Preface to the Issue

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The 8th Baltic Sea Science Congress was held on August 22–26, 2011, in St. Petersburg. This international forum of the Baltic Sea countries is held every two years and is organized by three informal scientific communities: The Conference of Baltic Oceanographers (CBO), The Baltic Marine Biologists (BMB), and The Baltic Sea Geologists (BSG). In 2011, the BONUS Programme focused on international integration studies of the Baltic Sea joined the organizers.

Recently, the scientific community of the Baltic Sea countries has progressed in addressing the issue of forecasting the Baltic Sea's state for different time scales. This applies both to long-term forecasts of the regional climate change and short-term operational forecasts of oceanographic features. The range of the Baltic ecosystem research has expanded greatly. Advances in technologies and techniques and the understanding of the needs of society, which are associated primarily with the preservation of the cleanliness of the Baltic Sea and the natural qualities of its ecosystem, have led to the activation of the coopera-

tion of oceanographers with marine biologists and geologists.

The subjects of the 2011 Baltic Sea Congress covered investigations in the fields of physics, geology, chemistry, biology, climatology, and socioeconomic sciences. Detailed information about the Congress is available at <http://www.bssc2011.org/>. A summary of the Congress was given on September 12, 2011, on the site of the BONUS Programme http://www.bonus-portal.org/news_room/.

Taking into account the importance of the international cooperation in the study of the Baltic Sea and the expansion of the basin's research range, the Editorial Board of the journal *Oceanology*, due to the Congress Organizing Committee, felt able to publish some reports in a special issue. Other papers that were presented at the Congress will be published in a special issue of the *Journal of Marine Systems*.

*Chairman of the International Scientific
Organizing Committee of the Congress,
Dr. Sci. (Phys.–Math.) V. A. Ryabchenko*