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GREEN TURTLE NESTING ACTIVITIES AT THE WESTERNMOST MEDITERRANEAN COAST OF TURKEY: A NEW GREEN TURTLE NEST RECORD FROM GOCEK, TURKEY**Doğan Sözbilen | Eyup Başkale | Yusuf Katılmış | Musa Azmaz | Yakup Kaska**

Pamukkale University, Acıpayam Vocational High School, Department of Veterinary, Laborant & Veterinary Health Program, Acıpayam, Denizli, Turkey | Pamukkale University, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Department of Biology, Denizli, Turkey | Pamukkale University, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Department of Biology, Denizli, Turkey | Pamukkale University, Acıpayam Vocational High School, Department of Veterinary, Laborant & Veterinary Health Program, Acıpayam, Denizli, Turkey | Pamukkale University, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Department of Biology, Denizli, Turkey

Two sea turtle species; the loggerhead turtle (*Caretta caretta*) and green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) regularly nest Mediterranean coastline of Turkey. Loggerhead turtle nesting is observed along the Mediterranean coast of Turkey but main loggerhead nesting beaches are located on the western Mediterranean beaches. Green turtle nesting is mainly localized on the easternmost beaches in Turkey and Turkey has the majority of green turtle nests in the entire Mediterranean with over 60% of the total nests. Nesting activity of green turtle is also regularly observed with very low density in some beaches in Antalya and but our knowledge about western beaches of Turkey on green turtle is limited. We only have foraging green turtle observations and stranding data from the western Mediterranean coasts of Turkey. Only two green turtle nests were reported from Dalyan (2001) and Fethiye (2010). In addition, a green turtle nest was reported from Rhodes Island, Greece, which is located 90 km southwest of Fethiye, in recent years. All previous reports were given from a nesting beach. During 2017, we located a green turtle nest in Göcek on a small beach (36°44'41.93" N, 28°55'29.50" E). Göcek is located in Fethiye-Göcek Specially Protected Area (SPA) with numerous small bays with small beaches and any sea turtle nesting activity was not observed in the previous years in the area. A total of 109 eggs were counted in the nest. A total of 46 hatchlings were produced, while dead embryos in different stages were found 63 eggs. The nest depth was less than average green turtle nests (55 cm). Stranded green turtles from different age classes reported from Fethiye-Göcek SPA in previous years but nesting activity is an unusual observation for this species. Göcek beaches are narrow in width and short in length and these small beaches can be evaluated as unsuitable for green turtle nests in comparison with eastern Mediterranean beaches. In contrast, having green turtle nests in the area and its close vicinities might be a sign for potential nesting area for green turtles, especially considering the possible temperature changes related to climate change in the future.

Keywords: Green turtle, Sporadic Nesting, Specially Protected Area, Göcek