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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE  
AND NATURAL HABITATS

**Standing Committee**

35<sup>th</sup> meeting  
Strasbourg, 1-4 December 2015

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**RECOMMENDATION No. 183 (2015)**  
**ON THE CONSERVATION, MANAGEMENT, AND**  
**RESTORATION OF FETHIYE NESTING BEACHES**  
**(TURKEY)**

*Document*  
*prepared by*  
*the Directorate of Democratic Governance*



Convention on the Conservation  
of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats

**Recommendation No. 183 (2015) of the Standing Committee, adopted on 4 December 2015, on the conservation, management, and restoration of Fethiye nesting beaches (Turkey)**

The Standing Committee to 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 of the Convention provides that each Contracting Party shall take steps to promote national policies for the conservation of the habitats 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 1, of the Convention provides that each Contracting Party shall take appropriate and necessary legislative and administrative measures to ensure the conservation of the habitats of the wild fauna species, especially those listed in Appendix II to the Convention;

Recalling that Article 6 of the Convention provides that, for the species listed in Appendix II, the deliberate damage to or destruction of breeding or resting sites shall be prohibited;

Noting that the loggerhead turtle is a strictly protected species listed in Appendix II to the Convention and is included in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, mainly as a result of degradation of nesting areas;

Recalling Recommendations No. 7 (1987) on the protection of marine turtles and their habitat, No. 8 (1987) on the protection of marine turtles in Dalyan and other important areas in Turkey, No. 12 (1988) concerning the protection of important turtle nesting beaches in Turkey, and No. 54 (1996) on the conservation of *Caretta caretta* at Patara (Turkey);

Having further regard to the following specific Recommendations of the Standing Committee:

- No. 24 (1991) on the protection of some beaches in Turkey of particular importance to marine turtles, recommending Turkey to take urgent practical steps to protect the seventeen nesting beaches, including by – inter alia – implementing prohibitions against sand extraction; giving priority to turtle conservation over other activities within SPAs; and halting constructions at Fethiye and Patara beaches until management plans for the areas are drawn-up;
- No. 66 (1998) on the conservation status of some nesting beaches for marine turtles in Turkey, recommending Turkish authorities to – among others – reassess tourism investment projects that may result in making the beaches unsuitable for turtle nesting; carrying out EIA prior to any development project affecting a nesting beach; take urgent measures to fully implement the protection status of SPAs; remove effects of anthropogenic pressures on the nesting beaches; improve control of the effects on the beaches of local tourism, secondary summer homes, caravans, camping and other activities that may be detrimental to the environmental quality of the beaches; assure inter-ministerial compliance for marine turtle conservation needs; and – for Fethiye in particular - secure the remaining unbuilt beach plots against development;

Very worried by the findings of the on-the-spot assessment carried out by Mr Paolo Casale [document [T-PVS/Files \(2015\) 40](#)] in summer 2015, reporting about very high levels of anthropogenic threats occurring on the beach and producing habitat degradation from low to high levels along Fethiye coast;

Concerned by the still ongoing sand extraction activities and by the continuous development of buildings and tourism facilities that – in Çalış in particular - have permanently limited the width of the beach;

Further concerned by the documented intense light pollution, poor controls and enforcement, inadequate management of the beach and human presence, including at night, which seem to severely affect natural hatchling recruitment to the sea;

Regretting the persistent weak level of implementation of the recommendations issued by the Standing Committee in the past fifteen years;

Noting that Akgöl beach hosts a relatively high number of nests of the Fethiye nesting complex, and that the planned construction of a shipyard/drydock on Akgöl nesting beach has been stopped;

Recommends the authorities of Turkey to implement, as a matter of urgency, the following measures:

1. Stop any further development of permanent structures (buildings, roads, shipyard, jetties/docks, etc.) along the entire coast of the nesting site complex, in order not to reduce further the nesting habitat;
2. Remove any structure (wooden paths, wooden pavilions, bars, platforms, showers, carpets, patios, etc.) from sand zones, including those to be restored, especially in areas with relatively narrow beach width and/or in tracts with narrow sandy strips; and restore the sandy areas;
3. Stop sand extraction and ensure the application of deterrent penalties for these illegal activities;
4. Remove planted vegetation, acacia in particular, with a view to restore the remaining sandy beach;
5. Map the whole Fethiye coast using long-term data, maps and imagery to identify the past, current and potential most suitable zones for sea turtle nesting, and set a maximum percentage limit of sandy tracts where touristic structures are allowed on the nesting beach and define (A) coastal tracts less suitable for turtle nesting, where beach furniture is allowed at appropriate densities and (B) coastal tracts adequate for turtle nesting, where beach furniture and access at night are not allowed. Enforce beach furniture removal/stacking at night along the entire nesting beach complex during the nesting/hatching season;
6. Prohibit the use of beach furniture and other structures or facilities on the sandy zones of Akgöl beach, regulate use of the core nesting area in the sandy northern end of the beach, and carry-out the necessary controls to check enforcement;
7. Reduce light pollution to a minimum along the whole coast during the nesting/hatching season: (i) remove all lights not strictly necessary, (ii) reduce the number of lights allowed for each business company, (iii) all lights considered as strictly necessary should be reduced in power and (iv) be red or orange-yellow, (v) all lights should be shaded in the direction of the beach. Further reduce lights after a certain time in the night, for not less than 50% of the dark time. Where possible, reduce height of lights, use motion sensors and native bushes/plants as light buffers on roads and properties. Prohibit light show equipment use;
8. Build permanent barriers (not ditches) on the roads to prevent vehicles from accessing the beach, designate parking spaces and official picnic areas away from the beach;
9. Regulate maritime traffic during the nesting/hatching season, by prohibiting any motorised traffic at appropriate distances near the coast, by setting speed limits and foreseeing marked corridors from the beach to open waters;
10. Set up long-term research and conservation programs conducted by a permanent team recruited on a long-term perspective. This team should have adequate manpower to monitor the entire

beach and protect all nests if necessary during the entire nesting/hatching season. The team should also assess across the years and using the same comparable methods: (i) the disorienting effects of photo-pollution on hatchlings, (ii) disturbance of nesting females, and (iii) predation of nests (or attempts);

11. Prohibit camping and bonfires and set appropriate time limits for the operation of beach bars at night during the nesting and hatching season;
12. Take measures to clean the beach and empty appropriately located bins on a daily basis, and ensure sewage is not discharged into the sea;
13. Set up adequate regulations and enforcement for the measures above, including regular day and night controls along the entire coast; Define and enforce fines for noncompliance with above regulations;
14. Ensure that adequate financial and human resources are allocated to the control and management of the beaches;
15. Improve information to local community and tourists about sea turtle nesting and sustainable use of the beach. This should include effective communication of regulations (incl. regulations implementing the Recommendation) by the authorities to stakeholders and businesses, signs at all major beach entry points, and awareness campaigns aimed to the guests of the big resorts, in collaboration with the owners and managers. Encourage beach hotels and businesses to support scientific teams and involve the local community in the protection and management of the protected area;
16. Continue to protect all nests with cages, until the different conditions obtained through the other measures above will allow again a more natural process;
17. Keep the Standing Committee annually informed about the implementation of this Recommendation.