



Annual pest control efforts are currently being launched by the Formentera Island Council's Office of the Environment in the Ses Salines National Park. The actions, conceived to combat the excessive mosquito and midge numbers endemic to that part of the island, specifically target S'Estany Pudent, S'Estany des Peix, Ses Salines d'en Marroig and surrounding areas. These zones are regularly subject to accumulations of fresh water and, thus, the propagation of mosquito larvae.

Measures to control numbers of mosquitoes and midges (the latter also referred to by their scientific name 'Chironomae,') are preventative, meaning they can be applied directly to insect larvae by means of a biological treatment composed of *Bacillus thuringiensis israeliensis* (commercialised under the name Vectobac-G and Vectobac WG).

The two Vectobac products are natural insecticides produced by a bacteria. The bacteria is itself created by protein crystals which, when ingested by insect larvae, provoke the cellular breakdown of the larvae's gastric epithelium. The failure of this tissue in turn causes death, preventing maturation to the adult stage in the insect life cycle.

It is anticipated that in 2014 these treatments will be carried out once a week from 2 May to 17 October a total of 23 times. Two individuals will apply a pulverised version of the granulated product using special backback-mounted applicators, a measure intended to improve success rates. In the hope of facilitating water flow, this year has also attended a round of extensive cleaning throughout the canal that borders S'Estany Pudent, a part of the La Savina locality.

The anticipated total cost of this and other similar maintenance in 2014 is 23,495.03€ (VAT included), although the possibility exists that this figure will increase further in the event of persisting fly and midge problems.

The decision by the Office of the Environment to green-light additional funding for such measures came on the heels of an unusually dry 2013/2014 winter on Formentera. Such factors are perennial causes of Chironomae problems in spring and summer, especially in the area

near S'Estany Pudent. Complaints received in 2013 from hotel and restaurant owners in the immediate vicinity of both ponds constituted a secondary motive in the intensification of the Formentera Council's traditional pest control campaigns.

Notice will be sent to affected hotels and restaurants with respect to the frequency and details of treatment as well as recommendations to follow if high concentrations of mosquitoes or midges are encountered.

In light of the fact that the Ses Salines park is officially-protected land, we also wish to take the opportunity to request that private citizens not undertake any pest control measures without consulting authorities.