



# Environmental Newsletter

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**Image 1: Wasp Nest**

Nests of protected wasp species must not be removed without valid reason. Always seek expert advice first.



**Image 2: Hazel Dormouse**

Strictly protected under conservation law. If found in or near a building, do not disturb—contact the DPW Environmental Division first.

## 1. Wasps in Summer – Protected Yet Misunderstood

Wasps often have a bad reputation—unlike bees, they're seen as annoying intruders during summer picnics. Yet, most people only encounter two common species: the German Wasp (*Paravespula germanica*) and the Common Wasp (*Paravespula vulgaris*). Both are protected under German Federal Nature Conservation Law (§39 BNatSchG), and harming or disturbing them without justification can lead to significant fines.

Some species, like the sand wasp (*Bembix rostrata*), are even particularly protected (§44 BNatSchG). Still, the actual penalty depends on the individual case.

Wasps play an important ecological role. A single colony can consume up to 2 kg of insects daily, including pests like gnats and fruit flies. They also act as scavengers and are a food source for other animals. Their pollination work, though less known, is another key contribution to biodiversity.

**Wasp nests** may not be removed arbitrarily. While most wasps nest away from humans, German and Common Wasps may settle in wall cavities, sheds, garages, or attics. Relocating or removing nests is only permitted in exceptional cases—such as for those with allergies or when small children are at risk. In such situations, only licensed professionals (e.g., pest control, beekeepers) may intervene.

Prevention tips:

- Use fly screens
- Cover food outdoors
- Avoid strong scents and bright clothing

Killing individual wasps in self-defense (e.g., after a sting) is not penalized. However, disturbing nests or protected species without proper cause may result in fines of up to €50,000.

## 2. Dormice – Rare Guests in Human Spaces

Dormice (especially the Hazel Dormouse) are shy and rarely seen, yet strictly protected under European and German conservation laws. Their nesting places—such as hedgerows, tree cavities, or even attics—must not be disturbed or destroyed.

If a dormouse is found in or around a building, the first step is always to contact the DPW Environmental Division. Do not remove or disturb the animal or its nest, as dormice are strictly protected under conservation law.

Prevention measures include:

- Sealing small entry points in attics or wall cavities to prevent access.
- Avoiding vegetation overgrowth near buildings that may serve as nesting routes.
- Inspecting structures (e.g. during renovations) carefully before disturbing insulated or quiet areas.

Any intervention requires prior approval and expert assessment. Unauthorized actions can violate species protection laws. These small mammals play a role in forest ecosystems and are considered an indicator species for habitat health.

### 3. Legionella Sampling—Summary of 2025 Campaign

Legionella are bacteria that naturally occur in water and can multiply in man-made water systems, especially when water remains stagnant and temperatures range between 25 °C and 45 °C. Inhaling contaminated water droplets—for example, while showering—can lead to serious illness, most notably Legionnaires’ disease, a severe form of pneumonia. Regular testing in residential buildings is therefore crucial to ensure water safety and prevent health risks.

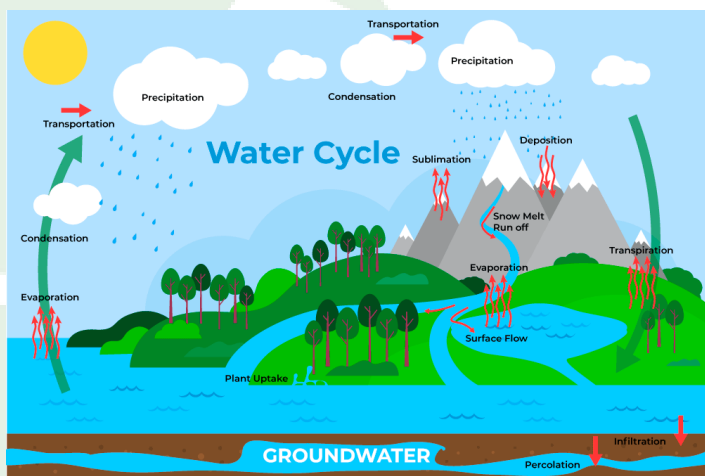
Between May 19 and June 2, 2025, routine Legionella sampling was carried out in U.S. Army Garrison Wiesbaden housing areas. The process was coordinated in advance with Housing and building managers. Two trained samplers from Tetra Tech, supported by Stantec GS

GmbH, collected samples in 165 buildings, totaling 212 planned sampling points.

In buildings with elevated Legionella levels (above 100 CFU/ml), resampling was conducted at two key locations: in the boiler room and in a resident’s apartment. Tenants were informed prior to sampling. Only **one exceedance** was found during the entire campaign—a **very good result** given the scope of the effort. This single exceedance has already been fully resolved.

### 4. Summer Water Use and the Importance of the Water Cycle

Water consumption tends to rise significantly during the warmer months—whether for watering gardens, filling pools, or keeping cool outdoors. While this may seem natural, especially during prolonged dry periods, excessive water use can put a considerable strain on local groundwater reserves. This is particularly critical in light of increasing drought events and unpredictable rainfall patterns caused by climate change. Conserving water during the summer is not only a matter of sustainability but also of protecting the natural systems that supply us.



At the heart of these systems lies the water cycle—a continuous and dynamic process that redistributes and renews Earth’s freshwater resources. Understanding how this cycle functions helps explain why careful water use is so important.

#### The Water Cycle at a Glance:

- **Evaporation:** Solar heat transforms surface water into vapor.
- **Condensation:** Rising moist air cools, forming

clouds.

- **Precipitation:** Water returns as rain, snow, sleet, or hail.
- **Runoff:** Excess water flows over land into rivers and lakes.
- **Infiltration:** Some water seeps into the ground, replenishing groundwater.

Each of these steps plays a vital role in maintaining the planet’s freshwater balance. When precipitation occurs, a portion of the water travels across the land as runoff, nourishing rivers, lakes, and vegetation. Another portion seeps into the ground, slowly filtering through soil layers to replenish underground aquifers. These groundwater stores are essential not just for ecosystems but for drinking water and agriculture as well.

This natural cycle is also deeply connected to the climate: it regulates temperature, shapes weather patterns, and sustains biodiversity. Disrupting it—by overusing water, sealing soils with urban surfaces, or altering natural drainage—can weaken the system’s ability to recover from droughts or handle heavy rainfall.

That’s why responsible summer water use matters. By limiting unnecessary consumption, using water-efficient fixtures, and collecting rainwater where possible, individuals can contribute to a broader effort to preserve this essential resource. Even small changes in behavior can help reduce demand on local supplies and support the long-term health of both the environment and the infrastructure that delivers our water.

Recognizing the role of the water cycle helps us understand that water is not limitless. It is part of a carefully balanced system—and one that we are all part of. Thoughtful water use today helps protect tomorrow’s resources.