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Temporal distribution of nests and nesting activity of loggerhead turtle on Dalaman beach: declining of the number of nests

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Any species conservation activity requires a deep understanding of population size, history and behavioural patterns of target species. The loggerhead sea turtle is an endangered species and its population size has been declining around the world. In Dalaman-Sarigerme beach, which is known as one of the most important loggerhead breeding beaches in Turkey, conservation activities on loggerhead sea turtle populations started in 2002 breeding season and are still ongoing. In this study, nesting activity and distribution on Dalaman-Sarigerme beach were investigated during 2009-2010 breeding seasons and compared with previous data. An average of 92 nests (ranging from 61 to 113 nests) were recorded during 2002-2008 nesting seasons. A total of 56 and 74 nests were registered in 2009 and 2010 breeding seasons as the lowest data since 2002. Within the examined nests, a number of 4542 and 5556 eggs were found respectively in 2009 and 2010

breeding seasons. According to this survey, 3698 (81.4%) and 3709 (66.8%) hatchings were recorded as successful data showing that the loggerhead population has decreased dramatically according to a damped oscillation in nest numbers. Secondly, we have checked the location of nests on the beach. According to this analysis, nest concentrations occurred mostly between Dalaman River and Ta I Stream. As displayed by data collected in the past nine years, female emergence and nesting activity seem to occur within the same undeveloped sections of the monitored beach. In addition, numbers of nests have been decreasing on Sarigerme section (Section I and II), which has recently shown a certain level of development. According to these results, there is clear evidence that loggerhead turtles have been choosing undisturbed beach sites for nesting activity.