Master Thesis – Mediterranean turtle conservation and tourism expansion

Context
The Mediterranean Sea is a hotspot for recreational usage. Since the 1950’s tourist areas were being built on the water front in order to enable tourists to easily use the beaches more. Tourist activities related to beach exploitation is worth billions of Euros and many countries depend heavily on these economic activities. In particular, mass tourism provides work for the local people and income for the state that can be crucial to support the education and health system. Unfortunately, large Mediterranean sand beaches with low erosion risks are also suitable sites for the spawning of sea turtles during the summertime. Consequently, the conservation of spawning sites greatly conflicts with recreational uses and related economic issues.

Case Site
Northern Cyprus is a de facto state that comprises the northeastern portion of the island of Cyprus. Recognized only by Turkey, Northern Cyprus is considered by the international community to be part of the Republic of Cyprus. Mainly due to the national embargo, Northern Cyprus slowly developed between 1974 and 2000, which allowed the beaches to remain almost free of urbanization. Consequently, Northern Cyprus’s beaches are one of the most important breeding areas for loggerhead turtles. However, the economy has seen growth through the 2000s and 2010s, with the GNP per capita more than tripling in the 2000s. Tourism is considered one of the driving sectors of the Turkish Cypriot economy. The country received over 1.1 million tourists in 2012. Official estimates of income derived from tourism totaled around 700 million US dollars in 2013. The tourism sector has seen great development in the 2000s and 2010s, with the number of tourists more than doubling, increased investments and hotel construction along the beaches.

To which extent affects tourism activity see turtle habitats, and how ecosystem-based landscape planning could support conservation activities?

Methods: Literature review, Aerial Map analysis, Scenarios analysis, Interviews.
Requirements: English, GIS (Master Thesis can be submitted in German)
Contact: Dr. rer. nat. Aude Zingraff-Hamed, aude.zingraff-hamed@tum.de

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