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A Brief Review of Sea Turtle Strandings and Causes of Mortalities in Fethiye, Turkey

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Sea turtles have been living for millions of years on earth but their nesting beaches are slowly diminishing and environmental and anthropogenic effects are threatening their populations. Despite the studies on sea turtle nesting activities and conservation are increasing in recent years, there are very few inventory studies on the sea turtle death causes in Turkey. Fethiye is one of the important nesting rookery in Turkey and also an important tourism attraction centre. In this study, we investigated the sea turtle stranding reports to determine the cause of sea turtle deaths. Data collected from our studies, sea turtle conservation and monitoring project reports of General Directorate for Protection of Natural Assets and the unpublished reports of local NGO's between 2000 and 2016. A total of 46 loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*) and 19 green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) strandings were observed during the last 17 years. Of these turtles, 15 loggerhead and 7 green turtles (33.85%) were dead by collision with speed boats, 11 loggerhead and 5 green turtles (24.62%) were dead by fisheries interactions, 3 loggerhead turtles (4.62%) were found dead by possible blocking of plastic bag in the digestive tracks. The causes of deaths of 17 loggerhead and 7 green turtles (36.92%) could not be determined. In the light of this information, we can say that speed boat collisions related to water sports and plastic bag pollution due to increasing tourism activities and fisheries interactions are main sea turtle death cause in the region.

Keywords: *Caretta caretta*, *Chelonia mydas*, *Trionyx triunguis*, Stranding, Conservation.

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