



Strasbourg, 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2023

T-PVS/Files(2023)56

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE  
AND NATURAL HABITATS

**Standing Committee**

43<sup>rd</sup> meeting

Strasbourg, 27 November - 1 December 2023

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**Open case-file: 2019/05**

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

**- GOVERNMENT REPORT -**

*Document prepared by Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry  
Republic of Türkiye*

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

21.08.2023

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

**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 about 180.000 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 view of the bilateral interviews between the General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks and the complainant Association, 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, rehabilitation was done before the summer of 2021. In the mean time, another complaint about the same site was filed to the Secretariat, which included a broader Project about the arrangement of the beach. Previous reports conveyed some information about the case and in the last Standing Committee Meeting, a file was opened after a vote. A progress report is expected from Turkish authorities. The present report should be evaluated together with the information presented in previous reports.

**Beach Arrangement Project**

The Anamur Coastal Arrangement Project is planned to be carried out in two stages. The 1st stage consists of two areas demarcated by wooden stakes, first of which extends up to 65 meters inland from the coastline, where sea turtles can lay their eggs. In collaboration with the Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks and sea turtle experts working in the region, the boundaries for nesting, previously determined through earlier efforts, will be taken into account. Starting from the 65-meter mark towards the inland, this area will be open to the public for the use of sunbeds and umbrellas. Within the scope of Circular 2009/10, no structures (facilities, stalls, cafes, tea houses, etc.) can be built within the first 65 meters of the 1st Protection Zone."

The activities planned for the 2nd stage are as follows: We would like to emphasize once more that according to the Turkish legislation, there is no requirement for Environmental Impact Analysis for such small scale projects like these, Therefore, before conducting beach arrangement works, a team of scientists consisting of Professors from three different universities, who have publications on sea turtles and are members of the National Sea Turtle Scientific Committee, determined the risks, necessary measures, and methods for preserving the nesting area, although there is no necessity for EIA. It was determined by the scientific committee that the 2nd Protection Zone in the current area, which lies behind the sea turtle nesting area, had been impacted and degraded due to vehicle traffic, as well as various filling and excavation works. Therefore, the implementation of the 2nd Stage project has been identified by the scientific committee to contribute to the conservation of the area. The conservation measures suggested by the members of the Scientific committee was presented in our earlier reports, therefore it is given here as an appendix.

As of August 17, 2023, considering the decisions made by the scientific committee based on their examinations, it has been observed that the 2nd Stage project is approximately 90% complete.

**Appendix 1 (Pictures)**

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tC\\_Y3ugOGqRSRCIO0hbeiffdwrXCf5yJ/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tC_Y3ugOGqRSRCIO0hbeiffdwrXCf5yJ/view?usp=sharing)

**Appendix-2****REVIEW REPORT ON THE ANAMUR BEACH SEA TURTLE BREEDING AREAS AND THE COASTAL STRIP ARRANGEMENT PROJECT PLANNED BY ANAMUR MUNICIPALITY****Regarding the Filled Area at the KARAĞAÇ Location:**

Anamur Beach, within the boundaries of Mersin Province, Anamur District, has been designated as a significant nesting area for sea turtles and loggerhead sea turtles based on various studies conducted from 1988 to the present (Baran and Kasperek, 1989; Baran et al., 1992; Yerli and Demirayak, 1996; Yerli and Canbolat, 1998; Oruç et al., 2003, Uçar, 2008). Works continued at Anamur Beach during the breeding seasons of 2006 and 2007 by Mersin University, and a doctoral thesis evaluating these two nesting seasons was conducted, highlighting the importance of the nesting beach in Anamur (Uçar, 2008). Our publications on this beach are available both nationally and internationally (Türkozan et al., 2013, 2018; Uçar et al., 2012). Furthermore, it is known that personnel affiliated with the Ministry have provided regular information about the number of nests in this area since 2007.

Anamur Beach stretches along the northeastern to southwestern part of Anamur District, Mersin Province, bordered by Anamur Cape in the south and Pullu Forest Camp in the north, covering a length of 12.2 km. The area includes Mamure Castle and Anamurium Ancient City, designated as a Level I Natural Protected Area. Additionally, Pullu Nature Park is located here. Anamur nesting beach is divided into four sections by Sultan Stream (Sultansuyu), Dragon Stream (Kocaçay), and Mamure Castle. The 2nd Section, limited between Sultan Stream (Sultansuyu) and Dragon Stream (Kocaçay), is divided by a concrete pier and two canals, thus evaluated within the context of four sub-sections. These sections and sub-sections exhibit partial differences in terms of human usage, development, and sand structure. According to this study, the sections and subsections of Anamur Beach, divided from west to east, are presented below.

1st Section: Between Ören (Anamurium) and Sultan Stream (Sultansuyu),

2nd Section: Between Sultan Stream (Sultansuyu) and Dragon Stream (Kocaçay);

1st. Sub-section: Between Sultan Stream (Sultansuyu) and Aslıhan (I. Channel),

2nd Sub-section: Between Aslıhan (I. Channel) and Taşlık (II. Channel),

3rd Sub-section: Between Taşlık (II. Channel) and İskele,

4th Sub-section: Between İskele and Dragon Stream (Kocaçay).

3rd Section: Between Dragon Stream (Kocaçay) and Mamure Castle.

4th Section: The beach between Mamure Castle and Pullu Forest Camp.

The rehabilitation works in the filled area at the Karağaç region have been initiated by Anamur Municipality. In previous years, trees that were planted by bringing soil to this area have been uprooted and relocated to another area. Currently, the soil fill on top of the sand needs to be removed from the

dune area without causing harm within a week from the issuance of this notice. Subsequently, it is recommended that the area that has been disrupted should undergo a natural self-repair process without any physical intervention.

In this context, it is essential that no unauthorized modifications conflicting with the regulations should be made within the 12.2 km stretch of sea turtle nesting areas.

**Regarding the Coastal Strip Arrangement Project:**

**For the 1st Stage Section of the Project:**

A nesting zone will be established using wooden stake systems in accordance with the characteristics determined by the General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks, considering the vegetation line. The wooden stake systems will be implemented within the nesting boundaries determined by previous efforts, taking into account a distance of 65 meters from the coastline. In collaboration with the Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks and sea turtle experts working in the region, starting from 65 meters, the nesting boundaries determined by previous efforts will be considered, and an area for the public to use sunbeds and umbrellas will be designated.

Within the initial 65 meters of the 1st Protection Zone, as outlined in Circular 2009/10, no structures (facilities, stalls, cafes, tea houses, etc.) can be constructed.

The 2nd Protection Zone, situated behind the nesting area of sea turtles and affected by vehicle traffic, has been identified as degraded due to various filling and excavation works. Therefore, due to the potential contribution of beach arrangement works to the preservation of the nesting area, the implementation has been deemed suitable.

The planned 3-meter-wide bicycle path and 4.5-meter-wide pedestrian path along the southern coastline in the project should be relocated to the northern part.

All lights within the project area should be designed to face the inner areas, using red light to prevent disturbing turtles during nesting and hatchling emergence periods.

Nesting areas within the determined nesting zone, occupied by tea gardens, cafes, cafeterias, makeshift shacks, showers, toilets, etc., must be cleared, and the removed soil fillings in those areas need rehabilitation. Trees planted later in the existing dune and within the nesting zone should be properly transferred to suitable locations. Additionally, the stone wall structure in the rocky area should be removed and reconstructed in harmony with the natural landscape.

Concerts, festivals, parties, weddings, and similar events that might disturb turtles should not be allowed.

The construction activities for this undertaking should occur between May 15 and October 15, and no harm should come to the dune areas within the 65-meter 1st Protection Zone.

Informative and cautionary signs related to sea turtles should be placed at suitable locations near the entrance points of the beach.

Preservation of naturally growing plants such as beach lilies and oleanders, which are native to the area, is recommended, and they should be used in landscape arrangements.

**For the 2nd Stage Section of the Project:**

A nesting zone will be established using wooden stake systems in accordance with the characteristics determined by the General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks, considering the vegetation line. The wooden stake systems will be implemented within the nesting boundaries determined by previous efforts, taking into account a distance of 77 meters from the coastline as specified in the project. In collaboration with the Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks and sea turtle experts working in the region, an area between 65 and 77 meters will be designated for public use of sunbeds and umbrellas.

Planned activities such as open sports areas and a soccer field in the project will cause light pollution and should be removed. A beach volleyball court should be placed in their stead.

Within the initial 65 meters of the 1st Protection Zone, as outlined in Circular 2009/10, no structures (facilities, stalls, cafes, tea houses, etc.) can be constructed.

The planned 3-meter-wide bicycle path and 4.5-meter-wide pedestrian path along the southern coastline should be removed from the project and relocated to the northern part of the project area.

All lights within the project area should be planned to face inward, and the use of red light should be ensured to prevent disturbing turtles during nesting and hatchling emergence periods.

Structures such as tea gardens, cafes, cafeterias, makeshift shacks, showers, toilets, etc., located within the determined nesting zone, need to be removed, and the rehabilitated of the removed soil fillings in those areas is necessary. The transfer of trees that were planted later in the existing dune and within the nesting zone to a suitable location should be facilitated. Concerts, festivals, parties, weddings, and similar events that could disturb turtles should not be permitted.

The construction activities related to this project should take place between May 15 and October 15, and the activities within the 65-meter 1st Protection Zone should be conducted without causing any harm to the dune areas.

Informative and cautionary signs related to sea turtles should be placed in suitable areas at the beach entrance points.

The waste water generated from the shower cabins mentioned in the project should be discharged into the municipality's sewer systems.

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

Preservation of naturally growing plants such as beach lilies and oleanders, which are native to the area, is recommended, and they should be used in landscape arrangements.

### **Ensuring the Sustainability of Sea Turtle Conservation and Monitoring Activities at Anamur Nesting Beach:**

To ensure the conservation of sea turtles and their sustainability, as well as to prevent vehicular access on the coast:

Wooden stake systems (impregnated, with a diameter of 12-15 cm, a length of 1.5 meters, and buried in the sand by 70 cm) will be placed along the beach at 5-meter intervals. The distance between stakes will

be reduced to 1.5 meters at points where vehicular access is possible, and this work will be carried out by Anamur Municipality.

Any scientific studies related to sea turtles and nesting areas must be conducted in coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry's General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks, with input from members of the scientific committee.

Every year, monitoring activities for obtaining information on nests, tracks, and hatchlings should be conducted with the contribution of GDNCNP officials and voluntary students or staff from universities, and ideally with the participation of municipality personnel as well.