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Turkey

Barcelona Convention slipup has Turkish monk seals disappear from the conservation radar screen

The 13th meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention was held in Catania, Sicily on 11-14 November 2003 [see [Mystery at RAC/SPA](#) and [Mediterranean states commit to implement "urgent actions"](#), International News, this issue]. Along with the ministerial delegations of contracting Mediterranean states and national/international NGOs, SAD-AFAG also participated as an NGO partner to UNEP-MAP.

For us, the most important subject of the meeting was formal approval of the SAP-BIO document. The SAP-BIO (strategic action plans for biological diversity) process was initiated by UNEP-MAP after the SAP (strategic action plans against pollution) and the contracting states requested that national reports be submitted defining the status of marine and coastal biodiversity within their borders. UNEP-MAP also urged the preparation of strategic action plans targeting the national priorities of biodiversity conservation.

A board of selected academicians was subsequently formed by the Turkish Ministry of Environment to draw up the national report and the strategic action plans. None of the Turkish NGOs having field experience in biodiversity research and conservation were considered in establishing that editing board. The reporting process was intended to be participatory and the draft national report was laid open for opinions and contributions from various national institutions and NGOs via three one-day workshops.

While the draft national report drew very serious and detailed criticisms from the workshop participants, GOs and NGOs alike, the strategic action plans were submitted to RAC/SPA without first opening them up for discussion. The contents of those "national" strategic action plans are still a mystery for every party who was kept out of the board of editors, including most of the Ministry of Environment officials. SAD-AFAG has learned only the "titles" of these national strategic action plans through the UNEP-MAP end document of SAP-BIO, which was offered for approval in Catania.

Surprisingly, there was no monk seal conservation action plan among the ones submitted by Turkey. When we asked RAC/SPA about the fate of the Turkish Strategic Action Plan for the Monk Seal – which was declared submitted by the "group of experts" who prepared the SAP-BIO national documents – they replied that if it had been sent by the national focal point, it would exist in the end document. RAC/SPA added that it has no enforcement power over governments.

When we posed the same question to Ministry of Environment officials, they declared that they had no idea whether the action plans had been submitted or not, since the unification of the Environment and Forestry ministries had resulted in personnel changes, and shifting responsibilities.

As a result, Turkey has not included monk seal conservation in that important SAP-BIO process with a relevant national action plan. Also, it seems that RAC/SPA did not express to Turkey any such expectation. We discussed the current dilemma with both RAC/SPA and Turkish Environment Ministry officials in Catania in order to facilitate a meeting between the two.

The monk seal is mentioned in the working document UNEP(DEC)/MED IG. 15/5 "Recommendations for 2004-2005", in the section II.B. The Document recommends the Contracting Parties to invite all concerned parties to hold a high level meeting to define appropriate ways of urgently implementing action for the effective protection of the Mediterranean monk seal, on the basis of the reports of the expert group convened by RAC/SPA in 2002. We have yet to receive any information or documents concerning the results of the Group of Experts meeting convened in

2002. The working document also recommends to the Secretariat that an evaluation report be prepared on the status of the Mediterranean monk seal for submission to the next Meeting of the Contracting Parties. In our meeting with Mr. Chadli Rais, Scientific Director of RAC/SPA, we expressed our willingness to commit the field research experience of SAD-AFAG, developed over the last 16 years in Turkey, to assist research work along those stretches of Mediterranean coast where the status of the monk seal is still unknown. – Yalcin Savas, SAD-AFAG.

Alleged monk seal killers acquitted: case heads to Supreme Court

There have been further developments in the criminal case brought against 4 fish farm operators accused of killing a monk seal in January 2003 on the Karaburun Peninsula, adjacent to the Foça Specially Protected Area [[Monk seal deaths](#), TMG 6 (1): June 2003].

The accused, pleading innocence, appealed prosecutors' demands that they each pay a fine of €200 and were thus obliged to face trial in public court where, if found guilty, they faced a penalty €400 each, plus a €4000 administration fine.

On 23 October 2003, the Urla Criminal Court of First Instance found the four accused – Ilker Akgül, Sedat Celenk, Temel Yildirim and Mehmet Özsü – not guilty and acquitted the men.

Urla's Chief Public Prosecutor, however, has now appealed to Turkey's Supreme Court to reverse the lower court ruling.

Source:

Urla Chief Public Prosecutor heads to Supreme Court for the dead seal. Cumhuriyet newspaper, 13 November 2003.

Fishy film documentaries in Foça

The 3rd International Documentaries Film Festival on Fishermen and the Sea took place in the historic Aegean town of Foça between 4-7 September 2003, organised by the Association of Documentary Filmmakers, the Underwater Research Society, Local Agenda 21 and Foça's Fisheries Cooperative.

Members of the Cooperative took a leading role in the organization of the event this year, its success in previous years convincing them that the Festival is their own.

The Festival kicked off with the concert of a Turkish folk music group, *Yeni Turku*. The most prominent events of the second day were the fishermen's boat races around the ancient harbour and, in the evening, the screening of documentaries in the *Bes kapilar* Castle. These included **Diary of a Fish** (directed by Enis Riza, Head of the Association of Documentary Filmmakers), and **Adrie and Mustafa**, which compares the lives of a Turkish and a Netherlands fishermen (Floor Kooij and Sibel Bilgin)

On 6 September, following the ritual circumcision of the sons of poor fishermen, net mending and fishing line tying competitions were held in the main square.



Fishermen's boat race.



Net-mending competition.

Although organised on a shoestring budget, the Festival has proved a remarkable success both with locals and visitors. Most importantly, perhaps, it has demonstrated to local artisanal fishermen that other people are interested

in their way of life and their concerns. Preparations are already underway for the 4th International Documentaries Film Festival in 2004. For further information, both from filmmakers and members of the public, please contact Yesim Aslan: yesim_aslan@yahoo.com. – Yesim Aslan, SAD-AFAG.

Seal Watch IV

SAD-AFAG's Seal Watch IV project – supported by the Scientific and Technical Research Council of Turkey, the Prince Bernard Nature Conservation Foundation, the Van Tienhoven Foundation of the Netherlands and also our own limited resources – continues to function at Mordogan, on the Karaburun Peninsula, adjacent to the Foça SPA [see [Seal Watch commences on Karaburun](#), TMG 5 (2): November 2002].

We constructed a portable observation station to record the behaviour of monk seals in the Mordogan cave, with the support of Mordogan Municipality and our summer volunteers.



The new, portable observation station at Mordogan.



Remote-controlled seal-watching.

Observations recorded by the system, installed in August and switched-on in September, show that monk seals continue to use the cave despite human pressures – notably fishing and summer tourism.



A female seal makes an appearance before the cameras.

Two female seals have been recorded using the cave, filling us with the hope that the cameras may catch the unique sight of a monk seal birth. – Nuray Veryeri & Harun Güçlüsoy, SAD-AFAG.

Help for coastal zone management project

SAD-AFAG received a small grant from GEF–SGP Turkey to produce education and public awareness materials about its coastal zone management (SMAP) project, which is being implemented in the following conservation areas: Foça; the adjacent Karaburun Peninsula near Izmir; and Aydıncık on Turkey's Mediterranean coast [see [Coastal zone management project commences](#), TMG 5 (1): May 2002 and [Turkey's second marine patrolling system launched](#) TMG 6 (1): June 2003].

Ten items will be produced as a result of the project. The first 5 – brochures about monk seals and the work of SAD-AFAG, fisheries, no-fishing-zones and SMAP – are already completed. The remaining items, including 2 posters

about Foça and Karaburun, a monk seal sticker, a board game and a story book for kids are currently being prepared. – Yesim Caglayan, SAD-AFAG.

Autumn ecotour postponed

This autumn's ecotourism project to the Kizilliman Marine Protected Area in the Cilician Basin on Turkey's Mediterranean coast has been postponed until May 2004.

The tour, which started in 2002 as a project to help monk seal conservation efforts in the MPA by providing a source of income to local, artisanal fishers and other stakeholders, is organised by Gruppo Foca Monaca of Italy in association with Dr. Ali Gucu's monk seal conservation team at Middle East Technical University – Institute of Marine Sciences [see [Cilicia on my mind](#) and [Ecotourism experiment bears fruit](#), TMG 6 (1): 2003].

GFM asks those who are interested in participating in next May's expedition to write to Gruppo Foca Monaca at grupfoca@tin.it or to visit its web site at: <http://www.focamonaca.it>.

EndQuote

Subject: Do you sale Monk Seal Meat?

Do you have Seal meat for sale? can I Buy for Food, Import of south Korea?
thank you

Best Regards

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Aircafe
South Korea
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Source: From an email received by CBD-Habitat, Madrid, 8 July 2003