Strasbourg, 16 September 2026 **T-PVS/Files(2026)2019-05_gov_rev**

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

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Standing Committee
46th meeting
Strasbourg, 7-11 December 2026

Bureau of the Standing Committee
Strasbourg, 22-24 September 2026

Open File: 2019/05

Habitat destruction in Mersin Anamur Beach (Türkiye)

-GOVERNMENT REPORT-

Document prepared by the General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Republic of Türkiye

Update Report – July 2026

REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

GENERAL DIRECTORATE OF NATURE CONSERVATION AND NATIONAL PARKS

REPORT ON ANAMUR SEA TURTLE NESTING BEACH FOR FALL 2026 BUREAU MEETING

REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT REPORT

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

The conclusions of the Bureau meeting held on 7–9 April 2026, containing the Bureau's assessment of the report prepared by the Secretariat of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) concerning Complaint No. 2019/05: Türkiye – Habitat Degradation on Anamur Beach (Mersin), were communicated to our General Directorate on 18 May 2026. The progress achieved in the implementation of Recommendation No. 226 (2024), for inclusion in the report to be submitted to the Bureau during its Autumn 2026 meeting, is presented below.

Activities Conducted within the Scope of Bern Convention 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.

The first inspection regarding light pollution and light spill onto the beach in Phases I and II of the Anamur Sea Turtle Nesting Beach was carried out on 9 June 2026, and the necessary mitigation measures were implemented by the relevant businesses. The inspection was attended by representatives of Anamur Municipality and Mr. Mehmet SARI, Regional Representative of SAD-AFAG. Although Ms. Suna Günay ÇEVRECİ from MER-ÇED had informed the authorities that she would participate, she was unable to attend due to illness (Annex 1).

During the 2026 nesting season, a team led by Dr. Doğan SÖZBİLEN of Pamukkale University has continued to carry out nest protection and monitoring activities at the nesting beach.

Erecting a fence along the beach edge to deter people from entering the beach at night, General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks intends to establish a green vegetative barrier rather than a conventional fence. In this context, work has been initiated to create a natural hedge using native shrub species, including oleander (*Nerium oleander*). This measure aims to reduce unauthorized night-time access to the beach while maintaining the natural landscape character of the nesting habitat. Planning and preparatory activities are currently underway.

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.

The Anamur Municipality has stated that the development of new phases within the nesting area is not on its agenda. Furthermore, no new construction or development activities have been identified in the nesting area.

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.

Information on this matter was requested from the Anamur Municipality. According to the Municipality's official reply, the unauthorized structures located on privately owned Parcel No. 1 of Block 326 and on unregistered land within the coastal setback line of Fatih Neighbourhood, Anamur District, were sealed on 5 August 2025 pursuant to the provisions of the Zoning Law No. 3194, as they are situated within the Sea Turtle Nesting Beach. Following the expiration of the legally prescribed period, it was determined that the unauthorized structures had not been brought into compliance with the applicable planning legislation. Consequently, the Municipal Council adopted Demolition Decision No. 284 dated 25 September 2025. The Municipality further stated that the demolition works would be carried out under the scope of its 2026 Demolition Tender (Annex 2).

As of the reporting date, the unauthorized bungalow has been removed from the nesting beach.

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 information and warning signs have been produced for the beach (Annex 3). These signs were installed on the beach prior to the beginning of the nesting season. Protective underground nest cages are available for the conservation of sea turtle nests. Furthermore, a budget allocation has been requested under the 2027 investment programme for the production of additional information and warning signs for sea turtle nesting beaches.

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 activities are being carried out by a scientific team led by Dr. Doğan SÖZBİLEN, a faculty member at Pamukkale University, with the support of volunteers and personnel of General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks. The final report of the project entitled "Research, Monitoring and Conservation of the Populations of Sea Turtles (*Chelonia mydas* and *Caretta caretta*) and the Nile Softshell Turtle (*Trionyx triunguis*) at the Anamur Sea Turtle Nesting Beach During the 2025 Breeding Season" is attached (Annex 4).

Monitoring activities are continuing during the 2026 nesting season with the same team. The coordinates of all nests are recorded using GPS, and all nest monitoring activities are conducted in accordance with the relevant Guideline Document.

Since the beginning of the 2026 nesting season, a total of 707 nests have been recorded on Anamur Beach. Of these, 701 belong to the loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*), 2 to the green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), and 4 to the Nile soft-shelled turtle (*Trionyx triunguis*). The total number of nests is expected to increase further by the end of the nesting season, as additional nesting activity is anticipated from turtles associated with nests that had not yet produced hatchlings during the early part of the season. To date, hatchling emergence has been confirmed from 60 nests.

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.

During the 2026 monitoring activities at the Anamur Sea Turtle Nesting Beach, the sections of the nesting beach where hatchling sea turtles were disoriented and moved inland instead of towards the sea were identified. The relevant business operators and the Municipality were requested to take the necessary measures to address this issue (Annex 5).

Legal proceedings have been initiated against five of these businesses, and demolition orders have been issued by the court. Accordingly, these businesses will not be permitted to operate during the next nesting season. In addition, inspections conducted periodically by the General Directorate have resulted in official reports being issued for businesses found to be in violation of the applicable regulations. As of 5 August, administrative sanctions will be imposed on those businesses for which the identified non-compliance issues have not been remedied.

Furthermore, Dr. Doğan Sözbilen, who is conducting fieldwork together with his team, has been meeting with all businesses operating in the area regarding lighting practices. These meetings aim to ensure that all businesses adopt consistent lighting measures and to eliminate the problem of inappropriate lighting that may affect sea turtle nesting and hatchling orientation.

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.

During the 2026 sea turtle nesting season, a scientific team led by Dr. Doğan SÖZBİLEN, a faculty member at Pamukkale University, is conducting nest monitoring activities for *Caretta caretta, Chelonia mydas*, and *Trionyx triunguis.*

In addition, *Trionyx triunguis* has been monitored by the staff of the Anamur Unit of General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks at the section where the Dragon River meets the sea, using the transect count method under the "Monitoring of *Trionyx triunguis* within the Scope of the Biological Diversity Monitoring Programme for Terrestrial and Inland Water Ecosystems of Mersin Province".

Since the beginning of the 2026 nesting season, 4 to the Nile soft-shelled turtle (*Trionyx triunguis*) nests have been recorded on Anamur Beach.

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

To facilitate communication on activities, notifications, complaints and other issues concerning the Anamur Sea Turtle Nesting Beach, a WhatsApp communication group entitled "Anamur Sea Turtle Local Commission" was established on 3 July 2025. As stated in the group description, the platform was created in accordance with the Bern Convention Recommendation to enable information sharing among stakeholders regarding the Anamur Sea Turtle Nesting Beach. The group includes representatives of the relevant public institutions and organizations responsible for the nesting beach, as well as representatives of non-governmental organizations, including SAD-AFAG and MER-ÇED, thereby serving as the communication network of the Anamur Sea Turtle Local Commission.

In line with the instructions of General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks, official correspondence regarding the establishment of this communication network was carried out, and documents confirming its notification to the relevant stakeholders were obtained (Annex 6).

During the current reporting period, the communication network has been actively used to exchange information and coordinate actions. Following the sharing of a Facebook post reporting the construction of visitor shower and toilet facilities at the Anamur Archaeological Site, an on-site inspection was conducted. It was determined that the toilet facility closest to the beach is located within the coastal setback line and the buffer zone and, due to the topography and the presence of archaeological structures between the beach and the facility, it is not possible for sea turtles to reach this area. It was also confirmed that these facilities had been constructed in accordance with the relevant legislation of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

Information was also shared regarding the identification of approximately 150 sea turtle nests at Anamurlu (Anıtlı), an area outside the officially designated nesting beach. Following this notification, sun loungers belonging to nearby residential complexes were moved away from the nesting area. In addition, repairs were carried out on an irrigation water pipeline on the beach. The communication network was also used to share information on the successful legal challenge, initiated by MER-ÇED, against the licence for a proposed geothermal energy facility planned outside the nesting beach but within the surrounding area, as well as other notifications, complaints and conservation-related updates.

The WhatsApp communication group continues to provide an active platform for coordination and information exchange between public institutions and non-governmental organizations.

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.

In accordance with the decision adopted at the meeting of the Anamur Sea Turtle Local Commission held on 10 April 2025 at 14:00, a joint inspection team was established comprising representatives of the Anamur Nature Conservation and National Parks Unit, Anamur Municipality, the Anamur District Police Department, the Anamur District Gendarmerie

Command, and relevant non-governmental organizations. This team conducts regular inspections along the nesting beach throughout the nesting season.

The first inspection of the 2026 nesting season was carried out on 9 June 2026 with the participation of Anamur Municipality and following invitations extended to SAD-AFAG and MER-ÇED (Annex 1). Inspection and monitoring activities will continue throughout the nesting season.

This report has been prepared and duly signed by the undersigned on 6 July 2026

ANNEXES:
Annex 1. Inspection Reports (Minutes)
Annex 2. Removal of the Unauthorized Bungalow
Annex 3. Photographs of Information and Warning Signs
Annex 4. The Abstract of the Anamur Sea Turtle Monitoring Report – 2025
Annex 5. Official Letter on Light Pollution Mitigation Measures
Annex 6. Anamur Sea Turtle Local Commission WhatsApp Communication Group

Annex 1. Inspection Reports (Minutes)

The translation of the original document has been prepared by General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks for information purposes.

INSPECTION RECORD

On 9 June 2026 at 22.15, an inspection was carried out within the Anamur Sea Turtle Nesting Beach in the Phase I and Phase II Landscape Project area under the scope of the Bern Convention. During the inspection, it was determined that Rıhtım 2 Cafe was using white lighting and that light from the lighting system was spilling onto the beach. It was concluded that this light pollution could negatively affect the emergence of nesting female sea turtles and the orientation of hatchlings towards the sea, thereby causing adverse impacts on biodiversity.

During the meeting held with the management of the establishment, they were informed that light and noise pollution must be avoided during the sea turtle nesting season (15 May–15 September) and that light spill onto the beach must be prevented. The manager of the establishment stated that, within seven (7) days, the white lighting would be screened so that no light would be reflected onto the beach.

This record has been prepared and signed by the undersigned on 9 June 2026.

INSPECTION RECORD

On 9 June 2026 at 21:30, a night inspection was conducted in the Phase I–Phase II Project area within the Anamur Sea Turtle Nesting Beach in connection with the complaint file opened under the Bern Convention. During the inspection, Yalı Beach Cafe was visited.

It was determined that loud music was being broadcast and that the sound was reaching the seaward side at a high level. As the area is located within a sea turtle nesting beach, it was considered that excessive noise could interfere with the emergence of nesting female sea turtles onto the beach for egg-laying. In addition, it was observed that lighting from the cafe was spilling onto the beach.

The owners of the establishment were informed that the lighting should be screened to prevent light spill onto the beach and that music should not be broadcast on the beach during the sea turtle nesting season (15 May–15 September). The manager of the establishment stated that, within seven (7) days, the lighting would be screened so that it would not illuminate the beach and that music would not be broadcast at a level audible from the beach.

This record has been prepared and signed by the undersigned.

INSPECTION RECORD

On 9 June 2026 at 23:09, an inspection was conducted within the Anamur Sea Turtle Nesting Beach regarding light and noise pollution in the Phase I–Phase II Landscape Project area under the scope of the Bern Convention.

During the inspection, it was observed that the sun loungers of Luna Beach Club (Dolunay Büfe) extended seven rows towards the sea. The manager of the establishment was informed

that the sun loungers should be moved back towards the front of the cafe, that fixed shade structures should be used, that the fixed entrance gate located on the seaward side of the sun lounger area should be removed, that music should not be broadcast at a level audible from the beach, and that the provisions of Circular No. 2009/10 on the Protection of Sea Turtles should be complied with throughout the sea turtle nesting season (15 May–15 September). The manager was also informed that the fixed volleyball net and poles located on the beach adjacent to Luna Cafe, which were stated to belong to the establishment, should be removed.

The manager of the establishment stated that these measures, including the removal of the entrance gate structure, the volleyball court equipment and poles, the cessation of music broadcasting, and the relocation of the sun loungers, would be implemented within seven (7) days. The establishment further undertook to comply with the provisions of Environmental Law No. 2872 and Circular No. 2009/10 throughout the sea turtle nesting season.

This record has been prepared and signed by the undersigned.

Signatories

Dr. Ayşe DÜRGEN – Mersin Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks

Durmuş DENİZ – Anamur Nature Conservation and National Parks Unit

Suna GÜNAY – Representative of MER-ÇED

Saniye POYRAZ TOK – Anamur Municipality

Mehmet SARI – Regional Representative of SAD-AFAG

Ferhat AYHAN – Manager of Luna Beach Club

Annex 2. Removal of the Unauthorized Bungalow

The translation of the original document has been prepared by General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks for information purposes.

REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE

ANAMUR MUNICIPALITY

Directorate of Building Inspection

Number: E-69649185-000-48482

Subject: Biological Diversity

To the Erdemli Chief Ranger Office

With reference to your letter cited above, it has been determined that the unauthorized structures located within parcel 1 of block 326 and on unregistered land within the coastal setback zone of Fatih Neighborhood, Anamur District, are situated within the Sea Turtle Nesting Beach.

Accordingly, the aforementioned unauthorized structures have been sealed in accordance with the provisions of the Zoning Law No. 3194, and the relevant legal proceedings have been initiated.

Submitted for your information.

Durmuş DENİZ

Mayor

REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE

ANAMUR MUNICIPALITY

Directorate of Building Inspection

Number: E-69649185-000-55038

Subject: Biological Diversity

To the Erdemli Chief Ranger Office

Reference: Your letter dated 30 January 2026 and numbered E-31875023-335.01-23227011.

With reference to your above-mentioned letter, the unauthorized structures located on privately owned parcel 1 of block 326 and on unregistered land within the coastal setback zone of Fatih Neighborhood, Anamur District, were sealed on 5 August 2025 in accordance with the provisions of the Zoning Law No. 3194, as they are situated within the Sea Turtle Nesting Beach.

It was determined that the unauthorized structures had not been brought into compliance with the zoning legislation within the legally prescribed period, and therefore a demolition decision was issued by the Municipal Executive Committee (Encümen) on 25 September 2025 under Decision No. 284.

The demolition works will be carried out within the scope of the Municipality’s 2026 Demolition Tender.

Submitted for your information.

Durmuş DENİZ

Mayor

Annex 3. Photographs of Information and Warning Signs




NESİLLERİ
TÜKENMESİN
DİKKAT !
HALK BALIK RESTAURANT


NESİLLERİ
TÜKENMESİN
DİKKAT !
DENİZ KAPLUMBAĞASI
YUVALAMA ALANIDIR.

Annex 4. The Abstract of the Anamur Sea Turtle Monitoring Report – 2025

Nest monitoring activities are being carried out by a scientific team led by Dr. Doğan SÖZBİLEN, a faculty member at Pamukkale University, with the support of volunteers and personnel of the General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks. The final report for the 2025 breeding season of the project entitled “Research, Monitoring and Conservation of the Populations of Sea Turtles (*Chelonia mydas* and *Caretta caretta*) and the Nile Softshell Turtle (*Trionyx triunguis*) at the Anamur Sea Turtle Nesting Beach During the 2025 Breeding Season” has been completed.

An abstract of the report is provided below. The report has been prepared in Turkish. An English translation will be provided and shared with the Secretariat upon request.

ABSTRACT

Nesting activities of sea turtles and soft-shelled Nile turtles on Anamur Beach in Mersin Province were researched during the 2025 summer season as part of a project carried out by the 7th Regional Directorate of the General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of the Republic of Turkey – Mersin Nature Conservation and National Parks Directorate. The project was carried out by Ak-Tel Engineering Education Tourism Food Industry and Trade Ltd. Co. under the supervision of Dr. Doğan Sözbilen.

As a result of the studies, 3,681 loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*) emergence events were recorded, of which 2,051 resulted in nesting and 1,625 resulted in non-nesting emergence. Three green sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) nests and two soft-shelled Nile turtle (*Trionyx triunguis*) nests were also detected on Anamur Beach during the 2025 season, bringing the total number of nests to 2,056. GPS coordinates were taken for the nests of sea turtles, and their distance from the sea was measured, determined to be an average of 16.02 m. Seven nests identified as being very close to the sea and in risky locations were moved to safer areas.
Nest density, calculated based on the total coastline length studied, was determined to be 167.2 nests/km. The most densely populated area within the sub-regions was identified in the eastern part of the beach. The top four areas with the highest nest density were, in order: the Dere

region between Dragon Creek and the stream (626.7 nests/km), the Mamure region between the stream and Mamure Castle (618.9 nests/km), the Dragon region between the Dragon Creek and the pier (223.3 nests/km), and Cerenler (172.5 nests/km). Predation pressure was concentrated in the Ören and Sultansuyu regions, where the main predator was identified as the fox (*Vulpes vulpes*). Stray dog predation was observed in other regions. The total number of nests affected by predation was 202, of which 31 were completely predated.

In the 2025 breeding season, hatchlings were detected from 954 nests (46.4%). The average number of eggs in these nests was determined to be 67.2 (± 17.68). 23.1% of the eggs were damaged at different stages of embryonic development, while 69.2% hatched. The average nest depth was 46 cm, while the average incubation period was calculated as 47.4 days (± 5.47). The hatchling success rate was 69.2%, with 58,517 hatchlings reaching the sea, and the ratio of hatchlings reaching the sea to total eggs was calculated as 42%.

The findings indicate that Anamur Beach is one of the most important nesting areas for loggerhead sea turtles in Türkiye. Anamur Beach, which has seen a dramatic increase in the number of nests since the 1990s when detailed sea turtle research began in Türkiye, is of great importance for the scientific basis of conservation strategies in the region, as it allows for a detailed assessment of nest success rates, the effectiveness of conservation measures, and parameters related to environmental factors. This study contributes to the development of policies and practices for sea turtle conservation at both local and national levels, while also offering recommendations for sustainable conservation programs based on long-term monitoring, threat assessment, and public awareness.

Annex 5. Official Letter on Light Pollution Mitigation Measures

The translation of the original document has been prepared by General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks for information purposes.

Republic of Türkiye
Anamur Municipality
Municipal Police Department

Number: E-69960505-000-54929
Subject: Anamur Sea Turtle Nesting Area

To the Erdemli Chief Ranger Office

Reference: Your letter dated 15 January 2026 and numbered E-31875023-335.01-23003758.
Your above-mentioned letter has been reviewed. The necessary warnings have been issued to the businesses concerned, instructing them to adjust their lighting in a manner that will not disturb sea turtles.

Submitted for your information.

Necdet ÜNAL
Deputy Mayor

Republic of Türkiye
General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks
7th Regional Directorate – Erdemli Chief Ranger Office

Number: E-31875023-335.01-23003758
Subject: Anamur Sea Turtle Nesting Area

To Distribution List

Anamur Sea Turtle Nesting Beach is one of the nesting beaches that is under international monitoring due to an open case (2019/5) filed against Türkiye under the Bern Convention.

During the 2025 nesting season, sea turtle nest protection and monitoring activities at Anamur Beach were carried out under the supervision of an academic expert specializing in sea turtle conservation, and the results were documented in a comprehensive end-of-season report. The report identified the sources of light pollution affecting sea turtle nesting and hatchling emergence on Anamur Beach.

The nesting beach was evaluated according to the sub-sectors used for nest monitoring, and the final report identified the following sources of light pollution:

a. Sultansuyu
Site lighting

b. Karaağaç

Facility lighting

c. Cerenler
Aslıhan Restaurant
Street lighting poles
Devlet Bahçeli Park lighting

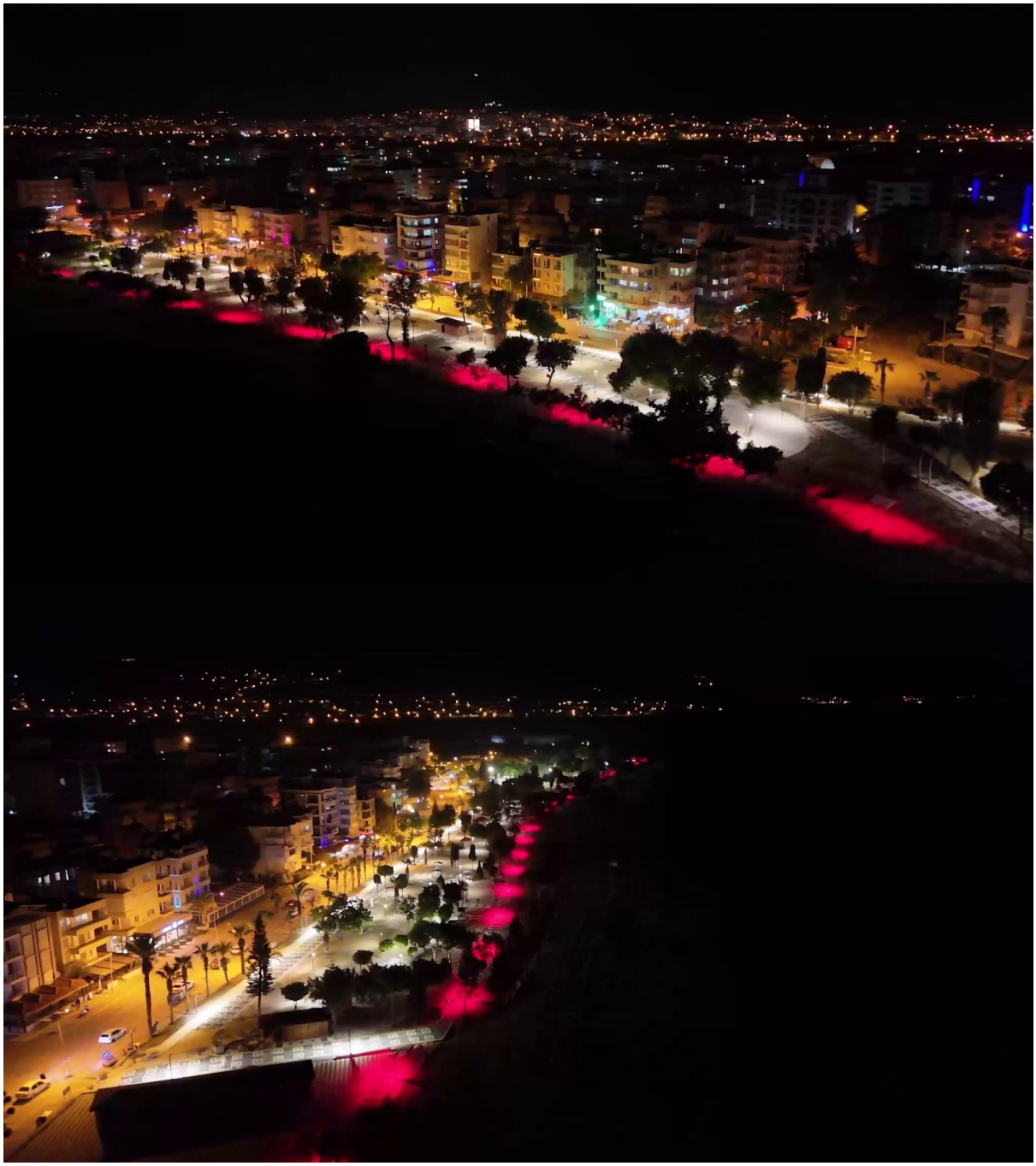
d. Taşlık
Devlet Bahçeli Park
Cafés and bars located on the beach
Street lighting poles
Babil’s Garden

e. Dragon Park
Facilities around the pier
General lighting installations

f. Mamure Castle
Lighting from the camping area

The Bern Convention Secretariat has requested that Türkiye submit a report by 13 February 2026 on the measures implemented in accordance with Recommendation No. 226 (2024).
Within this framework, pursuant to the decision adopted at the “Anamur Sea Turtle Local Commission” meeting held under the chairmanship of the Anamur District Governor on 10 April 2025, the technical subcommittee composed of the Anamur Nature Conservation and National Parks Chief Ranger Office, Anamur Municipality, Anamur District Police Department, Anamur District Gendarmerie Command, and the Mersin Environmental Association was tasked with inspecting the nesting beach before the nesting season, ensuring the implementation of measures to prevent light pollution, and correcting lighting deficiencies in the first and second-stage lighting systems by Anamur Municipality.
Accordingly, the technical subcommittee is requested to carry out the necessary inspections and assessments at the above-mentioned locations, ensure the implementation of measures to prevent light pollution, apply the necessary administrative sanctions against those failing to comply, and inform our Directorate of the outcome by 2 February 2026.

Savaş KUNT
Acting Director of Nature Conservation and National Parks



Annex 6. Anamur Sea Turtle Local Commission WhatsApp Communication Group

The translation of the original document has been prepared by General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks for information purposes.

Republic of Türkiye
General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks
7th Regional Directorate
Mersin Provincial Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks

Number: E-31875023-335.01-24398558
Subject: Anamur Sea Turtle Nesting Beach

To: Mersin Environment and Nature Association (MER-ÇED)

Within the framework of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention), Complaint File No. 2019/05 was opened against Türkiye concerning the Anamur Sea Turtle Nesting Beach.

Under the aforementioned complaint file, the establishment of a communication network was recommended. Furthermore, at the meeting of the Anamur Sea Turtle Local Commission held on 10 April 2025, it was decided to establish a WhatsApp communication group to facilitate communication among local stakeholders. Accordingly, on 3 July 2025, a WhatsApp group was created with the following description: “This is our communication group established in accordance with the Bern Recommendation to enable information sharing among stakeholders regarding the Anamur Sea Turtle Nesting Beach. The members of the group consist of the participants of the Local Commission Meeting.”

However, in the official letter of the General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks dated 3 March 2026 and numbered E-30057506-045.01-23713799, it was stated that during the 45th Standing Committee Meeting, the complainant had declared that no non-governmental organization had been informed of the establishment of such a communication mechanism. It was therefore instructed that concrete written evidence should be submitted to the Secretariat during the next reporting period and that, in line with Recommendation No. 8, the non-governmental organizations included in the local commission should be formally notified in writing.

In the WhatsApp communication group established on 3 July 2025, the contact numbers of Ms. Şeyda AFYONCU and Ms. Ayca ARDIÇ, representing the Mersin Environment and Nature Association (MER-ÇED), have been registered.

The WhatsApp group has been actively used as a communication network since July 2025, and numerous reports, notifications and information concerning the nesting beach have been shared through this platform. The group serves as a communication network composed of representatives of the relevant public institutions and non-governmental organizations (MER-ÇED and SAD-AFAG) concerned with the Anamur Sea Turtle Nesting Beach. Since 3 July 2025, actions taken in response to reports shared through this group have included the imposition of an administrative fine on a vehicle entering the beach, the prevention of

unauthorized intervention by a café on the beach, and the assessment of numerous reports concerning light pollution.

It has not been possible to contact your Association at its registered address, as no association could be located at the address on record. We therefore kindly request that your Association notify our Directorate in writing of its current official correspondence address. Furthermore, if your Association wishes to change its designated representative in the Anamur Sea Turtle Nesting Beach WhatsApp communication group, which has been active since July 2025, we kindly request that this also be communicated to our Directorate in writing.

We kindly request your information and necessary action.

Savaş KUNT
Acting Director Mersin Provincial Directorate of
Nature Conservation and National Parks

Update Report – February 2026

REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

1st REPORT OF 2026 ON ANAMUR SEA TURTLE NESTING BEACH

REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT REPORT

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

In accordance with the request communicated by the Secretariat of the Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats regarding Complaint No. 2019/05 on habitat degradation along the Mersin–Anamur Coast, the present report has been prepared to provide updated information on the conservation activities carried out in the area, the current status of the habitats and nesting populations, and the progress achieved in the implementation of Recommendation No. 226 (2024).

The report also presents recent developments and measures undertaken by the relevant national authorities and stakeholders to ensure the protection, monitoring, and rehabilitation of the affected habitats and species.

“In the decision adopted by the Bureau of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg on 22 December 2025, under Open File 2019/05;”

194. Appreciated the results of the efforts of both parties to enhance the monitoring, state of the habitats and nesting conditions of *C. caretta, C. mydas* and *T. triunguis*

195. Urged the authorities to intensify their efforts to pursue the implementation of Recommendation No. 226 (2024), in cooperation with all the relevant stakeholders, including the complainants.

196. In particular, called for decisive action to halt further destruction and rehabilitate the habitats of the Nile soft-shelled turtles to enable the local population’s survival.

Species monitoring activities for *Trionyx triunguis* have been initiated by the General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks, 7th Regional Directorate, as of 09 October 2025. Counts are being conducted at approximately two-week intervals along a 500-meter line using the line transect method in the Dragon Stream and Sultansuyu Stream (Annex-1).

Annex-1 includes field inspection reports documenting visits conducted on different dates to Dragon Stream and Sultansuyu Stream, during which surveys were carried out upstream starting from the sea inland. The findings recorded on these dates are presented in the table below.

09.10.2025	One Nile soft-shelled turtle (*Trionyx triunguis*) was recorded in Dragon Stream.

24.10.2025	No individuals were detected.
10.11.2025	No individuals were detected.
25.11.2025	One Nile soft-shelled turtle (*Trionyx triunguis*) was recorded in Dragon Stream.
10.12.2025	One Nile soft-shelled turtle (*Trionyx triunguis*) was recorded in Dragon Stream.
25.12.2025	No individuals were detected.
08.01.2026	No individuals were detected.
23.01.2026	One Nile soft-shelled turtle (*Trionyx triunguis*) was recorded in Dragon Stream.

Since the starting date of the monitoring activities, Nile soft-shelled turtles (*Trionyx triunguis*) have been recorded in four incidences.

197. Stressed the importance of establishing a turtle protection network (Rec.8) and a turtle monitoring group (Rec.9) for ensuring appropriate coordination of required efforts.

The activities carried out under Recommendation 8 and 9 are described below under the heading "Activities Conducted within the Scope of Recommendation No. 226 (2024) – Articles 8 and 9" The work is being implemented in coordination with relevant institutions and non-governmental organizations.

198. Highlighted that any existing practices and new developments not listed in the Recommendation No. 226 (2024) which could have a negative impact on the nesting beach, such as mining, agriculture or inadequate water management, be carefully assessed and – if considered detrimental – avoided.

Within the scope of assessing potential adverse impacts of agricultural activities, mining practices and water management on the sea turtle nesting beach, consultations were held with the District Directorate of Agriculture and Forestry. It was confirmed that routine inspections and controls are regularly conducted regarding the extraction of sand and gravel from the coast and riverbeds, as well as potential mass fish mortality incidents. The inspections carried out determined that no sand or gravel extraction has taken place from the beaches or streams, no mass fish deaths have occurred, and that the hydroelectric power plants (HPPs) located on the Dragon Stream provide sufficient water to fish passages.

Furthermore, it was reported that farmer training activities are being conducted to prevent the pollution of streams and seawater. Within the scope of these trainings, farmers are informed about the proper disposal of agricultural pesticide packaging, emphasizing that such waste must not be discarded into water bodies or the environment, and that it is collected and disposed of appropriately as mentioned in the official letter (Annex-2).

Activities Conducted within the Scope of Bern Convention 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.

As a result of the studies conducted on the Anamur Sea Turtle Nesting Beach by a team composed of members of the National Scientific Commission, the light index has been determined. It was recommended that lighting systems should not exceed a height of 50 cm,

operate at wavelengths of 580 nm and above, preferably in red or amber colors, that sections directly illuminating the beach should be shielded, and that the lighting design should be prepared in consultation with expert researchers.

Within the scope of these recommendations of the National Scientific Commission, the Municipality of Anamur is currently continuing the preparations for the 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.

The Municipality of Anamur has stated that the preparation and implementation of phased (stage-based) projects in the nesting area are not currently on their agenda.

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.

Information was requested from the Municipality of Anamur regarding the matter, and in the official reply provided in Annex-3 it was stated that unauthorized constructions located within the Coastal Setback Line in the Fatih Neighborhood of Anamur District—specifically on privately owned parcel 326, block 1, as well as on unregistered areas—were sealed on 05.08.2025 in accordance with the provisions of the Zoning Law No. 3194, as they fall within the Sea Turtle Nesting Beach. As it was determined that these illegal structures were not brought into compliance with zoning regulations within the legally granted period, a demolition decision (No. 284, dated 25.09.2025) was adopted by the Municipal Council. It was further stated that the demolition works will be carried out within the scope of the Municipality's 2026 Demolition Tender.

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 warning signboards have been produced for the beach (Annex-4), and these signs will be installed on the nesting beach prior to the nesting season. Protective subsurface cages for nests are available; however, efforts are ongoing to procure additional cages requested 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 activities are carried out by a team composed of a scientific group led by Doğan Sözbilen, a lecturer at Pamukkale University, together with volunteers and staff members of our Directorate. Nest coordinates are recorded using GPS. Nest monitoring activities are conducted in accordance with the relevant 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” has been prepared and was implemented during the 2025 sea turtle nesting season. Areas within the nesting beach where hatchlings emerging from nests were observed to orient toward land instead of the sea were identified (Annex-5), and the relevant businesses and municipalities were requested to take the necessary mitigation measures (Annex-5a).

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.

During the 2025 sea turtle nesting season, nest monitoring activities for *T. triunguis*, in addition to *C. caretta* and *C. mydas*, were carried out by a team led by Doğan Sözbilen, a lecturer at Pamukkale University, together with staff members of our Directorate. **Two nests** of *T. triunguis* were identified along the banks of the Dragon Stream.

Since 09 October 2025, surveys for *T. triunguis* have been conducted approximately every two weeks by the teams of the Anamur Nature Conservation and National Parks Unit, using the line transect counting method along designated transects in the Dragon Stream and Sultansuyu Stream. These monitoring activities are ongoing (Annex-1).

In addition, investigations are continuing regarding potential agricultural and mining activities that may pose threats to the habitats of *T. triunguis*.

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

On 3 July 2025, a WhatsApp group titled “Anamur Sea Turtles Local Commission” was established to facilitate communication regarding activities carried out at the Anamur Sea Turtle Nesting Beach, as well as notifications and complaints. As stated in the group description, the platform serves as a communication network, in line with the Bern Convention Recommendation, enabling information sharing among stakeholders related to the Anamur Sea Turtle Nesting Beach. The network includes members of the Anamur Sea Turtles Local Commission, comprising representatives of authorized public institutions and organizations operating at the Anamur beach, as well as representatives of non-governmental organizations such as SAD-AFAG and MER-ÇED.

Through this communication network, an administrative fine was imposed on one vehicle reported for entering the beach (Annex-6). In addition, information was shared by the State Hydraulic Works (DSİ) regarding a temporary gate malfunction affecting the release of the required 10% environmental flow in the Dragon Stream. Instant notifications and coordinated responses have also been carried out concerning issues such as beach encroachment, light pollution, and the collection of stray dogs. Active coordination between public institutions and non-governmental organizations is maintained through this WhatsApp communication network.

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.

Pursuant to the decision taken at the Anamur Sea Turtles Local Commission Meeting held on 10 April 2025 at 14:00, a joint team was established consisting of the Anamur Nature Conservation and National Parks Unit, the Municipality, the Anamur District Police Department, the Anamur District Gendarmerie Command, and representatives of non-governmental organizations. Volunteer citizens also participate in this team from time to time. In addition, volunteers (members of non-governmental organizations) periodically patrol the beach during the nesting season and submit notifications when necessary.

This report has been prepared and duly signed by the undersigned on 03/02/2026.

ANNEXES:

Annex-1 *T. triunguis* field inspection reports

Annex-2 Official correspondence was conducted with the District Directorate of Agriculture and Forestry regarding mass fish mortality incidents, the extraction of sand and gravel from coastal areas, and the organization of farmer training activities.

Annex-3 The official letter of the Municipality of Anamur regarding the removal of illegal development

Annex-4 Warning Signboards

Annex-5 Identification of areas with improper lighting

Annex-5a Official letter regarding the warning for the correction of improper lighting

Annex-6 Vehicle penalty notice

* The official correspondences included in the annexes have not been translated directly from Turkish; instead, their content has been appropriately referenced in the main text.

Annex-4 Warning Signboards

