** SEA TURTLE NESTING ATTEMPT



Anamur Çevre Platformu  
27 Ιουλίου στις 10:26 π.μ. · 🌐 · 📍 · 🗣️

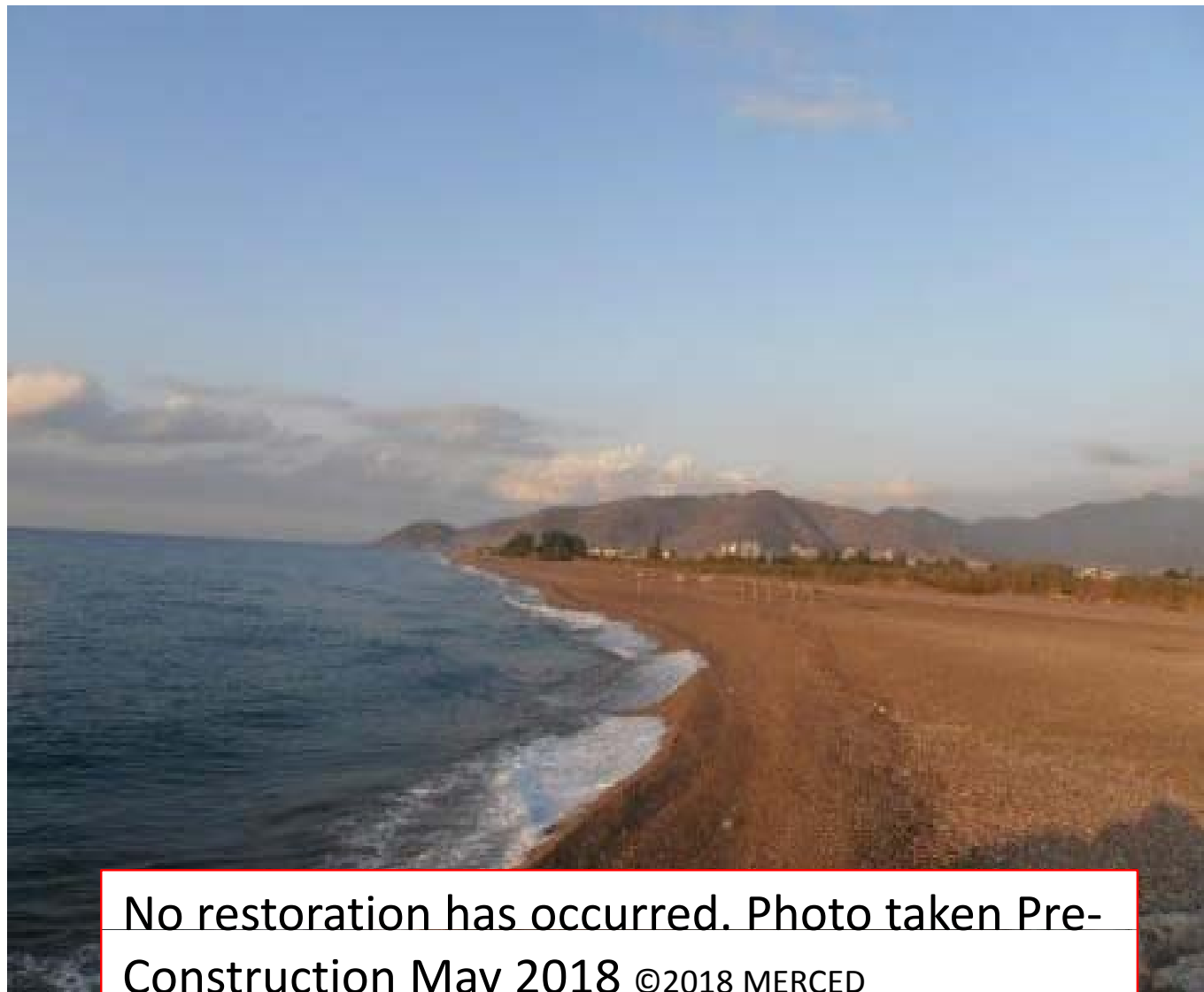
**FAILED** nesting attempt ©2019 MERÇED  
Video recorded 27<sup>th</sup> July  
<https://www.facebook.com/949710881892145/videos/2391783101110906>

# KARAAĞAÇ – ALTERATION OF SARISU CREEK (RAMSAR SITE)





# KARAAĞAÇ – NO REHABILITATION & CONTINUED IRRIGATION



No restoration has occurred. Photo taken Pre-Construction May 2018 ©2018 MERÇED



Photo taken 6<sup>th</sup> August 2020 ©2020 MERÇED



Continued irrigation of the site, 10<sup>th</sup> August 2020 ©2020 MERÇED

# NEW PLANNED THREAT AND FURTHER LOSS OF HABITAT WITH PLANNED COASTAL ARRANGEMENT PROJECT

New 93.408m<sup>2</sup> development proposed within **Protected** Sea Turtle Nesting Zone



Municipality Web page-  
<http://www.anamur.bel.tr/icerik/54/1078/mesire-alani-ve-halk-plaji-projesi.aspx>



The Municipality Web page, 27.02.2020 - Title: Beach Arrangement Project is Starting.  
<http://m.anamur.bel.tr/icerik/49/1184/baskan-kilinc-sahil-projesi-basliyor.aspx>

# ADDITIONAL THREATS TO ANAMUR NESTING BEACH

## Lack of Awareness of Conservation Rules & Enforcement



Beach signs placed by the authorities read 'Anamur Sea Turtle nesting beach', but no conservation rules e.g. prohibition of vehicles and campfires, are mentioned.

# ADDITIONAL THREATS TO ANAMUR NESTING BEACH

## Illegal entry of motor vehicles on nesting beach



# ADDITIONAL THREATS TO ANAMUR NESTING BEACH

## Complete lack of beach management



Beach Furniture placed anywhere and not removed at night ©2020 MERÇED



Illegal construction on the beach ©2020 MERÇED



Wedding ceremony platform on the beach  
©2020 MERÇED

# ADDITIONAL THREATS TO ANAMUR NESTING BEACH

## Light Pollution & Night Time Disturbances



Light Pollution at night on the nesting beach



# ADDITIONAL THREATS TO ANAMUR NESTING BEACH

## Disregard of Conservation efforts & Lack of enforcement



For the last 15 years a member of MERÇED has been caring for, releasing hatchlings, marking nests with reed sticks and recording nesting activity.

Reed sticks marking nests are removed at night and used for barbeques on the nesting beach

# ADDITIONAL THREATS TO ANAMUR NESTING BEACH

The Municipality **extracting sand from the beach**, without appropriate permission from the Anamur District Governorate and in disregard of Recommendation No. 66.



©2019 MERÇED – Additional photos and links can be found at:

<https://www.facebook.com/949710881892145/posts/1253633151499915/?vh=e&d=n>



# ADDITIONAL THREATS TO ANAMUR NESTING BEACH

## Degradation of Habitat and Lack of Enforcement

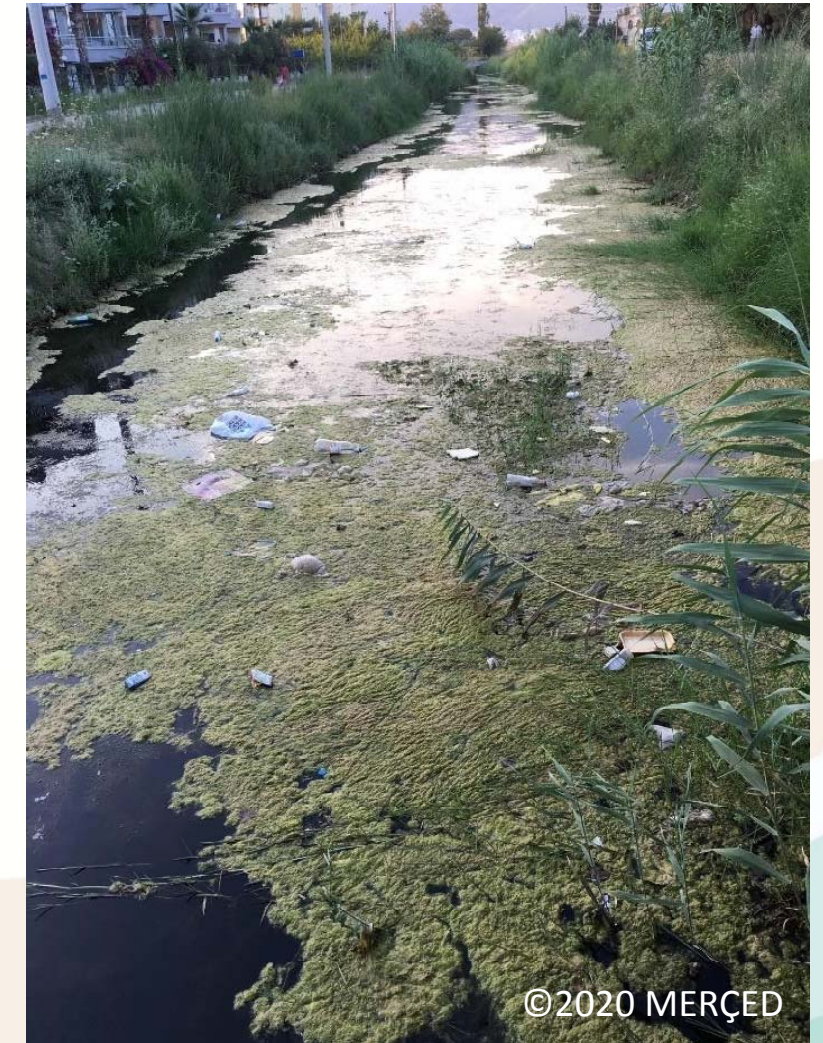


©2020 MERÇED

At Dragon Çayı Rivulet **no** enforcement to remove the illegal shanties, sheds and huts, deprived of a sewage system.



©2020 MERÇED



©2020 MERÇED

Aslıhan Canal runs adjacent to the picnic area at Karaağaç, carrying pollution to the sea, affecting the habitats of both the loggerhead and Nile turtle.

# In Conclusion

- **Complete disregard** to National, International commitments & Recommendations
- **Deliberate & continuous destruction** of the protected nesting habitat
- **Lack of enforcement** by Local Authorities

## We encourage the Turkish Government to:

- **Enforce compliance** to International and National legislation
- **Enforce the restoration** of Karaağaç
- **Prevent further habitat loss & destruction** from new proposed development
- **Implement & enforce conservation measures** to ensure the protection of Anamur nesting beach

Anamur's Mayor standing between the new picnic area and a nest holding a sign that reads:  
***'It is a sea turtle nest. Please protect it'.***



Sourced: The Municipality Web page—On-Going Projects Section  
<http://www.anamur.bel.tr/icerik/54/1078/mesire-alani-ve-halk-plaji-projesi.aspx>

## The Standing Committee of the Bern Convention to:

- Open a case file to follow-up on the conservation status of Anamur nesting beach