

# Firefighters battle wild blazes in Spain

July 20 2014

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Firefighters work to extinguish a wildfire in Guadalajara, near Veguilla city, on July 19, 2014

Spanish firefighters on Saturday battled forest blazes that have destroyed hundreds of hectares of parched land and forced scores of people from their homes, authorities said.

Nearly 500 [emergency workers](#) were fighting two blazes in the central province of Guadalajara, according to the regional Castile-la-Mancha

agriculture ministry.

Firefighters backed by water-dumping aircraft were deployed over an area of 2,100 hectares (3,700 acres) near the village of Cogolludo and 1,000 hectares near the hamlet of Bustares, it said in a statement.

Officials said on Friday that those two fires had destroyed at least 1,000 hectares between them, including part of the Sierra Norte national park. The ministry did not say exactly how much land had been burnt by Saturday.

Authorities evacuated 180 residents on Friday from four villages threatened by the two fires. The ministry said that residents from one of the villages were able to return on Saturday afternoon.

Authorities said the Bustares blaze was accidentally started by a beekeeper and the flames in Cogolludo were sparked by a combine harvester.

Elsewhere on Saturday firefighters in Ujue, near the northern city of Pamplona, brought under control a wildfire that had destroyed 900 hectares of land, the Navarra regional police force said.



A firefighting helicopter drops water to extinguish a wildfire in Guadalajara, near Veguilla city, on July 19, 2014

Spain is highly prone to [forest fires](#) in summer because of soaring temperatures, strong winds and dry vegetation.

Temperatures have soared close to 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) across Spain this week. The heat eased on Saturday but authorities warned that high winds could continue to fan the flames.

"We have to pay close attention to how the fire is evolving," said the president of the Castile-la-Mancha regional government Maria Dolores Cospedal, after visiting [firefighters](#) in the area.

"The situation is much better than 24 hours ago," thanks to the weather, said Cospedal, who is also secretary general of Spain's ruling

conservative Popular Party.

Up to July 13 this year 29,000 hectares of forest, fields and scrubland were destroyed by wildfires in Spain, according to the agriculture ministry.

Last year wildfires destroyed nearly 60,000 hectares. That followed a relatively wet winter and was far lower than the 226,000 hectares of land destroyed in 2012.

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