

The Formentera Department of Environment reports that an array of measures in recent months designed to guarantee appropriate water flow in Estany Pudent have the twofold objective of ensuring sanitary conditions and enabling bird nesting.

With the blessing of Ses Salines nature reserve management and the national coastal authority, municipal personnel positioned bags of gravel to reduce the incoming flow of water. The stopgap measure has so far proven effective, with Estany Pudent registering water levels far below normal levels, circumstances which are conducive to nesting birds. While authority on species preservation lies with the Govern balear, Formentera's government collaborates with the regional administration on such issues.

The Consell maintains constant communication with the firm contracted to manage Formentera's salt pans in order to ensure an coordinated monitoring of water levels. FDE staff insist that though many birds vie for nearby nesting sites, current physical limitations mean the number of couples the pond can accommodate is limited.

The current measure is viewed as a Band-aid until a permanent lock-gate is installed. The Consell has begun related legwork and brought in an outside firm to draft a project so reproductions of the original Sa Sequi lock-gates can be made. The salt-mining firm has proposed its own strategy, however, given the area in question is classified as a cultural interest site (BIC) and a briefing from the Regional Environmental Commission requires permits to be issued before action is taken, that proposal is currently under review.

Illegal construction in a protected space

On 6 March, the Consell ordered crews to halt works which the contract holder had commissioned unilaterally, without permits and without the go-ahead of the coastal authority or the Balearic natural spaces office. The project, for which the company had also failed to draft a highway impact study, involved installation of three lock-gates under PM 820-2. Given features protruding into the highway, the installation appeared dangerous, particularly for motorists. Agents of the national coastal authority, FDE and local inspection service stopped the operation so it could first be assessed and requests issued for related permits, and to guarantee the safety of individuals traveling on the highway.

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