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POSTER PRESENTATION

The Occurrence of Sea Turtles in Trawl Operations Conducted in the Western Coasts of İskenderun Bay

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Introduction: International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) declareted that, the population density of green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) and loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*) in Mediterranean should be monitored regularly. On the other side, many of the researchers reported that these two species are caught by local fishing nets and they are highly injured. Therefore deep trawl operations were conducted in order to observe the effects of deep trawl fishing on sea turtles.

Material and Methods: 53 deep trawl operations were performed seasonally during the period from spring 2004 to winter 2017 in the stations marked in 10m and 20m depth ranges off Sugözü village-Yumurtalık, located in western coasts of İskenderun Bay. Sampling duration was restricted for one hour. The trawled material was sorted by species on the board, and weighing was done by using a conventional balance with the accuracy 1g.

Results: Throughout the years of 2004-2017, two (55kg) green turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) were caught in 10m depth layer in summer 2007, and one (17.5kg) individual (*Chelonia mydas*) was caught in 20m depth layer in summer 2008. Again, one (5kg) loggerhead sea turtle (*Caretta caretta*) was observed in winter 2008, and there were no sea turtles in all other tows.

Discussion: Although the knowing that injuring the sea turtles by deep trawling activities and by considering above given results, it can be claimed that deep trawl fishing has no significant effect on sea turtles in western coasts of İskenderun Bay; since *Chelonia mydas* have 3.8%, and *Caretta caretta* have only 1.9% frequency of occurrency in the region. So deep trawl fishing has no significant effect on loggerhead sea turtles and green turtles distributed in western coast of İskenderun Bay.

Keywords: *Chelonia mydas, Caretta caretta*, İskenderun Bay, Deep Trawl Fishing, Frequency of Occurrency