



The University of Bayreuth, Germany (Jan 2026, photo by Mahshad Forghanifar).

Dear John Doe,

in our regular BayCEER newsletter, we inform you about a selection of interesting news in the BayCEER community, the University of Bayreuth, the city and region. Please forward this newsletter to others who might be interested ([sign-up link](#)).

You are very welcome to share your own news via our BayCEER newsletter, too. Please contact us at bayceer@uni-bayreuth.de!

Enjoy our newsletter!

Your BayCEER Newsletter Team

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News

New BayCEER Member

We're excited to welcome three new members to BayCEER and the University of Bayreuth! Wishing you a wonderful start, filled with inspiring research, engaging teaching, and a warm welcome to our campus and the city!

Bert van der Veen

Plant Ecology Group

Bert van der Veen is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Bayreuth with a PhD in Statistics. His research focuses on applying dimension reduction techniques, known as ordination in ecology, to multivariate datasets on ecological communities, combining computational statistics, ecological statistics, and community ecology.



Dr. Lorenzo Ricci

Disturbance Ecology

Dr. Lorenzo Ricci is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Bayreuth specializing in disturbance ecology. His research focuses on plant biodiversity and conservation, including the effectiveness of protected areas (notably the Natura 2000 network), plant community responses to environmental disturbances and global change, and macroecological patterns that inform conservation planning and policy.



Albert Cabré

Geomorphology

Albert Cabré is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Bayreuth. His research focuses on the geomorphic and sedimentary responses to extreme rainstorm events in dryland environments, combining sedimentology, geomorphology, remote sensing (InSAR), and statistical methods.

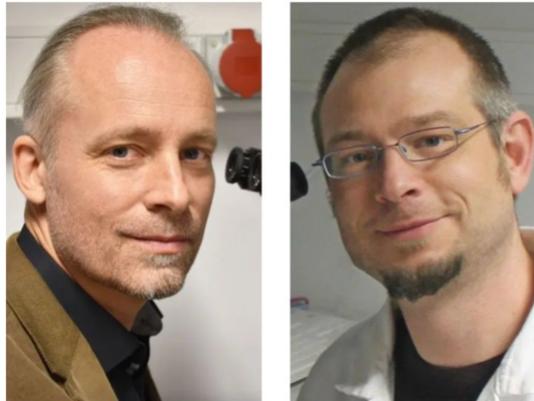




Recognition for years of commitment to the environment

Prof. Dr. Heike Feldhaar, Professor of Animal Population Ecology at the University of Bayreuth, has been awarded the Bavarian State Medal for outstanding services to the environment. Her research focuses on the impacts of human activities on insects—an issue of critical importance in the context of global insect decline. Beyond her scientific work, she is actively engaged in science communication and practical nature conservation, including supporting pollinator protection initiatives and advising regional conservation bodies. This award honors her outstanding interdisciplinary contributions, passion for nature, and long-standing commitment to environmental protection.

[Press Release](#)



Two BayCEER scientists among the world's most cited researchers

Prof. Christian Laforsch and Dr. Martin Löder from BayCEER and the CRC 1357 Microplastics have been named to the Highly Cited Researchers List 2025, placing them among the most influential scientists worldwide. Also honored is Dr. Qingsong Wang from the University of Bayreuth. The recognition highlights Bayreuth's strong international research profile—this marks the second time for Prof. Laforsch and the fourth consecutive year for Dr. Löder.

[Press Release](#)



Predicting the Future of Ecosystems: New M.Sc. in Ecological Forecasting

The new Master's programme in Ecological Forecasting at the University of Bayreuth trains students to predict ecosystem change and translate forecasts into informed decisions. Combining ecology, data science, statistics, and decision-making, the programme equips graduates with the skills needed to support adaptive ecosystem management and biodiversity conservation.

[Press Release](#)



QS Sustainability Ranking 2026: University of Bayreuth strengthens its global profile

The University of Bayreuth has achieved strong results in the QS Sustainability Ranking 2026, with a particularly remarkable improvement in Environmental Sustainability, where its score nearly doubled from 27.4 to 52.4 points. The university now ranks 322nd worldwide, 156th in Europe, and a strong 21st in Germany. Excellent performances in Health & Wellbeing, Environmental Research, equality, knowledge exchange, and educational impact highlight Bayreuth's growing international visibility and confirm sustainability as a key strategic focus.

[Press Release](#)



Klaus-Dieter-Wolff Award 2025 Goes to Sofie Paulus

The Rotary Club Bayreuth-Eremitage has awarded the 2025 Klaus-Dieter-Wolff Prize to Sofie Paulus, a doctoral researcher at the University of Bayreuth's Chair of Sport Ecology.

She was honored for combining academic excellence with outstanding voluntary commitment to climate and nature conservation. Through initiatives such as "Ecopoint Frankenjura" and her research on sustainable concepts in climbing and outdoor sports, she bridges science and practice to promote more environmentally responsible sport.

Congratulations to Sofie Paulus on this well-deserved recognition!

[Press Release](#)

Research



Outdoor bouldering as a source of microplastics?

A research team from the University of Bayreuth has provided first experimental evidence that outdoor bouldering can damage sensitive rock ecosystems and introduce microplastics into nature. In a study published in *People and Nature*, researchers show that repeated climbing leads to significant losses of moss and lichen, especially on sandstone, and that abrasion from climbing shoe soles releases microplastic particles onto rock surfaces. The findings highlight slow ecosystem recovery and underline the need for differentiated management strategies that balance recreational climbing with the protection of vulnerable rock habitats.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1002/pan3.70207>

[More Information](#)



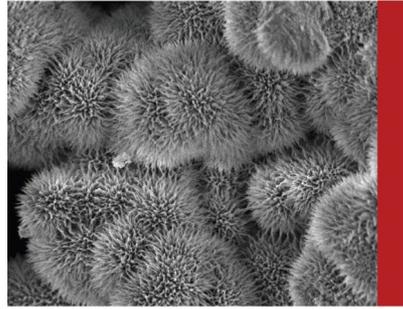
How Disturbance Shapes Forest Recovery: Project T-EDGE

The T-EDGE project investigates how transient forest edges created by disturbances affect forest microclimate and regeneration dynamics beyond the forest edge. By combining field measurements and remote sensing, the project advances understanding of forest recovery, biodiversity, and climate adaptation. T-EDGE is jointly led by Katja Kowalski (Technical University of Munich), Leonie Gass, and Lisa Hülsmann (University of Bayreuth).

[More Information](#)

Schwertmannite

Formation, Stability and Applications



Susanta Paikaray and Stefan Peiffer



Fresh Release: Schwertmannite in Environmental Science

We're pleased to announce a new book by Prof. Dr. Stefan Peiffer (BayCEER) and Susanta Paikaray: Schwertmannite: Formation, Stability and Applications.

The book brings together decades of research on schwertmannite, from formation and structure to pollutant binding and environmental applications, and is a valuable resource for scientists working in acid mine drainage, mining, and environmental geochemistry.

Congratulations to the authors!

[More Information](#)

Retrospective



“Wie viel Staat braucht der Wald?” – Forum Waldkontroversen 2025

At the University of Bayreuth, around 100 stakeholders from forestry, science, policy, and civil society came together for the Forum Waldkontroversen 2025 to discuss the future of forests amid climate change. Organized by BayCEER, the Campus-Akademie, and the Ecological-Botanical Garden, the forum explored the balance between state regulation, funding, and private responsibility. Key debates focused on forest conversion, public vs. private financing, advisory services, biodiversity, and hunting pressure. A lively discussion ensued about how resilient forests require a combination of government support, knowledge transfer, innovation, and trust-based cooperation, supplemented by an excursion to showcase practical forest management approaches in the Bayreuth region.

[More Information](#)





BayCEER Colloquium

This semester's BayCEER Colloquium brought together researchers, students, and guests for a lively series of inspiring, innovative, and well-attended talks. We thank all speakers and participants for the engaging discussions and vibrant exchange.

We are already looking forward to welcoming you again next semester for more exciting research, fresh ideas, and stimulating conversations.

Upcoming events

Save the dates

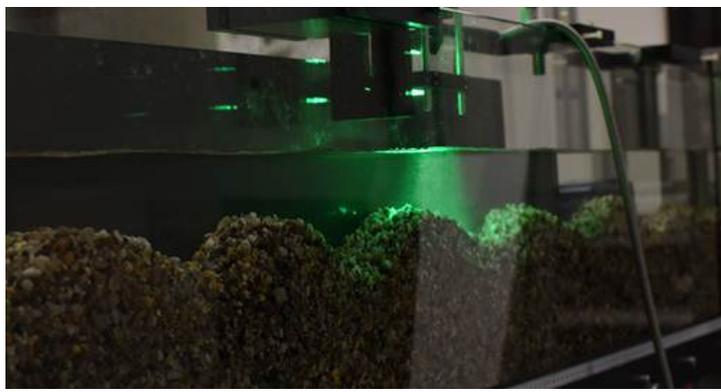
22. Feb 2026: Guided tour | "Without Flight and Jet Lag: Excursion to the Tropics"

01. March 2026: Guided tour | "Horticultural practice: Insights into fruit tree pruning and grafting"

12. March 2026: Library introduction for interested people from the city and region

19. March 2026: Action | "Gardening together: tips and tricks for a water-saving garden"

CRC 1357 Microplastic



Different Shapes, Different Journeys: How Microplastics Travel in Rivers

A new study by researchers from the Collaborative Research Centre (CRC) 1357 Microplastics at the BayCEER challenges a long-standing assumption in microplastics research. The team shows that microplastic particles do not share uniform transport behaviour in aquatic environments. Instead, their movement strongly depends on particle shape: microplastic fragments and fibres behave in distinctly different ways in water.

These findings improve our understanding of how microplastics spread and accumulate in aquatic systems and how strongly organisms may be exposed to them. Such insights are essential for more accurate assessments of the environmental risks associated with microplastic pollution.

DOI: doi.org/10.1186/s43591-025-00165-2

[More Information](#)





SFB 1357 Microplastics PhD Symposium 2025: Where Land Meets Sea

Doctoral researchers from SFB 1357 Microplastics visited the Alfred Wegener Institute in Bremerhaven for a dynamic symposium combining scientific exchange, networking, and outreach. The programme featured research talks on microplastics across environmental compartments, insights into advanced analytical and data-driven methods, student presentations, a beach clean-up in Cuxhaven, and a soft-skills workshop on international teamwork—highlighting the power of collaboration in tackling global environmental challenges.

[Press Release](#)



CRC Microplastics at MICROM 2025

Researchers from CRC 1357 Microplastics participated in MICROM 2025 in Novi Sad, Serbia. Prof. Christian Laforsch contributed as a keynote speaker, while Rizwan Khaleel presented new findings on the colonization of microplastics in floodplain soils by bacteria and fungi. The conference offered an inspiring platform for scientific exchange, innovative ideas, and networking, fostering collaboration toward solutions for global microplastics challenges.

[Press Release](#)



Honorable Mention for Dr. Anja Ramsperger

Dr. Anja Ramsperger received an honorable mention from the Dick Vethaak Award jury for her outstanding research on microplastics and health. The award, presented by the Plastic Soup Foundation, recognizes scientific excellence and impactful science communication.

[Press Release](#)



Editor's Choice Award 2024 for CRC Microplastics (Project B03)

Jan-Pascal Boos, Franz Dichgans, Jan Fleckenstein, Ben Gilfedder, and Sven Frei have received the Editor's Choice Award 2024 from Water Resources Research for their open-access paper on microplastic infiltration and retention in streambed sediments. Selected among the top ~1% of papers published in 2024, this award highlights the study's outstanding quality and impact. Congratulations to the team!

[Press Release](#)



BANU Field Botany Certificate Exam (Bronze)

The Ecological-Botanical Garden of the University of Bayreuth, in cooperation with the Bavarian Academy for Nature Conservation and Landscape Management (ANL), will host the BANU Field Botany Certificate (Bronze level) exam on Friday, 12 June 2026.

The exam certifies botanical species identification skills relevant to nature conservation, biodiversity monitoring, and research.

Location: Ecological-Botanical Garden, University of Bayreuth

Time: From 15:00 (max. 45 min; groups of 15–20)

Register by: 23 May 2026

[Participant
registration](#)

Other



PhD Opportunity in Tropical Forest Ecology!

The Research Group Functional and Tropical Plant Ecology (Prof. Dr. Engelbrecht) is offering a Doctoral Research Position (m/f/d) for 3 years, starting flexibly between April and August 2026. The PhD project, funded by the German Research Foundation, explores the ecological role of silicon in tropical forests and includes exciting fieldwork in Panama in collaboration with Yale University and hosted by the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute. An excellent opportunity for internationally visible research in a dynamic academic environment.

For full details, see the complete job announcement on link.

[Job
announcement](#)

Photo Credits

Most images in this newsletter are from the University of Bayreuth and BayCEER members, with a few taken by the editor. We appreciate all contributors for their support.

We are looking forward to your compliments, criticism - and above all your content for the BayCEER Newsletter! Please feel free to contact us if we may also present content from your area in the newsletter: bayceer@uni-bayreuth.de.

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