



ABOARD THE "OCEANIA"

# THE DEEP BLUE

Photography: Jakub Ostałowski

The "Oceania" never sleeps. Her crew work 24 hours per day, and after they disembark they will remember their time aboard for years to come – perhaps forever.



**W**hat is a research vessel? Contrary to widespread opinion, she is not a ship carrying researchers to their destination (just like a tram heading to a university isn't an academic tram); nor is she a ship supplying research stations (just like a carthorse isn't a racehorse), nor a training, service or multipurpose cargo vessel (just like a tug boat fitted with a cannon isn't a warship).

The "Oceania" is Poland's only ocean-going research vessel (as the "Baltica", the ship of the National Marine Fisheries Research Institute and the Institute of Meteorology and Water Management, stays within the Baltic Sea). Research ships are expensive, specialist tools for studying marine environments. Launching such a huge vessel is a major undertaking, so they are taken out for a minimum of five days and never for daytrips. The "Oceania" is equipped with a huge variety of apparatus meeting top international standards and used for research in a wide range of fields, from atmospheric physics, marine dynamics, chemistry and geology to ecology and biology. She spends around 180 days every year cruising the Baltic; her most important annual polar voyage to Spitsbergen lasts 60 days and involves changing the crew of 14 scientists, conducting regional and international research, every two weeks. They include doctoral students and staff at the PAS Institute of Oceanology, and universities and research institutions in Poland, Norway and many other European countries.

To spend a day working on the ship, one must have a grant for a project that involves measurements that require the use of the vessel. Every hour is precious, and work is usually conducted on a shift basis around the clock. But the "Oceania" is also a welcoming home to her crew, where they rest, spend time with others, and wait for their next shift.

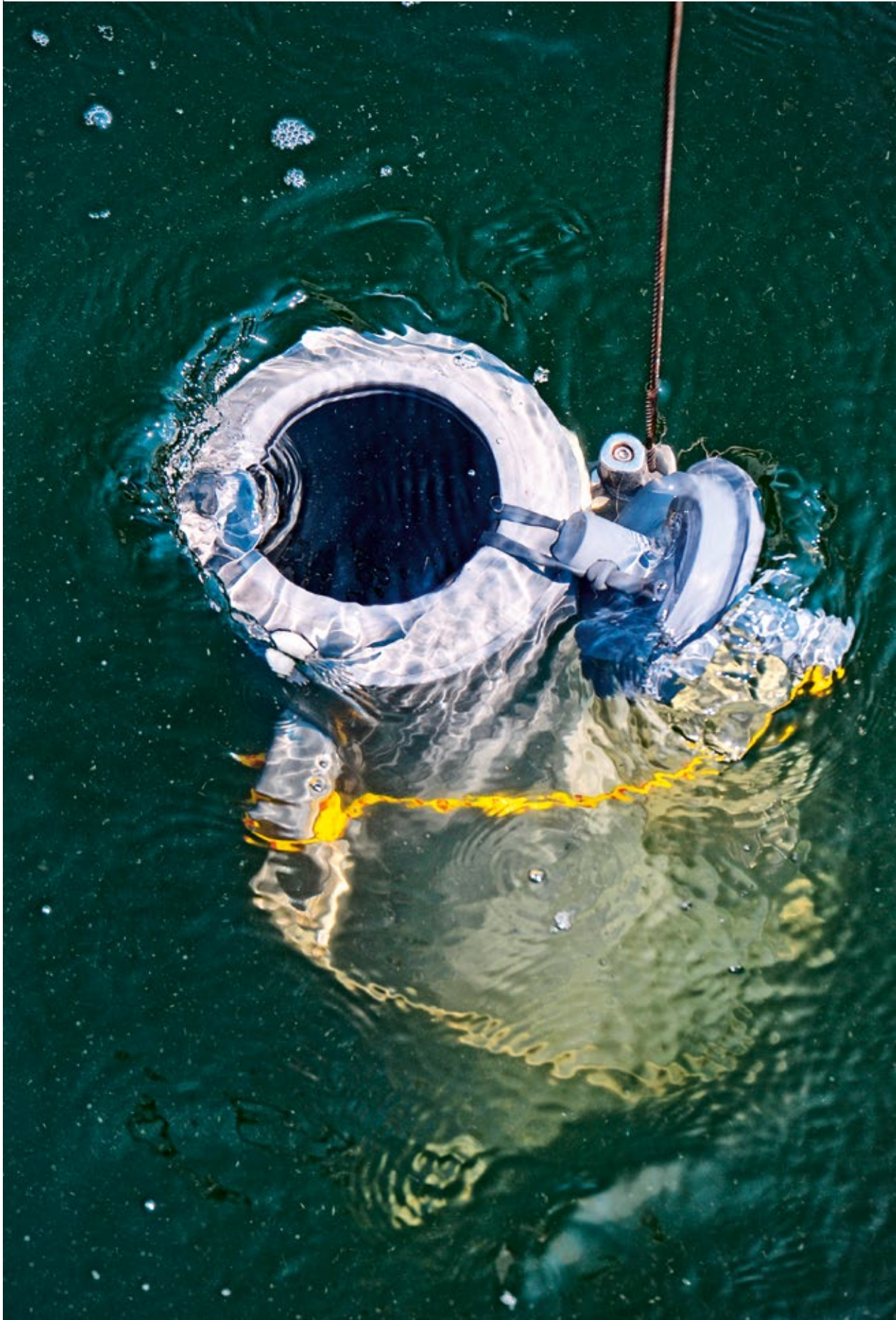
Just thirty years ago, the Polish ensign could be seen flying over trading, fishing and tug vessels on all the seas around the world over; today seeing the white-and-red banner on another ship is a rarity. For the last thirty years the "Oceania" has been taking part in international studies in the North Atlantic and the Arctic Sea, demonstrating that Poland still maintains an important presence on the seas...

Prof. Jan Marcin Węśławski, Director of the PAS Institute of Oceanology  
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