




Mediterranean News

Vol. 8 (1): May 2005

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Turkey

Seal dies despite rescue efforts

Three dead seals and one ailing seal have been found along Turkish coasts since the last issue of TMG, reports Harun Güçlüsoy of SAD-AFAG. Despite considerable efforts to save it, the ailing seal subsequently died during treatment. The spate of deaths has spurred EU-sponsored efforts in Turkey to establish a coastal rescue network [see [Cover Story](#), this issue].

On 28 January 2005, the ailing seal was found stranded by fishermen in Dil Lake in Dilek Peninsula and Menderes Delta National Park. The following day, [SAD-AFAG](#) and the national park personnel determined that the adult male seal was in need of help. An examination of its health by the veterinarians and biologists suggested that he might be in need of long-term treatment and observation, and it was decided to move the animal to a better-suited location within the National Park.

Adnan Menderes University Veterinary Faculty personnel, together with the veterinarian of Foça Municipality determined a course of treatment and began the first applications. During this process the animal's health deteriorated and it was decided that the seal should have been transported to Foça. The treatment continued with the help of rescue experts from the Greek NGO [MOM](#) (within the framework of the EC Turkish Delegation's Micro II programme) as well as experts from the [Seal Rehabilitation and Research Centre](#) of the Netherlands. Despite our best efforts, the seal's health gradually worsened, until his unfortunate death. After this, in the first week of February, a full necropsy was made at the Veterinary Faculty of Adnan Menderes University, with the assistance of Jeny Androukaki of MOM – participating once again under the terms of our common project funded by the EC Turkish Delegation to establish a rescue network in Turkey. After the internal examination and detailed lab work, the cause of death by the Veterinary Faculty was found to be breathing malfunction.

Another dead juvenile seal – reported by a fisherman via e-mail (!) – was found at Alacati on the Çesme Peninsula, on 2 March 2005. A SAD-AFAG team travelled to the site but because of the animal's advanced state of decomposition, no necropsy was possible.

Previously, on 5 December 2004, a dead female monk seal was found at Gözsüzce village in Mersin, Bozyazi. The necropsy determined that the cause of the death was drowning possibly due to entanglement in fishing gear.



From top to bottom:
Dilek, January 2005,
Gözsüzce, December 2004,
Alacati, March 2005 and
Anamur, April 2005.

On 14 April 2005, another dead seal was found at Anamur, also in the Cilician Basin. Again, the animal was so highly decomposed that no necropsy was possible. – Harun Güçlüsoy, SAD-AFAG.

Regional Environment Centre funds rescues

A project recently approved by the National Donations programme of the Regional Environment Centre (REC-Turkey) will help SAD-AFAG establish a Monk Seal Rescue and Information Network along the Turkish Mediterranean coasts to help injured, sick and orphaned monk seals quickly, and also to respond to incidents involving dead seals.

This project will be implemented in cooperation with Dokuz Eylül University - Institute of Marine Sciences and Technology as an extension of the joint MOm/SAD-AFAG rescue network project currently underway with financial aid received from the E.C. Turkish Delegation [see [Cover Story](#), this issue].

The second project, prepared in conjunction with the Foça Municipality and submitted to REC-Turkey by the town authorities, involves the mapping of Posidonia sea grass meadows, an assessment of the threats they face, and the drawing up of management actions to prevent further deterioration and to promote recovery.

Also as part of the project, the species, population numbers and breeding areas of marine birds within the Foça Specially Protected Area will be determined, and threats assessed. According to data collected, adjustments may be made to the existing SPA management plan.

The REC-Turkey project will also help fund the establishment of an information centre in the Foça Public Library. – Harun Güçlüsoy, SAD-AFAG.

Foça and Alonissos issue joint statement of ecological commitment

Following their historic exchange visits [see [Developing closer ties between Turkey and Greece in monk seal conservation](#), TMG 7 (2): November 2004], representatives of the “monk seal communities” of Foça in Turkey and Alonissos in Greece have issued a joint statement pledging a commitment to sustainable development, a protection of ecosystems and the monk seal.

The two communities have also promised to work together on developing further joint initiatives aimed at achieving those goals. The exchange visits were made possible by the EC Delegation in Turkey, through a programme that aims to encourage “Turkish-Greek Civil Dialogue”.



Joint statement of commitment

We, the following undersigning, representing:

*The Municipality of Alonnisos, N. Sporades, Greece,
The Municipality of Foça, Turkey,
The Fishing Cooperative of Alonnisos,
The Association of Fishermen of Alonnisos,
The Fishing Cooperative of Foça,
The Hellenic Society for the Study and Protection of the Monk Seal (MOm), and
The Underwater Research Society – Mediterranean Seal Research Group (SAD-AFAG)*

In the framework of the joint project of the Representation of the European Commission to Turkey entitled «A comparison and experience exchange between the National Marine Park of Alonnisos

Northern Sporades (Greece) and the Foça Specially Protected Area (Turkey) involving the NGOs MOm and SAD-AFAG» and taking under consideration that Alonnisos and Foça are sharing a lot of common cultural and sociological aspects, we declare the following:

1. We strongly believe that it is vital for both our communities to live in peace around our sea and to share our common problems and views in our development process.
2. We strongly believe that sustainable development is the only way for our communities to guarantee the welfare of our citizens and the conservation of our natural environment, thus providing a quality future to our children.
3. More specifically we consider that, for both communities, coastal fisheries constitute a major past, present and future productive asset and must be further developed only under the principles of sustainable management.
4. We, also consider that the endangered species of the Mediterranean monk seal, which is included in the European Community's Habitat Directive (92/43), although competitive to our fishing communities, is a symbol of health and richness of our areas' biodiversity, and the efforts to protect it are an indispensable part of our sustainable development strategy. Pioneers in our respective countries, we, both communities, are supporting the conservation of the Mediterranean monk seal and its ecosystem for the last twenty years, thus reflecting our long term commitment to the above mentioned strategy.
5. We further believe that together with fisheries, sustainable tourism also represents an important present and future asset for both of our communities and must be further developed by enhancing the structure of the specific sector in collaboration with local, national and international bodies.

To that extent we declare in public that:

We are strongly willing to continue the already established collaboration between us, using all available resources to enhance and further develop common initiatives towards the sustainable development of our communities, thus conserving our natural environment, promoting coastal fisheries activities and properly managing tourism

and

We urge all public and private, national and international bodies to support in priority our common development initiatives and stand by us in our effort to sustainably use our environment, which is a source of living for us all.

Signed,

The Mayor of Alonnisos
Mr. Orestis Papachristou

The Mayor of Foça
Mr. Gökhan Demirag

President of the Fishing Cooperative of Alonnisos
Mr. Dimitris Kalogiannis

President of the Fishing Cooperative of Foça
Mr. Yasar Balta


President of the Association of Fishermen of Alonnisos
Mr. Thodoris Malamatenias

President of MOm's Board of Directors
Mrs. Eugenia Androukaki

Member of SAD's Board of Directors,
Mr. Yalçın Savas

Further information

The project report has been added to the Monk Seal Library in English, Greek and Turkish:

SAD-AFAG/MOm. 2005. A Comparison and Experience Exchange between the National Marine Park of Alonnisos – Northern Sporades (NMPANS) (Greece) and the Foça Specially Protected Area (FSPA) (Turkey) involving the NGOs MOm and SAD-AFAG. Final technical report: 1-9. [PDF](#)  390KB]

SAD-AFAG/MOm. 2005. Ανταλλαγή τεχνογνωσίας ανάμεσα στο Εθνικό Θαλάσσιο Πάρκο Αλοννήσου Βορείων Σποράδων (Ελλάδα) και στην Προστατευόμενη Περιοχή της Φώκαιας (Τουρκία) με την συμμετοχή των ΜΚΟ, ΜΟμ και SAD-AFAG. Μετάφραση της τελικής αναφοράς δραστηριοτήτων του προγράμματος: 1-10. [PDF 550KB]

SAD-AFAG/MOm. 2005. Alonnisos-Kuzey Sporadlar Deniz Milli Parkı (AKDMP)(Yunanistan) ile Foça Özel Çevre Koruma Bölgesi (FÖÇKB) (Türkiye) Arasında, STK'lar MOm ve SAD-AFAG'ın Katılımı ile, Bir Karşılaştırma ve Tecrübe Paylaşımı. Proje Teknik Raporu Tercümesi: 1-9. [PDF 481KB]

Cilician ecotourism project enters third phase

The Kizilliman MPA covers a very large area (16x12 nautical miles) that is off-limits to large-scale fisheries, and also incorporates a network of small, no-take-zones established in front of the monk seal breeding caves. On land, a 75 km coastal band has also been set aside by the Ministry of Culture as a 1st degree natural asset, offering effective terrestrial habitat protection

The only ongoing research project in the area is “Investigations on the changing impacts on Kizilliman Marine Protected Area and responses of the ecosystem”, funded by the Scientific and Technical Research Council of Turkey. No funds are available for Mediterranean monk seal conservation at the present time.

Many examples from around the globe indicate that, if local people can gain sufficiently from the sustainable use of such MPAs, they would be less likely to exploit the already over-fished ecosystem, and would be more likely to protect their asset for the future. In monk seal conservation, there are only very few avenues available that could involve local people as constructive partners in protection practices, while also generating sufficient revenues to be economically viable.

In October 2002 an ecotourism experiment designed to test the suitability of ecotourism as a sustainable Mediterranean monk seal conservation model was successfully accomplished by Ali Cemal Gucu and Gul Gucu. The second phase was a continuation of the first, involving more local people for guiding, lodging and dining [see [Cilician Basin ecotourism project enters second phase](#), TMG 7 (2): November 2004].



High school seminar on sustainable tourism.

For 2005 the ecotourism projects aims to diversify local involvement and improve the overall partnership. Involving high school students is an important element of the plan, helping to acquaint young people about the purpose of the conservation/ecotourism efforts underway in the area – a message that will hopefully also reach their families.

To involve the high school students from Bozyazi in the ecotour we are organising for November, we visited the schools, talked to students and held a seminar on ecology and the monk seals of the area, and on the work we are engaged in. Before the commencement of November's ecotour, participating students will undergo training.

A seminar focusing on the sustainable tourism aspects of our activities was also held for students at the department of Tourism Administration at the University of Mersin.

Establishing a good working sustainable tourism practice is necessary for the conservation of monk seals in the area – before conventional tourism can take hold.

To obtain more detailed information about ecotourism in the Cilician Basin, please visit www.ecocilicia.org. – Serdar Sakinan, Project Assistant, METU-IMS.

Who's for marine biology summer school?

Middle East Technical University is organising a practical marine ecology summer school between 18-26 June 2005 for students interested in marine biology and young marine biologists who want to gain experience on Mediterranean coastal ecosystem.

The summer school, sponsored by TUBITAK, the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey, will be held within the Kizilliman Marine Protected Area recently designated for the protection of the Mediterranean monk seal. Topics that will be included are the sampling techniques of plankton, benthic invertebrates, sea grass meadows, direct and indirect fish census, hydrographic parameters and photo identification and individual recognition.

Instructors are Dr. Alexandra D. Gubanova (Institute of Biology of the Southern Seas, Ukraine), Prof. Patrice Francour (Nice Sophia-Antipolis University, France), Dr. Erhan Mutlu and Dr. Ali Cemal Gucu (Middle East Technical University Institute of Marine Sciences, Turkey). The selected participants will take part in the research activities carried out in the MPA. Accommodation will take place at a local hotel in the close vicinity of the MPA. For more information please visit www.ecocilicia.org or email contact@ecocilicia.org / gucu@ims.metu.edu.tr. – Ali Cemal Gucu, METU-IMS.



[enlarge poster](#) (292KB)

EndQuote

“Although the people and the fishermen of Foça are accustomed to seeing Greeks in their town, this was the first time that they had been introduced to people and fishermen from another monk seal conservation area, who suffered and benefited in very similar ways. Turks are not common visitors to Alonnisos, yet learning of their experiences in the monk seal conservation area in Foça proved equally interesting for the Greek fishermen. The comment of the head of the fishermen’s association of Alonnisos, made during the panel discussion in Foça, was symbolic of this communication between countries and cultures: “I have found friends here and nobody can change my attitude from now on!”

Source: SAD-AFAG/MOm. 2005. A Comparison and Experience Exchange between the National Marine Park of Alonnisos – Northern Sporades (NMPANS) (Greece) and the Foça Specially Protected Area (FSPA) (Turkey) involving the NGOs MOm and SAD-AFAG. Final technical report: 1-9. [\[PDF\]](#) 390KB]