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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

45th meeting
Strasbourg, 8-12 December 2025

Bureau of the Standing Committee

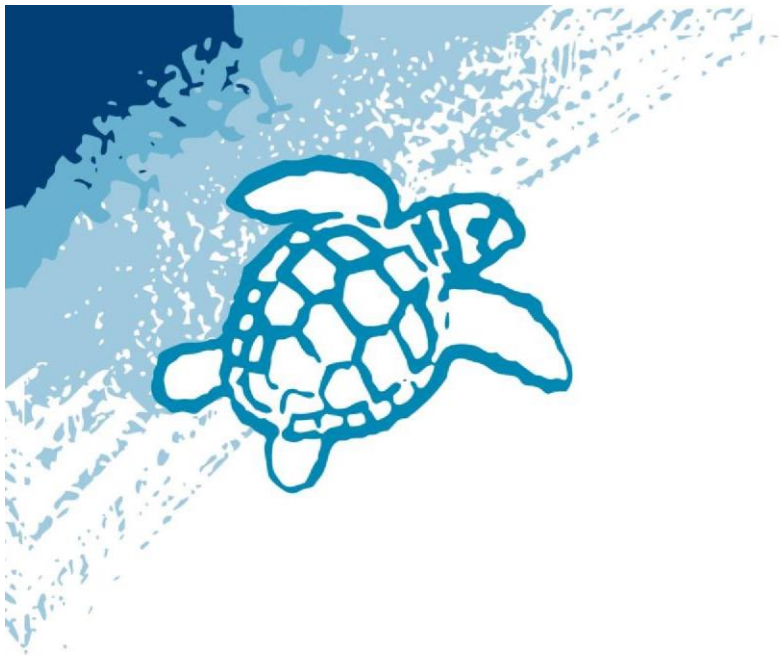
8-10 April 2025
Strasbourg

Open File: 2019/05

Habitat destruction in Mersin Anamur Beach (Türkiye)

-COMPLAINANT REPORT-

Document prepared by MEDASSET



MEDASSET

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Mr. Carl Amirgulashvili
Chair Standing Committee of the Bern Convention

12 February 2025
Our Ref. 05.2025

Re: Updated Report for the open file 2019/05: Türkiye: Habitat destruction in Mersin Anamur Beach

Dear Mr. Amirgulashvili,

MERÇED and MEDASSET, hereby submit an update in relation to the Open File 2019/05: Türkiye: Habitat destruction in Mersin Anamur Beach, to be addressed at the 2025 spring meeting of the Bureau (8-10 April).

In reference to the violations that MERÇED and MEDASSET witnessed during our on-site visits and we [presented](#) in the framework of the 44th Standing Committee, **we hereby report the continued degradation of the nesting beach and that there is no progress** for their resolution and the full implementation of Recommendation No. 226 (2024).

Specifically as we present in the attached documents, owners of businesses and fields on the nesting beach shore increase and expand the violations on the beach during the winter months, when people are less active and state bodies do not inspect. Although the authorities, unfortunately, know of this situation, their control and inspection mechanisms do not operate during the winter months. The specific violations will increase human pressure on the nesting beach during the summer months. Despite our repeated warnings to state officials on this issue, they neither cooperate with us nor protect the beach. Please refer to the Annex 4 - Fig. 18 – a-b and Annex 5- [R19]. Find all the updated report and evidence here.

We therefore encourage the Bern Convention Standing Committee to keep the case file open for further monitoring.

We are at your disposal for any further information.

Yours sincerely,



Lily Venizelos

MEDASSET President Member of IUCN-Species Survival Commission: Marine Turtle Specialist Group

With roots back to 1983, MEDASSET was founded in 1988 in England and 1993 in Greece. It is an international NGO registered as a not-for profit organisation in Greece. MEDASSET plays an active role in the study and conservation of sea turtles and their habitats throughout the Mediterranean, through scientific research, environmental education, lobbying relevant decision makers and raising public awareness. The organisation is a partner to the United Nations Environment Programme's Mediterranean Action Plan (UNEP/MAP) and a Permanent Observer-Member to the Bern Convention, Council of Europe, since 1988.

Protecting marine biodiversity in the Mediterranean since 1988

Non Profit Organisation, Established by the 3187/93 Decision of the Athens' Court of First Instance
Member: MIO/ECSDE & Greek Herpetological Society. Partner to UNEP/MAP - Permanent Observer-member of the Bern Convention.

UPDATE REPORT BY THE NGO

Marine Turtle Conservation in the Mediterranean

LOGGERHEAD SEA TURTLE (*CARETTA CARETTA*), GREEN TURTLE (*CHELONIA MYDAS*) & AFRICAN SOFT SHELL TURTLE (*TRIONYX TRIUNGUIS*) CONSERVATION MONITORING IN ANAMUR, MERSIN, TÜRKİYE

10 February 2025

Document prepared by
MERÇED - Mersin Environment and Nature Association Deputy
& presented by
MEDASSET - the Mediterranean Association to Save the Sea Turtles

for the 44th Standing Comm Meeting of 2024 the Contracting Parties to the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention)

MERÇED and MEDASSET hereby submit an update report to the 44th Standing Committee Meeting of the Bern Convention (2-6 December 2024) on the conservation status of loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*) & green (*Chelonia mydas*) sea turtle nesting beaches and habitats of the African soft shell turtle (*Trionyx triunguis*) in Anamur, Türkiye.

Contents:

- **SUMMARY**
- [ANNEX 1: MEDASSET's OSA REPORT](#)
- [ANNEX 2: PHOTOGRAPHS of the MEDASSET's OSA](#)
- [ANNEX 3: ADDITIONAL REPORT FOR ANAMUR NESTING BEACH](#)
- [ANNEX 4: PHOTOGRAPHS of the ADDITIONAL REPORT](#)
- [ANNEX 5: REFERENCES](#)

1. SUMMARY

This report covers the updates since the last report submitted for Autumn Bureau Meeting ([T-PVS/Files\(2024\)6](#)).

As a result of the elections held on March 31, 2024, the political party and the Mayor governing the Anamur municipality changed. We hope that the new administration will not make the mistakes made by the former mayor. MERÇED will continue to monitor the new Mayor's and his team's actions, give advice if requested by the local authorities and report to the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention.

MEDASSET organized an On Site Appraisal (OSA) by a sea turtle expert in Anamur SPA in 29-30 June and 1 July 2024. The MEDASSET on site survey was funded through a grant from Aktionsgemeinschaft Artenschutz (AGA), www.aga-artenschutz.de. It was prior to the Bern Committee organized OSA (BCOSA). MEDASSET's report on the conservation status of the Anamur nesting beach is attached in Annex 1 and photos of this report are provided in Annex 2. This report highlights the fact that most issues included in the previous NGO reports have not been corrected, including light pollution, illegal vehicle entry to the beach, expanding businesses, stone walls alongside the *Trionyx triunguis* habitats (Dragon river and Sultan Stream) etc.

MEDASSET's OSA was followed by the Bern Convention expert's OSA (BCOSA) which took place 2- 4 July 2024. MERÇED as well as representatives from the local authorities and the central government participated in the BCOSA. MERÇED's observations during and after the BCOSA are presented in Annex 3 and the related pictures in Annex 4. During the BCOSA, a *Trionyx triunguis* was observed swimming in the Dragon river and nests of *Caretta caretta* and *Chelonia mydas* were also identified. During the BCOSA all parties discussed possible solutions to the issues. There was no communication and collaboration between the authorities and local NGOs until this BCOSA event, which enabled all parties to directly share their thoughts and perspectives with each other. The parties began evaluating problems and possible solutions to better protect and monitor the nesting beach. This is a promising outcome, which we hope will continue and that it was not just a show during the BCOSA.

This concern is driven by the fact that the corrective actions taken by the authorities on the beach prior to the BCOSA (for example, taking back the beach furniture, warning businesses to comply with the rules defined in the circular, etc.) have returned to the former state after the BCOSA team left Anamur. This situation discourages our hopes that corrective actions will be permanent.

In our detailed reports in Annex 1, 2, 3 and 4, we report on some positive progresses, such as the cancellation of the drilling permits on the nesting beach, which was part of the planned geothermal power plant. However, we also report on new negative developments and observations:

- 1) Plowing the beach with construction equipment for "cleaning and organizing" purposes in April,
- 2) Caravan camping work on the beach near Dragon River,
- 3) Concrete building construction and burial of a septic tank in the coast of the Anemurion Ancient city, which is a nesting beach and a 1st Degree Archaeological Site.
- 4) Negative effects of the stone walls and illegal huts in the Sultan Stream on the habitat of African soft shell turtle. (Ref: Annex 5 -[R1], Ref2, Ref3)
- 5) Reclamation works and pollution in streams and rivers

MERÇED and MEDASSET call upon the authorities to:

1. Ensure that local authorities and local businesses comply with the Turkish National law (Circular # B.18.0.DMP.0.01.03 - Ref: Annex 5-[R11]) and the Bern Convention's Recommendation No. 66 (1998),
2. Enforce and penalize perpetrators for violations of the protection measures as stated in the National legislation circular # B.18.0.DMP.0.01.03 (e.g. vehicle access, sand extraction, business expansions, light, and noise pollution, etc). Businesses should be disciplined so that they stop to commit violations,
3. Allocate more staff and work with experts from a university, to ensure efficient and significant prevention, monitoring and data collection is performed,

4. Immediately establish the sea turtle commission, as decided during the BCOSA, and operate it effectively. Reported violations to the commission should be resolved effectively and in a timely manner,
5. Ensure that the positive cooperation and communication established with local NGOs during the BCOSA process continues,
6. Update the Ministry's National Biodiversity Inventory records to collect and include Green turtle's (*Chelonia mydas*) and African soft shell turtle's (*Trionyx triunguis*) data,
7. Rehabilitate the stone walls alongside of the Dragon River, Sultan Creek and Sarisu Creek that cause irreversible damage to the living environment and seriously affect the nesting activities and habitats of African soft shell turtles,
8. Fix the lighting of parks, tourism businesses, official premises, street lamps and apartment complex's lamps on the entire nesting beach. Especially the newly built Beach Arrangement Project (Devlet Bahçeli Park) and the Port (Iskele) region, should be evaluated in terms of the color, intensity, frequency and direction of the lighting, and necessary changes should be made, (Ref: Annex 4 - Fig. 13)
9. Stop illegally taking sand from the beach. Punish people/institutions that take illegal sand from the beach in a way that will provide deterrence,
10. Install permanent barriers to prevent illegal vehicle access to the beach in the Dragon and the Cerenler region,
11. The caravan area in the Dragon area and the iron profiles to establish the jet ski renting facility should be removed,
12. Remove the reinforced concrete building and the toilet area within the 1st degree archeological protected area and the 1st degree nesting protection zone in Anemurium Ancient City (Ören). Area should be rehabilitate to its natural state,
13. Ensure that the data collection process on sea turtle nests follows international protocols, (For example, GPS data of the nests should be recorded.)
14. Ensure that the restaurant that builds bungalow houses, plants grass, creates a walnut garden by pouring soil on the sand on Karaagaç beach, comply with the rules defined with the Circular, (Ref: Annex 5 - [R14]),
15. Fix the showers in Beach Arrangement Project (Devlet Bahçeli Park) to prevent water flows to the beach,
16. Remove the concrete floor in front of the Teacher's Guest House that narrows beach and causes nests to be submerged, (Ref: Annex 4 - Fig. 1f)
17. Release more water from the Hydroelectric Power Plant in Dragon Stream. Sedimentation flow must be ensured,
18. Provide sea turtle awareness and protection training to all municipal and government office employees (including cleaning personnel, construction workers, gardeners, electricians, technicians, excavator operators, etc.) who work at the beach or whose work interacts with the beach,
19. Publish the number of nests marked by the Nature Conservation and National Parks authority on the Anamur nesting beach separately, according to the sections of the beach and all existing sea turtle species (Loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*), green sea turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) and African soft shell turtles (*Trionyx triunguis*). This information is requested for the past 5 years and future years.
20. Dismiss the zoning plan change in the Aquapark region affecting the nesting beach that is approved by the Municipality of the Anamur and the Mersin Metropolitan Municipality.

21. The damage to the streams from existing and possible mines in the region is unknown. Additionally, agricultural pollutants in the environment need to be investigated. Mass fish deaths occur at various times in these streams, which are home to African soft shell turtle. Again, the municipality's stream improvement and cleaning efforts are likely to have negative effects on the aquatic life in the streams.
22. The soil brought to the Karaağaç Picnic Area should be removed (Ref: Annex 4 - Fig. 16)
23. Owners of businesses and fields on the nesting beach shore increase and expand the violations on the beach during the winter months, when people are less active and state bodies do not inspect. Although the authorities, unfortunately, know of this situation, their control and inspection mechanisms do not operate during the winter months. The specific violations will increase human pressure on the nesting beach during the summer months. Despite our repeated warnings to state officials on this issue, they neither cooperate with us nor protect the beach. (Ref: Annex 4 - Fig. 18 – a-b, Annex 5- [R19]).

MERÇED and MEDASSET call upon the Bern Convention Standing Committee to:

1. Encourage authorities to implement the necessary actions listed above.

ANNEX 3: MERÇED'S ADDITIONAL REPORT FOR ANAMUR NESTING BEACH

The updated statuses of the previously reported issues are presented at MEDASSET's OSA (On-spot Appraisal) report in Annex 1 and Annex2. This annex is a complementary document by MERÇED to Annex 1 and Annex 2 to present the information not included in MEDASSET's OSA report. It includes information gathered after MEDASSET's OSA, during the Bern Convention's OSA (BCOSA) and information gathered after the BCOSA was completed. The list of the issues presented in this annex is given below:

- Bern Convention's OSA (BCOSA)
- Concrete building construction and installation of a septic tank in the Anemurium Ancient city
- The stone walls alongside the habitats of the African soft shell turtle (*Trionyx triunguis*) and illegal huts on the Sultan Stream,
- Plowing of the beach with construction equipment for "cleaning and organizing" purposes
- Caravan camping work on the beach near Dragon river
- Geothermal Drilling License
- The dam built on the Dragon River does not release enough water
- Expanding businesses on the nesting beach
- Insufficient Monitoring and Protection Status
- Communications and collaboration
- Green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) Observations
- Zoning plan change
- Reclamation works and pollution in streams, rivers and canals
- Light pollution and sound pollution
- Illegal vehicle entry to the beach
- New Soil pile in the "Karaagac Picnic Area" region.
- Update note

Details of the above issues are detailed in following sections:

17. Update note:

The Facebook link below shows that the violations at the Anamur nesting beach continue and that the authorities are still not doing their duty to protect the beach.

ANNEX 4: MAPS & PHOTOGRAPHS

Figure 18 – a) Satellite images - Evidence that violations continue and authorities fail to do their duty to protect in Karaağaç –January 2025

In the areas outlined new bungalows are being built and trees are being planted in an ever increasing area!



b) Pictures documenting continuation of soil dumping on the beach, bungalow construction and tree planting in Karaağaç –January 2025



ANNEX 5: REFERENCES

[R19] Evidence of Satellite images and visuals – violations (continuation of soil dumping on the beach, bungalow construction and tree planting) in Karaağaç –January 2025

<https://www.facebook.com/100069901083569/posts/919480977058597/?mibextid=WC7FNe&rdid=6O6uuyUiHBXQCV8O#>