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Spanish official apologizes after beach sprayed with bleach

Jack Guy, CNN • Published 30th April 2020



(CNN) — A local official in southern Spain has apologized after spraying beaches with bleach, which caused outrage among environmentalists.

Tractors sprayed the sandy shoreline at Zahara de los Atunes, Andalusia, with bleach earlier this month in an apparent attempt to clean it of coronavirus, but the move drew sharp criticism.

"If only they could understand the damage they have done to the ecosystem," said María Dolores Iglesias Benítez of the Asociación Voluntarios Ambientales Trafalgar, a



Environmentalists were shocked by the fumigation.

Victoria Herranz/NurPhoto/Getty Images

The bleach will have killed insects and molluscs that live in the sand, she said, and the tractors could have damaged birds' nests.

Iglesias Benítez and her organization work to protect the local beaches and the birds that live there, including Kentish plover and swift.

"Let's see if anyone that has a bird as a pet thinks to take this solution and wash their bird in it," she said.

Spain has been hit badly by coronavirus, recording the second highest number of cases worldwide and registering more than 24,200 deaths, according to figures collected by Johns Hopkins University.

The spraying controversy attracted the attention of Greenpeace Spain.

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"Fumigating beaches with bleach in the middle of bird nesting season... is not one of [Donald] Trump's ideas," tweeted the organization. "It's happening in Zahara de los

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