



The Formentera Council's department of environment is unveiling its newest crusade to keep numbers of mosquitos and lake flies under control in the ses Salines nature preserve. Operations are planned at a handful of fresh water points, generally preferred sites among pests depositing their larvae, at s'Estany Pudent, s'Estany des Peix and ses Salines d'en Marroig.

As crews got to work yesterday covering the treatment area, they noted considerable buildup of stagnant water, attributed to heavy rainfall early in the year. Those conditions likely resulted in the upwelling of mosquitos, both larvae and fully-grown adults.

Those circumstances were part of what prompted the decision to step up efforts in 2018. Namely, this year's campaign involves a 31-day, two-part application plan as opposed to the 24-day programme that was implemented in 2017. The first part, dubbed the “shock” phase, involves three weeks' worth of twice-weekly dustings on Tuesdays and Thursdays. In the second phase, treatment will be scaled back to once a week.

Crews are using the maximum dosage allowed by law as they spray a bio agent called *Bacillus thuringiensis Israeliensis* across parts of ses Salines. The idea is to achieve maximum ambient levels of the substance, a natural insecticide that works by acting directly on larvae growing in stagnant water.

After the first day of operations, department head Daisee Aguilera, noting not only the glut of standing water but also forecasts of mounting temperatures in the days ahead, defended the decision to move up this year's start date and intensify application during the first three weeks. “Intensification of the campaign lets us take aim at the swelling mosquito population and deal with some of the negative ways its affecting islanders”, Aguilera said.

Two operators oversee control measures, which involve special rucksacks that are filled the insecticide and fitted with dusting equipment. Spraying the product in its pulverised state is seen as a more effective form of application. The effort is scheduled to continue through October.

Though the price tag initially placed on 2018 operations, €32,075, is nearly ten thousand euros more than the amount set aside for last year's campaign, officials have already said they are prepared to increase this figure should inconveniences associated with the mosquitos and lake flies persist.