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Appendix 1. Description of study sites.

Akyatan, located near Adana, is a Wildlife Development Area under protection status of the Ministry of Forest and Water Affairs since 1987. The lagoon, forest and surrounding sand dunes cover an area of 15,304 ha and host a great variety of fauna and flora. It is one of the officially recognised 21 marine turtle nesting beaches located along the Mediterranean coast of Turkey.

Akyatan Beach is situated between Akyatan Lagoon and the Mediterranean on the southern shores of the large delta formed by Seyhan and Ceyhan rivers. The area constitutes one of the largest dune ecosystems located on the Turkish Mediterranean coast and the beach has the largest number of *C. mydas* nests in the whole Mediterranean. A typical cross-section along the 22 km beach would show 60-70 m of beach followed by sand dunes. Land behind the sand dunes is used for agriculture. The sand dunes have been advancing 1–2 m annually towards the lagoon. In order to protect the farmland from the advancing dunes, Adana Regional Forestry Directorate have reforested the area with mainly

acacia (*Acacia cyanophylla*) and eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus camaldunensis*) trees between 1972–86. Other species used are stone pine (*Pinus pinea*), maritime pine (*Pinus pinaster*), and Italian pine (*Cupressus sempervirens*). These sand dunes run parallel to the coast reaching 20 m in height near the lagoon. Perfect sand dunes are located on the eastern section of the beach, which is unforested.

Ağyatan beach is approximately 8.5 km sandy beach and not used intensively by marine turtles. Ağyatan lagoon which is an important bird habitat located behind the beach.

Tuzla beach is located on the east of the Akyatan beach and 25 km in length. This beach has been serving as public beach for swimming purpose.

Yumurtalık Nature Reserve beach is almost 24.5 km in length and includes wide sand dunes with rich vegetation. The nesting of marine turtles is very limited on the beach. İskenderun Bay which is including Yumurtalık is also a wintering ground for marine turtles.