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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

16-18 September 2025
Strasbourg

Open File: 2019/05

Habitat destruction in Mersin Anamur Beach (Türkiye)

-GOVERNMENT REPORT-

Document prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Republic of Türkiye

Update Report, received 29 July 2025

REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY
BERN ANAMUR SEA TURTLE NESTING BEACH
RECOMMENDATION NO. 226 (2024) – TÜRKİYE’S FOLLOW-UP REPORT

SUBJECT: In the referenced letter and its annexed correspondence, it is stated that during the Bureau Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention), held between 8–10 April 2025, the complaint numbered 2019/5 regarding the conservation of Anamur Beach in Mersin, Türkiye, was discussed. It was indicated that the alleged violations at Anamur Nesting Beach continue, and the lack of sufficient control, especially during the summer months, could further exacerbate the situation. Accordingly, a call was made for compliance with Recommendation No. 226 (2024).

Furthermore, the letter requests that a progress report be prepared and submitted to the relevant party in order to allow the matter to be reviewed at the next Bureau Meeting in Autumn 2025. As is known, in line with the decision adopted by the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention, an on-site inspection visit was conducted from July 2 to 4, 2024, as part of the official procedures and follow-up activities. Following this visit, conducted with the participation of representatives from the Convention Secretariat, an independent expert appointed by the Secretariat, officials from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, local institutions, non-governmental organizations, and the National Sea Turtle Scientific Committee, the problems and solution proposals concerning the Anamur Sea Turtle Nesting Beach were evaluated. It was recommended to establish a local commission to ensure the monitoring and effective protection of the beach. In line with Recommendation No. 226 (2024) adopted at the 44th Standing Committee of the Convention, a local commission was established with the approval of the governor’s office. The commission is chaired by the Anamur District Governorship and composed of representatives from the Anamur District Police Department, Mersin Metropolitan Municipality, Anamur Municipality, Mersin Provincial Directorate of Environment and Urbanization and Climate Change, Mersin Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism, Anamur District Directorate of Agriculture and Forestry, the 7th Regional Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Mersin DKMP Directorate, the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus Branch Directorate of State Hydraulic Works, MERÇED–Mersin Environmental and Nature Association, and SAD-AFAG Underwater Research Society.

The commission held a meeting on April 10, 2025, and the following report, including monitoring and evaluation results, was produced. This report constitutes a supplementary document prepared to give information on the developments following the submission of the previous report.

Below are the recommendations made to the Government of Türkiye, where necessary in cooperation with local and regional authorities:

1. Remedy Stage 1 and 2 design issues, which mainly relate to poor lighting choices and light control. Consider erecting a fence along the beach edge to deter people from entering the beach at night.

To address issues of light pollution within Phases I and II of the project, on 10/04/2025 at 14:00, the Anamur Sea Turtles Local Commission convened and decided on several actions. A site

inspection was conducted on 15/05/2025 by a team comprising the Anamur Nature Conservation and National Parks Directorate, the Municipality, Anamur District Police Department (excluding the Gendarmerie as the area is outside their jurisdiction), and volunteers (Annex-1: a) drone footage and b) minutes). The inspection revealed that two floodlights from Yalı Cafe and Atalay Wedding Hall were directed toward the beach, and they were subsequently turned off. The sunbeds at Galya Cafe were moved back by one row. Municipal staff confirmed that a row of green lights would remain off throughout the summer, and overall lighting would remain as shown in the drone footage. The proposal to install fences along the beach to prevent people from entering the area at night was rejected by the district governor, who chaired the local commission meeting. Discussions on the matter are ongoing, and it is expected to be resolved in the long term.

2. Review the remaining Stage 2 and Stage 3 development plans to ensure they are necessary and are compatible with preservation of successful, undisturbed turtle nesting. During the Local Commission Meeting held on 10/04/2025, it was agreed that continuation of coastal rehabilitation projects in Phases II and III could proceed provided that necessary lighting precautions are taken (Annex-2). The Anamur Municipality did not include the remaining phases of the Project in the investment program for the next year.

3. Enforce existing legislation by removal of illegal development, structures and impactful lighting from all areas of beach but especially the area of bungalows and restaurant on beach section 2 that may act as a catalyst for similar such developments away from the urban centre.

In accordance with the decision made at the Local Commission meeting held on 10 April 2025, an official letter dated 19 June 2025 was sent to the Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism, Mersin Provincial Directorate of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change, and Anamur Municipality. It reminded them that any allocation of land, permits, or authorizations within the 2009-designated nesting area must not be granted without the opinion of the Ministry, as this could breach both the Bern Convention and national legislation. To prevent legal grievances, strict adherence to the attached Circular was requested. Additionally, it was requested that, under the Coastal Law and relevant legislation, bungalows located below the coastal boundary in the Karaağaç area (excluding those on private property) be promptly removed outside the nesting season (1 April – 30 September). No intervention should be made on dune areas, and any soil or fill placed over the dunes must be removed and the area restored (Annex-3). No reply has yet been received from the municipality. According to the information obtained from the meeting held with the business enterprise, a work schedule has been set to remove the soil fill at the end of the season. It was also reported that there have been conflicts regarding the removal of the bungalow and that the resolution process is still ongoing. The issue is being monitored and will be addressed after the nesting season concludes.

4. Increase number of signs that have information on sea turtles and the dos and don'ts for behaviour on the nesting beach at beach entrances. Create new signs to attach to each protective nest cage so that each nest has key information associated with it.

Due to budget constraints, the warning signs could not yet be produced, but technical specifications have been prepared. The General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks has committed to securing sponsorship for the issue. As the current status, a sponsor has been found to finance the signs, and the cooperation agreement process is ongoing.

5. Improve turtle monitoring and protection capacity through training and increasing the number of people involved in daily surveys. Collect all relevant data indicated in Guidance

Tool, starting as soon as possible by recording the location of each turtle nest using GPS to support scientific analyses and interpretation of the status of turtles and their habitats.

Nest monitoring is carried out by a team led by Doğan SÖZBİLEN, a faculty member at Pamukkale University, along with volunteers and personnel from our Directorate. Nest coordinates are recorded via GPS. The guideline document T-PVS 2023(30) “Conservation of Sea Turtle Nesting Sites: A Guidance Tool” is used in studies such as nest monitoring, and the data collection process is carried out in accordance with this guideline.

6. Design a hatchling management plan to be prepared for occurrences of hatchling disorientation caused by artificial lighting and respond promptly and strongly to adjust, revise or eliminate problematic lighting.

As nesting by adult turtles continues, lighting pollution is monitored during nest tracking, and necessary measures are taken. Although hatchling emergence has not yet begun, a “Hatchling Management Plan for the Anamur Sea Turtle Nesting Beach” has been prepared and put into effect (Annex-4).

7. Undertake surveys for presence of Nile soft shelled turtles at all historically known sites along Anamur beach and commission ecological study for feasibility of restoring sites where presence remains, and nesting was previously reported.

Under the coordination of Doğan SÖZBİLEN from Pamukkale University and our Directorate personnel, nest monitoring is also conducted for *T. triunguis* in addition to *C. caretta* and *C. mydas*. As per the decision of the 10/04/2025 Local Commission, the official letter dated 20/06/2025 was sent to the State Hydraulic Works Anamur KKTC Drinking Water Supply Branch Directorate. It requested the preparation of an ecological feasibility study for restoring former nesting areas of *T. triunguis*, affected by river improvement works in Dragon Stream and Karaağaç areas (Annex-5).

8. Create a turtle protection network composed of authorities, NGOs, local stakeholders and concerned individuals that regularly meet to discuss issues and their solutions.

As per the decision of the 10/04/2025 Local Commission, a team consisting of the Anamur Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks, the Municipality, Anamur District Police Department, Anamur District Gendarmerie Command, and NGOs was established. Although the site inspection on 10/05/2025 was communicated to MERÇED, no participation was received from the association. However, volunteer citizens did take part in the inspection.

9. Create a turtle monitoring group composed of authorities, NGOs, local stakeholders and concerned individuals to better monitor the turtle nesting activity. Investigate the potential for bringing in academic and voluntary teams to contribute to the monitoring. Given that Anamur beach potentially hosts one of the top five loggerhead turtle nesting areas in the Mediterranean accurate assessment of activity is strongly warranted.

The WhatsApp group titled “Anamur Sea Turtle Nesting Beach” has been created to facilitate coordination and communication. Furthermore, notifications made via the Mersin Sea Turtle Research and Rehabilitation Center (phone: +90 324 4812284 during working hours or 112 emergency line 24/7) are responded to by the Mersin Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks and the Anamur Directorate personnel.

[Annex 1a](#): Photography Devlet Bahçeli Coastal Park

[Annex 1b](#): 15.05.2025 minutes

[Annex 2](#): Anamur Sea Turtles Local Commission Meeting

[Annex 3](#): Letter dated 19.06.2025 and numbered 19773768

[Annex 4](#): Anamur_Sea_Turtle_Hatchling_Management_Plan

[Annex 5](#): letter dated 20 June 2025

Update Report dated 24 February 2025

REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY
GENERAL DIRECTORATE OF NATURE CONSERVATION AND NATIONAL
PARKS (GDNCNP)

24.02.2025

Government Report on Complaint No. 2019/05: Open file: Türkiye: Habitat destruction in Mersin Anamur Beach

Background: This report includes the progress after the decision was taken about this case file in the 44th Standing Committee Meeting. For the background information of the file, please refer to our previous reports.

General Information: Recommendation No: 226 (2024) was accepted in the 44th Standing Committee. The progress about each recommendation is given below point by point:

1. Remedy Stage 1 and 2 design issues, which mainly relate to poor lighting choices and light control. Consider erecting a fence along the beach edge to deter people from entering the beach at night.

The Mersin Provincial Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks had some attempts to discuss this issue with Anamur Municipality. The decision taken in the meetings held with the related authority is to dim the lumen of green lights and turn them off completely during the summer season. But a permanent and effective decision is expected to be taken in the meeting of the commission, which is planned to be gathered at the end of February 2025.

2. Review the remaining Stage 2 and Stage 3 development plans to ensure they are necessary and are compatible with preservation of successful, undisturbed turtle nesting.

This issue will be discussed at the meeting of the commission to be held at the end of February 2025.

3. Enforce existing legislation by removal of illegal development, structures and impactful lighting from all areas of beach but especially the area of bungalows and restaurant on beach section 2 that may act as a catalyst for similar such developments away from the urban centre.

A new staff was recruited by the Anamur Chief Office of the GDNCNP on the site, to increase the enforcement of the existing legislation.

4. Increase number of signs that have information on sea turtles and the dos and don'ts for behaviour on the nesting beach at beach entrances. Create new signs to attach to each protective nest cage so that each nest has key information associated with it.

This work will be done close to nesting season, during March or April.

5. Improve turtle monitoring and protection capacity through training and increasing the number of people involved in daily surveys. Collect all relevant data indicated in Guidance Tool, starting as soon as possible by recording the location of each turtle nest using GPS to support scientific analyses and interpretation of the status of turtles and their habitats.

The newly recruited personnel will be responsible from collecting the data in line with the Guidance Tool, once the breeding season starts.

6. Design a hatchling management plan to be prepared for occurrences of hatchling disorientation caused by artificial lighting and respond promptly and strongly to adjust, revise or eliminate problematic lighting.

This issue will be discussed in the meeting of the commission at the end of February 2025.

7. Undertake surveys for presence of Nile soft shelled turtles at all historically known sites along Anamur beach and commission ecological study for feasibility of restoring sites where presence remains, and nesting was previously reported.

The newly recruited personnel will be responsible from collecting the data about Nile soft shelled turtles.

8. Create a turtle protection network composed of authorities, NGOs, local stakeholders and concerned individuals that regularly meet to discuss issues and their solutions.

A commission was established under the Governorship of Anamur. It will hold its first meeting at the end of February. The commission's meeting agenda will be about each recommendation in Recommendation No 226 (2024).

9. Create a turtle monitoring group composed of authorities, NGOs, local stakeholders and concerned individuals to better monitor the turtle nesting activity. Investigate the potential for bringing in academic and voluntary teams to contribute to the monitoring. Given that Anamur beach potentially hosts one of the top five loggerhead turtle nesting areas in the Mediterranean accurate assessment of activity is strongly warranted.

Establishing a monitoring group will be discussed in the meeting of the commission.