Farewell

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After 27 years, time has come for us to retire from *Polar Biology*. We have witnessed the development of Antarctic and Arctic biology over the decades from the times of rush for fish and krill in the Antarctic to global warming and the fear of loss of biodiversity. An array of new tools in biochemistry, genetics, telemetry and underwater observations has been introduced. The polar science community has grown in numbers and has spread geographically far beyond the handful of countries with a long tradition in polar research. As editors we have tried to assist those newcomers. We have participated in the technology shift from the ‘paper age’ when five paper copies had to be submitted and figures arrived in odd formats in big parcels, to the ‘electronic era’ when manuscripts and figures can be e-mailed and (hopefully) be opened and processed by mouse-click. The next step to a fully integrated processing has been introduced by our successor, while we will continue to take care of manuscripts submitted before 1 October 2008.

Journals like *Polar Biology* are indispensable parts of the science system. Research is useless without proper documentation and communication of its results. *Polar Biology* and other peer reviewed journals are the herbivores in the food chain of science communication. They thrive on the primary products of research, sometimes with a bit of detritus in between, while journals with very high impact factors make selected, condensed and often pre-digested material known to a wide scientific audience where it will be picked up by carnivorous journalists for public consumption.

Our first thanks go to the authors in many parts of the world. Their articles reflect months of hard work at sea, on

ice, in laboratories and in front of computers. Millions of dollars, yen and euros of public funds have been spent for obtaining those scientific results. Much diligence by the authors is required to optimize the presentation of the outcome of the research activities. But no manuscript is perfect; therefore, they have to be peer-reviewed.

Peer reviews constitute the backbone of quality control in the science system. Therefore, our special thanks go to the hundreds of referees who spent much time and effort on reviewing manuscripts and providing advice to the authors. Most authors appreciate the critical support of the reviewers and revise their papers accordingly. Members of the Editorial Board were particularly helpful in controversial cases.

Always we were helped by colleagues and technical staff in the Alfred Wegener Institute, Bremerhaven but mostly in the Institute for Polar Ecology of Kiel University. Without their assistance we hardly would have managed the (almost) frictionless transit into the present e-time.

Furthermore we wish to thank Dr. Dieter Czeschlik, head of the life sciences department of Springer Verlag in Heidelberg. In the publisher’s office we had very efficient counterparts: Hilde Haala, Ria Scheuermann, Ursula Hildebrandt and May Doebl

The transfer of the Arctic manuscripts for *Polar Biology* to Rolf Gradinger and his wife Bodil Bluhm in 2004 made our life easier at a time when the number of manuscripts grew very fast. Because of great research projects and heavy teaching obligations, Rolf Gradinger decided to quit with us as managing editor.

On 1 October 2008, Dieter Piepenburg became Editor in Chief of *Polar Biology*. We are very relieved to see him as our successor. Dieter Piepenburg is professor for biological oceanography at Kiel University. He is 51 years young and has an impressive record as marine biologist, working on

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polar benthos ecology, specializing in echinoderms. On numerous expeditions with German, Russian and Canadian research vessels he visited mostly the Arctic but also the Weddell Sea. He organized student excursions to Disko Bay, Svalbard and the shores of the Kola Peninsula. He has editorial experience and great skills in working with the computer. So he will introduce a modern web-based editorial system for processing manuscripts without sacrificing scientific quality control or losing personal contacts to authors and reviewers. We are confident that Dieter

Piepenburg will be a very devoted, helpful and critical Editor in Chief of *Polar Biology* and will be helped by a strong editorial board and by an ever growing community of peer reviewers.

Polar research is more important than ever and polar ecology is one of its core elements. Over the past decades *Polar Biology* has become an important partner in the international network of polar biologists. We wish them and their journal all the best for the future.