

Earlier today Consell de Formentera president Alejandra Ferrer, chief of the Balearic office of natural spaces and biodiversity Llorenç Mas and local environment conseller Antonio J Sanz unveiled the Formentera Xarxa Natura 2000 management plan and the committee that will monitor the effort to regulate moorage at S’Estany des Peix.

All told, the management plan covers a surface area of 8,518.49 hectares and five micro-territories classed as natural spaces in Xarxa Natura 2000: La Mola and Cap de Barbaria (terrestrial and maritime) and Cala Saona and Migjorn and Ses Platgetes beaches (maritime only). Twelve distinct special-interest habitats can be found in the zones in question, and five of them are considered priority.

“Formentera’s commitment to environmental sustainability is long-standing”, insisted Ferrer, “and this plan constitutes clear progress on that path”. She quipped that the management strategy was “all the more important because it means effective protection for each one of the undersea environments on Formentera’s coast”, and indicated that the local and regional governments were working to come up with a scheme to regulate moorage across Formentera’s coastline.

Ferrer added that the search for a contractor to pilot the scheme would be “crucial to regulating this protected local heritage site”.

In an effort to promote conservation, the plan’s architects propose not just regulating how people use the areas in question, but also specific safeguards to protect habitats and the animals that call them home, like monitoring human impact on species such as the bottlenose dolphin and loggerhead sea turtle.

Regulating S’Estany des Peix

Conseller Sanz affirmed that the Spanish coastal agency had delegated authority to manage and regulate watercraft moorage at S’Estany des Peix to the Consell de Formentera—a 15-year mandate open to renewal at term.

The Consell and Govern decided last year to pursue the joint initiative, which will involve equipping S'Estany des Peix with 285 moorage points (207 environmentally-friendly, 78 located on floating pontoons). It also means agreeing on which activities are permitted at the lake, and will include provisions for cleaning.

Conseller Sanz called the news "exciting" and said it marked a double breakthrough as far as protection for land and undersea areas is concerned. "We're seeing the comeback of an iconic project that had run temporarily aground", he said, "not to mention the renewed prospect of a balanced ecosystem and the return of uses which islanders have historically given the lake".

With an equal number of Consell and Govern staff, the six-member monitoring committee met for the first time following the press conference and began work on a management timeline. Reasoning that Formentera's government was the administration closest to the area in question, Sanz asserted both Consell and Govern were working together and coordinating to ensure that management would fall to local authorities.

Per the terms of a bi-lateral deal, the Consell will come up with a proposal to regulate use that includes minimum requirements before a vessel can moor at the lake. The proposal must also establish backstops to guarantee environmental safeguards and respect for traditional uses of S'Estany des Peix.

The Govern, for its part, will be responsible for monitoring the impact of associated infrastructure on flora, fauna and the surrounding area. It will also oversee, with support from the Consell, habitat conservation and recovery projects. Funding for the project to the tune of €652,154 was made possible by the Impost de Turisme Sostenible (Sustainable Tourism Levy).

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