

The Formentera Department of Environment is one week in to a new campaign to curb the local spread of the pine processionary caterpillar. Scheduled to conclude next Thursday, the effort, which has seen the administration partner with Ibanat and the Balearic healthy forests division, has involved the contracting of a specialist forestry firm to remove caterpillar nests and send them to the treatment plant for controlled burning. Nearly 1,500 nests have been removed in the seven days since the €4,436 initiative was activated.

Operations have so far centred on Es Ca Marí, Es Carnatge, Punta Prima, Es Cap, Cala en Baster and Migjorn, and have been made possible by additional help from islanders, who can report nests found on the island by using the pinpoint tracking feature of the Línea Verde app, phoning the environment office at 971.32.12.10, or sending the office an email at mediambient @conselldeformentera.cat

.

Islanders and hunters pitch in, too

Environment councillor Antonio J Sanz applauded everyday islanders for “finding and reporting nests so that they can be removed”, and highlighted the “seriousness of the pest’s exponential propagation in recent years”. Sanz called on affected landowners to join in the effort to stem the caterpillar’s spread across island trees. Article 9 of legislation passed on 20 November 2002 to protect plant health requires islanders whose property includes areas of forest affected by the caterpillar to keep trees healthy.

Sanz also highlighted efforts this January that saw local hunters firing off more than one thousand shells in the space of a weekend in order to get rid of nests.

The campaign is carried out in coordination with the Balearic Ministry of Environment and is part of a plan launched in October to tackle the plague. A helicopter was used during early stages of the effort to complete aerial dustings of *Bacillus thuringiensis* over affected areas.

13 February 2020
Department of Communication
Consell de Formentera