



Earlier today the Office of Environment of the Formentera Council reported on the progress to date of efforts to control the spread of the processionary pine caterpillar, an invasive pest which has particularly affected the area of Es Cap de Barbaria. According to CiF environment councillor Daisee Aguilera, “approximately 12,000 caterpillar nests were removed in autumn and winter 2015-2016.” Aguilera lauded the efforts of outside workers contracted by the Council, volunteers and IBANAT staff, calling them an “instrumental part” of the response.

As Aguilera pointed out, of 12,000 nests removed, more than 4,000 were empty, 6,000 were full and 1,900 were destroyed by rifle shots. For normal nest removal the Council relied on two outside specialists, Govern Balear-employed staff of IBANAT and local volunteers and property owners. According to the councillor, the administration had the additional help of hunters in the Es Cap de Barbaria area, who were tasked with shooting down out of reach nests.

The goal behind the efforts is to stem the spread of the caterpillar in those areas where infestation is most pronounced. Officials have determined the hardest-hit area to be the former agritourism site in Es Cap de Barbaria, in the north northwest part of the island. Nevertheless, a recent study by the environmental office indicates the pest has turned up in places from la Mola to the Ses Salines national park.

The councillor said warm winter temperatures were the primary cause for the caterpillar’s continued spread. What is more, she announced that in the future the Council’s response would include more workers and an expanded area of focus. According to Aguilera, the Council will soon tap the appropriate arms of the Palma government to request a plan of action.