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14th European Marine Biology Symposium "Protection of Life in the Sea": Opening address

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Ladies and Gentlemen! Colleagues and Friends!

It is a great honour and pleasure for me to welcome you here on Helgoland. I welcome you on behalf of the Minister for Research and Technology of the Federal Republic of Germany and in the name of my associates from the Biologische Anstalt Helgoland. Thank you for coming here and for accepting our invitation to attend the 14th European Marine Biology Symposium.

Before continuing with this address, I have a sad duty to fulfil, namely to inform you that Professor Pieter Korringa (IJmuiden, The Netherlands), who intended to present an Introductory Paper at this symposium, died on July 13. We have lost a dear friend and marine science a prominent scholar. Although Pieter Korringa had suffered from a severe illness for some time, he had hoped and planned to join us. It was not until his last letter, dated 22nd June, 1979, that Pieter concluded "I have been too optimistic by assuming that I might come to Helgoland," and continued "I hope you will read my paper yourself or try to find a good orator to do so, perhaps Dr. J. Zijlstra." Since then Jenne Zijlstra, the director of the Netherlands Institute for Sea Research, has offered to present the paper, and we have entered his name in our programme. Two days ago, however, Dr. Zijlstra called to say that he had been involved in an accident and unfortunately would not be able to attend. Hence, I shall read Pieter Korringa's paper on Thursday and, on this occasion, formally express our sympathy, respect and condolences in the presence of Mrs. Korringa, his widow.

In this opening address, I now wish to briefly refer to the history of the European Marine Biology Symposia, to the topic selected for the present symposium, and to the principal facilities and activities of the sponsoring institution, the Biologische Anstalt Helgoland.

HISTORY OF THE EUROPEAN MARINE BIOLOGY SYMPOSIA

The European Marine Biology Symposia (EMBS) were initiated here on Helgoland in 1966. These meetings were preceded by a series of German Marine Biology Symposia – also initiated by the Biologische Anstalt Helgoland, but later cosponsored by our

colleagues in Kiel and Bremerhaven. After reopening the Marine Station on Helgoland in 1959, the German symposia were first intended to help build up scientific, institutional and personal contacts and thereby to prepare the scene for cooperation – first within Germany but then also internationally. We further intended to make our new facilities known to potential visiting scientists. After a few years, the German meetings began increasingly to attract interest and attendance from other European countries and from abroad. Thus one meeting was held at Gothenburg, Sweden.

More and more colleagues suggested to me that sponsorship for these meetings should also be available to institutions outside Germany. Ensuing discussions revealed the need for a series of European Marine Biology Symposia. It was realized that – in contrast to fisheries biologists – marine biologists, largely concerned with basic research, had failed to develop suitable structures for international communication, for continuous personal exchange of ideas and for an annual platform of presenting and discussing new results and perspectives. In fact, many of us were – due to the dynamic policies of US-science support at that time – more familiar with marine biological research programmes and facilities in the United States than in Europe. Thus we decided to start the European Marine Biology Symposia. In biological terms: larval development in the form of the German Symposia had come to an end, metamorphosis had occurred and the resulting juvenile entered the world in 1966 on Helgoland as the "First EMBS".

What did we have in mind when we founded the EMBS? We wanted to build a permanent bridge between European marine biological institutions and we were convinced that this could best be achieved by creating a perpetual mechanism for establishing, maintaining and deepening professional, personal and institutional contacts. We wanted to give all marine biological institutions in Europe a chance to act as sponsor and thus to shape the symposium topic and programme according to their own scientific interests and needs; to give them a chance to make known their own facilities and achievements; and to provide opportunities for all of us to learn more about the surroundings of related institutions – their ecological conditions, the organisms living there – and also about culture, folklore and historical background of the guest country. In this way, we hoped to overcome still existing barriers of human and professional understanding and to provide opportunities for continued scientific and personal interchange. All this we wanted to do with a minimum of administrative effort and structure. Furthermore, we intended to give our youngest colleagues – the beginners in the field – a chance to attend international meetings. They need international contacts more than established scientists, but they often encounter greater financial and administrative difficulties. Of course, we wished the EMBS to be attended by colleagues from countries outside Europe. Finally, and most important, we wanted to achieve and demonstrate a high level of professional performance.

In the first 13 symposia, have we accomplished these goals? I think we have been reasonably successful, at least in part. We now know more about our institutions and about each other than ever before. The EMBS have paved the way and initiated numerous cases of cooperation and have greatly assisted and promoted our research. There is more mutual understanding now, and many new personal contacts and friendships have developed. Some of these may last a lifetime. There is still a minimum of administration and formality, but a maximum of flexibility and dynamics. All we have is an ad-hoc committee chaired by an elected president, the sole responsibility of both

being to assure the continuity and quality of the EMBS, e. g. to decide on applications for sponsorship, to advise sponsoring institutions in regard to topics and organizational detail, and to press for quality.

Fortunately, over the years we have enjoyed attendance from non-European countries. Some of our overseas colleagues have rarely missed a symposium. I mention here only the names of two friends of long standing: Drs John Costlow and 'Booky' Bookhout.

The EMBS have gradually become well-known and world-wide respected meetings. The published symposium volumes represent a valuable source of information on marine biological achievements. In summary, I think we can look back upon the history of our EMBS with satisfaction, if not with a little pride. Let us continue to support these symposia and to give our best for their future development. We have shown that they serve a good purpose!

Since Helgoland 1966, subsequent EMBS meetings have been held in Bergen, Norway (1967); in Arcachon, France (1968); in Bangor, North Wales (1969); in Venice, Italy (1970); in Rovinj, Yugoslavia (1971); and in Texel, The Netherlands (1972). The 8th symposium was to have been held in Naples, Italy (1973); unfortunately, it had to be cancelled, but the papers submitted were later published. The 9th EMBS was held in Oban, Scotland, in 1974; the 10th in Ostend, Belgium, in 1975; the 11th at Galway, Ireland, in 1976; the 12th at Stirling, Scotland, in 1977; and the 13th at Port Erin, Isle of Man, in 1978.

It was not originally intended that the 14th EMBS should be held again on Helgoland. There are still several countries and many marine biological laboratories which qualify as sponsor and, indeed, should have a chance to organize a meeting of this series. However, it turned out that the institution which originally planned to host this year's symposium had later, for organizational reasons, to withdraw its invitation. During the 13th EMBS on the Isle of Man, the organizing committee discussed the consequences. The committee members came to the conclusion that it was undesirable to skip one year. The only chance to avoid this was to convert the International Helgoland Symposium scheduled for 1979 – for which funds were available and for which plans had already been developed – into the 14th EMBS. This we have done – following a unanimous plea of the committee.

SYMPOSIUM TOPIC

The 14th EMBS is devoted to a most important and timely topic: "Protection of Life in the Sea." While marine biologists have, for decades, sought to describe the different forms of life found in the sea, to investigate their functions and structures and to analyze intra- as well as interspecific ecological dynamics, this was done solely or primarily with the intent of increasing man's knowledge. We now face a significant, additional task: the need to critically apply the knowledge obtained for the protection of life in the sea and thus for the benefit of man's long-term future.

Ecological research has become the essential fundament and means for providing the knowledge and concepts necessary for restricting, adjusting and controlling man's logarithmically increasing impact on nature, for protecting life – in the sea, on land and in fresh water – and for sound management of species, environment and living resources.

In short: ecological research and its wise application have become the basic prerequisites for civilized human life on this planet to continue beyond the next few decades or centuries. I think most of us would agree that our chances for long-term survival are slim, the difficulties and problems overwhelming, and our own abilities for comprehending complex living systems and for critically applying the knowledge gained very modest at the most.

Nevertheless, what else can we do? As citizens of this earth we must try to make our professional know-how available to political decision makers and to attempt to make the basic problems and issues known to the public. It no longer suffices to know and to be quiet. We are responsible to our fellow citizens and to those people who, with their own work, make the money available for our research.

PRINCIPAL FACILITIES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE BIOLOGISCHE ANSTALT HELGOLAND

The Biologische Anstalt Helgoland or BAH was founded in 1892. It is Germany's oldest and largest marine biological institution. The BAH is financially supported by the Federal Government in Bonn, i. e. by the Federal Ministry for Research and Technology. It entertains facilities in Hamburg (the Central Institute in Altona and the Isotope Laboratory in Sülldorf), on Helgoland (the Marine Station) and on Sylt (the Littoral Station). We have three research vessels: "Friedrich Heincke," "Uthörn" and "Mya" and two smaller motor boats. On Helgoland and Sylt, the BAH provides modern facilities for guest scientists and for teaching.

At present, the BAH has 170 staff members, of whom 42 are scientists. Our major activites are: (1) to conduct marine biological research; (2) to serve the needs of guest scientists, as well as of universities from in- and outside the Federal Republic of Germany; (3) to assume responsibilities related to the overall "Marine Research and Technology Programme" of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Our research is mainly ecology-oriented; it concentrates on organisms and environmental conditions prevailing in the southern North Sea, particularly near the islands of Helgoland and Sylt. Major points of our research programme are: (a) studies on the essential structures, functions and dynamics of marine ecosystems; (b) analysis of the responses of marine organisms to variations in environmental factors; (c) investigations on the effects of pollutants on marine organisms and on protection of life in oceans and coastal waters; (d) exploration of the methodological and biological background required for the successful cultivation of marine organisms (including aquaculture).

The research programme is carried out by the 5 sections of our institution, i. e. Marine Zoology, headed by Professor Hans-Peter Bulnheim; Marine Botany, headed by Dr. Klaus Lüning; Biological Oceanography, headed by Professor Max Gillbricht; Experimental Ecology, headed by Dr. Gotram Uhlig; and Marine Microbiology, headed by Dr. Willfried Gunkel. Research results and further details regarding our activities are regularly published in our institutional journal "Helgoländer Meeresuntersuchungen" and in our Annual Report. The latter, in German, is available at no cost from our library in Hamburg.

The Biologische Anstalt Helgoland serves the needs of other institutions and individual researchers by: (a) providing research facilities, advice and – to a limited

extent – technical assistance for domestic and foreign guest scientists; (b) serving the needs of scientific teaching and educational institutions by accommodating courses or excursions, and by conducting marine biological courses; (c) supplying educational and research institutions on the mainland with marine organisms; (d) maintaining a seawater aquarium which is open to the public and is also used for instruction and experimentation.

The Biologische Anstalt Helgoland includes a Taxonomic Working Group ("Taxonomische Arbeitsgruppe") consisting of 10 scientists. This group is responsible for classifying biological material collected by German research vessels.

Please remember that you will always be welcome to return here as a guest scientist or visitor. Following this address we shall be happy to show you our facilities on Helgoland.

I would like to express here again my gratitude to the Minister for Research and Technology for financial support, and to the Gemeinde Helgoland for continued good cooperation. It is my sincere hope that this symposium will turn out to be a useful platform for presenting, receiving and discussing new information, and for establishing or deepening professional and personal ties. I wish you all interesting and rewarding days on Helgoland.

I herewith open the "14th European Marine Biology Symposium."