The library of the Institute of Baltic Sea Research was founded in 1960 when
the Institute of Oceanography in Warnemünde was taken over by the GDR Academy
of Sciences. Thus in the framework of German oceanographic libraries the library is
comparatively young. Its history differs West German partner libraries because of
Germany's political division.

In thirty years the library has managed, as the most important oceanographic
library of the GDR, to gather a substantial amount of literature that includes all
subdisciplines of oceanographic literature, because apart from the institute's focal
point of physical oceanography it also worked on marine biology, marine chemistry, marine
geology and marine technology. The library was instructed to collect publications
orientated on the institute's research tasks. However, since it was the only marine
scientific library of the GDR, the desire arose to collect standard literature for the
entire field as extensively as possible. How difficult that was with limited means in
convertible currency is difficult for outsiders to understand. Strong regulations
intervened in our work again and again. Assignments of funds were inflexibly effected
according to groups of states, irrespectively of the actual demand. There were
regulations that Western periodicals should be available just once in the entire GDR
or in the entire academy. Only by means of a complicated system of interlibrary loan,
and providing summary indexes and copies was it possible support our scientists in
obtaining literature in their fields. In addition to the desire to gather current literature
there were also efforts to obtain old important literature on e.g. the fields of the great
German expeditions (deep sea expeditions with "Valdivia", cruises of the "old" Meteor
etc). Direct access to traditional libraries in Hamburg and Kiel was impossible. Loan
service was only allowed to be rendered on the corresponding way as "international
loan service" and despite the proof of ownership the loan receipts frequently got lost.
Nevertheless we have managed to build up a smooth exchange of literature with about
250 partner libraries around the world.

The Beiträge zur Meereskunde (Contributions to Marine Scientific Research)
published since 1960 was our most important object of exchange. Unfortunately these
texts will not be published anymore. However, *Meereswissenschaftliche Berichte*
(*Marine Scientific Reports*) will be available for exchange.

Today the library contains about 33,000 bibliographic units, with approximately
450 current journals and series. Despite the limited possibilities of former years we
have successfully managed to build up a relatively good collection of standard
literature, especially of journals.

With the opening of the borders the situation instantly changed with regard
to cooperation with other libraries. Whereas in October 1989 GDR participation in the
first meeting of the Working Group of Marine Sciences Libraries failed because of the
missing passport of the librarian, from February until May 1990 the most important
institutes in the western part of Germany could be visited. A close effective
cooperation and an active participation, which greatly promoted the library's way into
united Germany, derived from the visits paid in spring 1990. We saw help in every
respect: the gift of a substantial number of duplicates; the donation of literature from
retired scientists; participation in the loan service; and last, but not least, our partners
permanent readiness for discussion.

The Institute of Oceanography in Warnemünde was closed at the end of 1991.
At the beginning of 1992 the Institute of Baltic Sea Research took up its work and the
library has been taken over. In the future we will orientate to a greater extent towards
the Institute's research tasks, the "national" task can be omitted. This, however, does
not reduce our area of responsibility. Modern library software is being introduced with
which literature investigation can be effected via an OPAC. A new periodical index
is under way. Literature investigations conducted using *ASEA* CD-ROM. Library
research will be further improved with a forthcoming online connection.