



Strasbourg, 24 November 2025

T-PVS/Files(2025)2019-05_gov

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

45th meeting
Strasbourg, 8-12 December 2025

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 12 November 2025

REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

BERN ANAMUR SEA TURTLE NESTING BEACH

RECOMMENDATION NO. 226(2024)

REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT REPORT

SUBJECT: Complaint No. 2019/05: Open File: Türkiye: Habitat destruction in Mersin Anamur Beach

In accordance with the letter sent by the Secretariat of the Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats concerning Complaint No. 2019/05 on habitat degradation along the Mersin-Anamur Coast, it was requested to report on the conservation activities carried out in the area, the implementation status of Recommendation No. 226 (2024), and developments regarding light pollution, illegal sand extraction, vehicle access, tourism-related construction, water release from the hydroelectric power plant, river rehabilitation works, and the protection of *Trionyx triunguis* habitats.

Accordingly, the following information and findings are presented below.

ASSESSMENTS AND FINDINGS ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS STATED IN THE LETTER

Monitoring activities for *T. triunguis* habitats and individuals were initiated during the 2025 sea turtle nesting season. A project entitled “**Research, Monitoring, and Protection of Sea Turtle (*Chelonia mydas* and *Caretta caretta*) and *Trionyx triunguis* Populations During the Breeding Season on Anamur Sea Turtle Nesting Beach**”, coordinated by Dr. Doğan SÖZBİLEN, was implemented under the supervision of the Mersin Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks. Within the scope of the project, two *T. triunguis* nests were identified along the Dragon Stream. The monitoring and conservation of the Anamur nesting area, including *T. triunguis* habitats, were conducted. A winter monitoring methodology for *T. triunguis* has been developed, and it has been decided to conduct bi-monthly winter monitoring and habitat surveys under the supervision of Dr. Doğan SÖZBİLEN together with the staff of the Mersin Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks. Transect counts will be performed within the parts of Dragon and Sultan Creeks located inside the Anamur nesting area, and data will be recorded on a presence-absence basis.

Regarding high-rise buildings behind the Karaağaç area, the caravan camp site near Dragon Stream, and the touristic infrastructure near the Anemurion Ancient City:

The buildings in the Karaağaç area are under construction approximately 350–400 meters inland from the coastline, within the legal coastal boundary and in compliance with the approved

zoning plan and construction permits. According to our General Directorate's Circular No. 2009/10 on the "Protection of Sea Turtles" and its annex "Conservation and Utilization Conditions for Sea Turtle Nesting Areas", these buildings fall within the "impact zone," defined as the area extending 1000 meters inland from the coastline where construction may be permitted in accordance with the zoning plan (Annex-1 a,b).

The exact location of the so-called caravan camping area near the Dragon Stream could not be clearly identified. During the summer, some caravans park in an open area near the stream. If this is the area in question, it is located approximately 300–350 meters inland, separated from the dune habitat by a green belt and trees (Dragon Park). This area also falls within the "impact zone" of the nesting area, as defined in Circular No. 2009/10 and its annex (Annex-2).

Information regarding touristic infrastructure development near the Anemurion Ancient City beach has been requested from the Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism and will be submitted once received.

Regarding the commission, monitoring group, and data collection team established under the Anamur District Governorship:

The Commission was established following the on-site mission of the Bern Secretariat (1–5 July 2024) concerning Complaint File No. 2019/05, with the aim of ensuring effective coordination among local stakeholders for the monitoring and protection of the nesting beach.

In accordance with the decisions of this Commission, an inspection team composed of representatives from the District Police Department, Municipality, a local NGO, and the Anamur Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks carried out inspections during the nesting season on issues such as light pollution, vehicle access, and unauthorized structures.

As a result, one cafe was sealed, businesses causing light pollution were warned, and an administrative fine was imposed on a vehicle entering the nesting beach (Annex-3).

Nesting monitoring and data collection on the Anamur Beach were carried out by the same scientific team led by Dr. Doğan SÖZBİLEN from Pamukkale University together with the staff of the Anamur Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks.

Regarding the request for a timeline and a concrete plan to advance coordination for the implementation of Recommendation No. 226 (2024):

A detailed timeline will be developed in consultation with the relevant stakeholders.

Regarding the complainant's remark that the coastal section between Mamure Castle and Dragon Stream has high nesting potential:

This recommendation will be duly taken into consideration.

Regarding the complainant's requests:

- **Removal of the concrete surface in front of the Teachers' House:**

The concrete surface has been removed (Annex-4).

- **Releasing more water from the hydroelectric power plant on the Dragon Stream to ensure sediment flow:**

The issue has been forwarded to the 6th Regional Directorate of State Hydraulic Works (DSİ); information will be shared once the response is received (Annex-5).

- **Cancellation of the aquapark zoning plan approved by Anamur Municipality and Mersin Metropolitan Municipality:**

The zoning plan for the aquapark area was approved by the Mersin Metropolitan Municipal Council on 09.02.2021 (Decision No. 76) as part of the 1st Stage (Central, Ören, Bozdoğan, Kaşdışlen) 1/5000 Scale Additional and Revision Master Development Plan of Anamur District.

During the public announcement period, objections were raised, and by Decision No. 34 dated 10.01.2022, the relevant parcel was reclassified as a "Daily Recreation Area." The final approval of the plan was made on 13.09.2022 (Decision No. 471).

Therefore, no construction or similar activity is permitted under the current zoning plan (Annex-6).

- **Investigation of the impact of existing or potential mining and agricultural pollution on rivers:**

The matter has been communicated to the Provincial Directorate of Agriculture and Forestry (Annex-7).

- **Investigation of the causes of mass fish deaths in rivers:**

Information has been requested from the Provincial Directorate of Agriculture and Forestry.

- **Avoiding negative impacts of river rehabilitation and cleaning works on aquatic life:**

The relevant Municipality has been informed to take necessary precautions to prevent harm to wildlife during river rehabilitation works (Annex-8).

ADDITIONAL WORKS CONDUCTED UNDER RECOMMENDATION NO. 226 (2024)

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.**

A light index was determined by the National Scientific Commission. It was recommended that lighting fixtures should not exceed 50 cm in height, use wavelengths of 580 nm or above (preferably amber or red), and avoid direct illumination of the beach by shielding. Designs should be prepared in consultation with lighting experts. In line with these recommendations, Anamur Municipality is currently preparing a lighting project.

- 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.**

Anamur Municipality reported that construction of Phase 2 and 3 projects within the nesting area is not currently planned.

- 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.**

The Anamur Municipality reported that unauthorized structures within parcel 326, block 1, located in Fatih District within the coastal boundary and inside the nesting area, have been sealed and legal proceedings initiated under the provisions of the Zoning Law No. 3194 (Annex-9).

- 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.**

Twenty (20) new information signs have been produced for placement on the beach before the next nesting season (Annex-10). A limited number of protective nest cages were provided by the Metropolitan Municipality (Annex-11). Additional cages will be procured for the 2026 nesting season.

- 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 scientific team led by Dr. Doğan SÖZBİLEN (Pamukkale University), volunteers, and our staff. All nest coordinates are recorded via GPS, and monitoring is conducted in full compliance with the Guideline Document.

- 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.**

The Anamur Sea Turtle Nesting Beach Hatchling Management Plan was prepared and implemented during the 2025 nesting season.

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.**

Monitoring of *C. caretta*, *C. mydas*, and *T. triunguis* is being carried out by the same scientific team. In line with the decision of the Local Commission dated 10/04/2025, a request letter (E-31875023-335.01[045.01]-19787814, dated 20/06/2025) was sent to the Anamur Branch of the State Hydraulic Works, asking for an ecological feasibility study for the restoration of historical *T. triunguis* nesting areas affected by river rehabilitation works at Dragon and Karaağaç (Annex-12).

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 WhatsApp communication group titled “Anamur Sea Turtle Nesting Beach” was created for coordination. In addition, reports received through the Mersin Sea Turtle Research and Rehabilitation Center (Tel: +90 324 481 2284, during working hours) or via the national emergency hotline (112, 24/7) are evaluated jointly by Mersin and Anamur staff.

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.**

Following the Local Commission meeting on 10/04/2025 (14:00), a monitoring group was established with representatives from the Anamur Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks, Municipality, District Police, Gendarmerie, and local NGOs. Although MERCED was officially invited, no participation was recorded; however, local volunteers have contributed to field inspections.

This report has been prepared and duly signed by the undersigned on .../11/2025.

ANNEXES:

[Annex-1 a\)](#) Photographs of the buildings in the Karaağaç Area

[Annex-1 b\)](#) Google Earth image showing the residential area constructed in the Karaağaç Area

[Annex-2](#) Google Earth image of the Caravan Camping Area

[Annex-3](#) Administrative Fine issued to the vehicle

[Annex-4](#) Concrete ground in front of the Teachers' Lodge

[Annex-5](#) Official letter sent to the 6th Regional Directorate of State Hydraulic Works (DSİ)

[Annex-6](#) Anamur Güzelyurt, Block 1128, Parcel 1

[Annex-7](#) Official letter sent to the Provincial Directorate of Agriculture and Forestry

[Annex-8](#) Official letter sent to Anamur Municipality

[Annex-9](#) Official letter received from Anamur Municipality

[Annex-10](#) Warning signboard

[Annex-11](#) Nest cage

[Annex-12](#) Official letter dated 20.06.2025 and numbered 19787814, sent to the KKTC General Directorate of Veterinary Services.

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 for 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 for 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.