

Strasbourg, 1 March 2022

T-PVS/Files(2022)32

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

42nd meeting
Strasbourg, 29 November – 2 December 2022

Possible File: 2019/05

**Habitat destruction in Mersin Anamur Beach
(Turkey)**

- REPORT BY THE GOVERNMENT -

*Document prepared by the
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Turkey*

REPUBLIC OF TURKEY**MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY**

11.03.2022

Government Report on the Complaint submitted by Mersin Environment and Nature Association and Medasset Regarding The Activities Done by Anamur Municipality on Anamur Beach of Mersin Province**Background:**

This complaint was first raised in the summer of 2019. As soon as the complaint was reported to the Mersin Provincial Directorate of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the case was inspected by the Directorate and finally, the municipality was fined 180.489,00 Turkish Liras on the basis of Turkish Environmental Law (No. 2872). The municipality was also obliged to rehabilitate the area. However, the Municipality refused to pay the fine and appealed to the administrative court. The National Court made its decision in January 2021 and it ruled to dismiss the appeal filed by the Municipality with the decision no K.2020/1054. In addition, as a result of the appeal examination, Adana Regional Administrative Court 2nd Administrative Case Division decided to reject the appeal application with the decision numbered E.2021/780, K.2021/2031.

In view of the bilateral interviews between the General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks and the universities, it was decided that the rehabilitation must be done within the scope of the principals determined by a group of experts, so as to mitigate further degradation on the beach due to the heavy machinery activities. In this respect, a small group meeting was held between the representatives of the Ministry and the members of National Sea Turtle Scientific Committee, which is an advisory body for the Ministry. In this meeting, the commission decided about an on-the-spot investigation, to better see the effects of illegal activity on the beach. The on-the-spot visit was held at the end of March 2021. It was a key tool to decide upon the road map about how to rehabilitate the area. Three members of the Scientific Committee attended the on-the-spot visit due to COVID -19 restrictions.

The committee also collected information about the official application of the same Municipality to make a beach arrangement project, which was based on the Beach Arrangement Master Plan, approved by the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization in September 2020.

Information on both areas can be found below in detail:

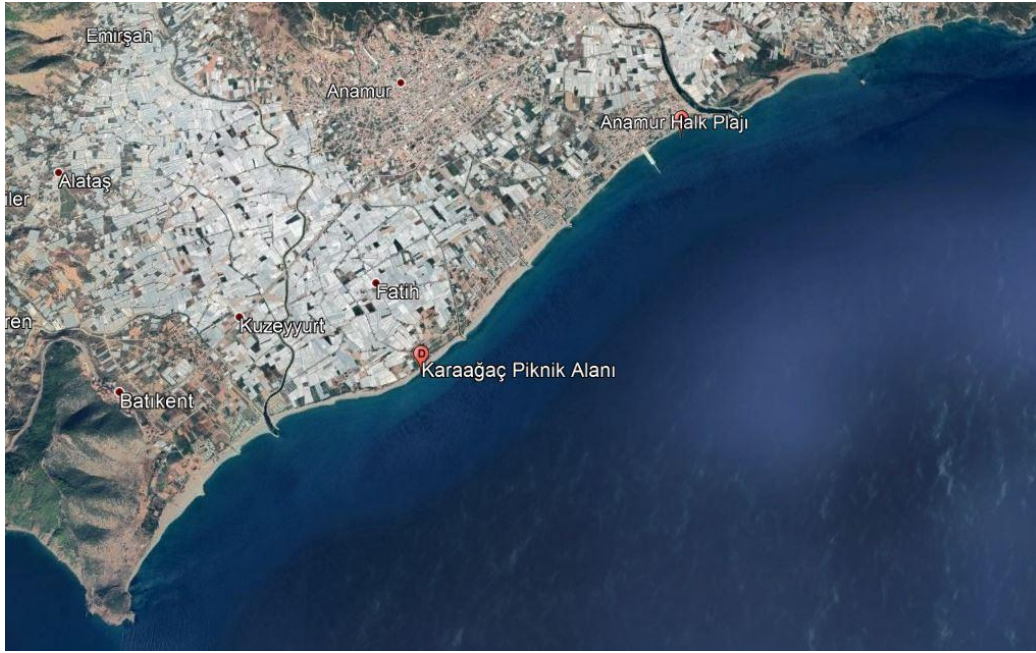
A- Illegally Filled Site In Karaagac

Anamur Beach is located along the north-east and south-west of the Anamur District of Mersin Province, bordered between Cape Anamur in the south and Pullu Forest Camp in the north, stretching 12.2 km.

Anamur Sea Turtles Nesting Beach was declared as one of the important nesting beaches in Turkey with the Circular No. 2009/10 of the former Ministry of Environment and Forestry. The borders of the "Anamur Sea Turtle Nesting Area" was defined in one of the annexes of the Circular. In the west it starts with the coordinates 36°01'14.04" – 32°48'12.71" and in the east it ends with coordinates 36°05'15.11" – 32°54'59.63".

Mamure Castle and Anamurium Antique City located here are first degree natural protected areas. There is also Pullu Forest Camp here. Anamur nesting beach is divided into 4 parts by Sultan Stream (Sultansuyu), Dragon Stream (Kocaçay) and Mamure Castle. In addition, since the Section II is divided further by a concrete pier and two channels, it has been evaluated in 4 subsections. This section and sub-sections show partial differences in terms of both the use of the beach by people and the construction and sand structure. The sections and subsections from west to east of Anamur Beach, which is divided into parts according to this study, are given below.

Section I: Ören (Anamurium) - Sultan Stream (Sultansuyu),
Section II: Sultan Stream (Sultansuyu) - Dragon Stream (Kocaçay);
Subsection I: Sultan Stream (Sultansuyu) - Aslıhan (1st Channel),
Subsection II: Aslıhan (1st Channel) - Taşlık (2nd Channel),
Subsection III: Taşlık (2nd Channel) - Pier,
Subsection IV: Pier – Dragon Stream Çayı (Kocaçay),
Section III: Dragon Stream (Kocaçay) - Mamure Castle,
Section IV: Mamure Castle - Pullu Forest Camp.



The filling area built by the Municipality of Anamur in the Karaağaç region remains in the first subsection, and negotiations were held for the rehabilitation works to be started by the Municipality again. The soil, which had been brought to this region in previous years, and the trees planted were removed and moved to another region. The earth fill, which was on the sand, has been moved from the area without damaging the dune area. Afterwards, it was left to the natural process to repair itself without any physical intervention on the damaged area, but it is monitored. The photos from the first rehabilitation year and the second year can be found as Annex I to this report. The photos taken in 2022 February reflect the natural process of rehabilitation very well.

In this context, the relevant institutions have been informed that any arrangement contrary to the scope of the Circular 2009/10 should not be made without permission in the 12.2 km sea turtle nesting areas.

B- Beach Arrangement Project;

Following the approval of the "Mersin - Anamur District's 1/5000 scale Master Development Plan and 1/1000 scale Implementation Development Plan by the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization, Anamur Mayor's Office requested to make a Coastal Line Arrangement project in two stages in Güzelyurt locality with the letter dated 25/08/2020 and numbered 52393879-150.01-5876. As required by the legislation, the approval of the related institutions are sought in these applications. In the examination carried out by the Provincial Directorate of General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks, the requested area was found to be inside the Zone II of the sea turtle nesting area. It was understood that it remained in the protection zone and in

compliance with the provisions of the Ministry's Circular No. 2009/10, restructuring of the Project was requested from the municipality.

In Anamur Municipality's letter dated 23/08/2021 and numbered E-52393879-000-5842; it was stated that the landscape project was rearranged, and the necessary permissions were requested again. Therefore, a commission consisting of some members of the "Sea Turtles Scientific Committee", which was mentioned above was formed by the General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks, based on the Circular numbered 2009/10, in order to examine the landscape project within the scope of the circular,

On-the-spot investigation was carried out on 25-28 March 2021 and "Investigation Report on the Regulation of Anamur Beach Sea Shore Band Planned by Anamur Municipality on Turtle Breeding Beaches Project" has been prepared. The provisions in the report has been integrated with the provisions of the beach management plan, which was presented in the previous reports and can be found as Annex II to this report also.

As it was requested by the Bureau, the complainant, Mersin Environment and Nature Association was repeatedly asked to inform about the coastal arrangement project, however, it was understood that the Association did not have an official address and telephone number. Due to her health problems, it was only possible to meet with the President of the Association, Sabahat ASLAN, on 11/02/2022 and she was informed about the subject. The negotiations with the complainant will be continuing in the future about the beach arrangement plan Project.

ANNEX I

Photos from the first rehabilitation year and the second year





Pictures above: April 2021 rehabilitation







Pictures above: February 2022, a year after rehabilitation

Annex II

First Stage of the Project

Taking into account the vegetation line, the nesting band will be marked with wooden pile systems with the features to be determined by the General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks. Considering that the wooden piled systems should be at a distance of 65 meters from the shoreline, they will be built within the nesting limits determined by previous studies. In this context, taking into account the nesting limits determined by previous studies which were carried out together with the Nature Conservation and National Parks Branch Directorate and sea turtle experts working in the region, starting from 65 meters towards the coastline it will be open to the use of sunbeds and umbrellas that can be used by the public,

Within the scope of the Circular No. 2009/10, no buildings (facilities, buffets, cafeterias, tea houses, etc.) can be built within the first 65 meters of 1st Protection Zone.

It has been determined that the 2nd Protection Zone, at the back of the beach, is far beyond the nesting area of sea turtles and has been destroyed by vehicle traffic, so it has been exposed to various filling and excavation works. For this reason, it has been found appropriate that the beach arrangement works can be arranged as it will contribute to the protection of the nesting band.

The 3-meter wide bicycle path and 4.5-meter wide walking path planned along the south side coastline specified in the project must be moved to the northern region.

All lights in the project area should be planned to face the interior, and red lights should be used so that turtles are not disturbed by the light during nesting and hatching periods.

Tea gardens, cafes, cafeterias, makeshift huts, showers, toilets, etc., within the determined nesting band must be removed and the area must be rehabilitated by removing the landfills. It is necessary to transfer the trees planted in the existing dune and nesting band from the area to a suitable place. Also the stone wall structure located in the Taşlık region should be removed and restructured in accordance with the natural landscape.

Activities like concerts, festivals, parties, weddings, etc., which may cause discomfort to the turtles are not allowed.

The construction works of the project must be carried out between 15 October and 15 May and the dune fields in the 65-meter 1st Protection Zone must not be damaged under any circumstances.

Information and warning signs about turtles should be placed in appropriate areas in the project beach side entrance areas.

It is recommended that natural plants such as sand lily and oleander that grow naturally on the beach suitable for the natural landscape should be protected and used in landscaping.

Second Stage of the Project;

Taking into account the vegetation line, the nesting band will be marked with wooden pile systems with the features to be determined by the General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks. Considering that the wooden piled systems should be at a distance of 77 meters from the shoreline, they will be built within the nesting limits determined by previous studies. In this context, taking into account the nesting limits determined by previous studies which were carried out together with the Nature Conservation and National Parks Branch Directorate and sea turtle experts working in the region, starting from 65 -77 meters towards the coastline it will be open to the use of sunbeds and umbrellas that can be used by the public,

Since activities such as open sports fields and football fields planned in the project will cause light pollution, they should be removed and replaced with a beach volleyball court.

Within the scope of the Circular No. 2009/10, no buildings (facilities, buffets, cafeterias, tea houses, etc.) can be built within the first 65 meters of 1st Protection Zone.

The 3-meter wide bicycle path and 4.5-meter wide walking path planned along the south side coastline specified in the project must be moved to the northern region.

All lights in the project area should be planned to face the interior, and red lights should be used so that turtles are not disturbed by the light during nesting and hatching periods.

Tea gardens, cafes, cafeterias, makeshift huts, showers, toilets, etc., within the determined nesting band must be removed and the area must be rehabilitated by removing the landfills. It is necessary to transfer the trees planted in the existing dune and nesting band from the area to a suitable place.

Activities like concerts, festivals, parties, weddings, etc., which may cause discomfort to the turtles are not allowed.

The construction works of the project must be carried out between 15 October and 15 May and the dune fields in the 65-meter 1st Protection Zone must not be damaged under any circumstances.

Information and warning signs about turtles should be placed in appropriate areas in the project beach side entrance areas.

Waste water that will originate from the shower cabins specified in the project should be discharged into the sewerage systems of the municipality.

The exhibition and show fair area specified in the project should be shifted towards the land side.

It is recommended that natural plants such as sand lily and oleander that grow naturally on the beach suitable for the natural landscape should be protected and used in landscaping.

C- Ensuring the Sustainability of Sea Turtle Protection and Monitoring Works on Anamur Nesting Beach and the Communication of Stakeholders

In order to prevent the entry of vehicles into the shore, wooden piled systems (12-15 cm in diameter, 1.5 meters in length, impregnated wooden piles buried into sand 70 cm) will be placed at intervals of 5 meters along the beach. The distance between the piles will be decreased to 1.5 meters at the points where there may be a vehicle entrance and these works will be carried out by the Municipality of Anamur.

Any work to be done on sea turtles and nesting areas should be carried out under the coordination of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks, with the opinions of the members of the science commission.

Every year, monitoring studies should be carried out with the contribution of GDNCNP officials and volunteer students or staff from Universities and, if possible, with the participation of Municipality personnel in obtaining nest, trace and hatchling information.