

Foreword

The Institute of Fisheries Research (*Instituto de Investigaciones Pesqueras*, IIP) was created in 1951 as a biology research centre belonging to the Spanish National Research Council (*Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas*, CSIC). Its headquarters were in Barcelona but it had coastal laboratories in Blanes, Castelló, Cadiz and Vigo. The IIP split into five centres (Barcelona, Castelló, Cádiz and Vigo in 1979, and Blanes in 1985), and in 1987 the Barcelona centre became the Institute of Marine Sciences (*Institut de Ciències del Mar*, ICM).

This evolving institutional scenario was accompanied by a conceptual change, from the classical biological inspection of marine organisms towards an integrative view of the marine ecosystem, with its physical and chemical environment as essential components. This was possible thanks to the foresight and enthusiasm of several people, among them Ramón Margalef and Antoni Ballester, and the appearance of new opportunities within an evolving national and international context, which included increased collaboration in international programmes and the launching of two oceanographic vessels (*Coornide de Saavedra* in 1971 and *García del Cid* in 1977). The ICM was set to begin a profound transformation, but one fundamental element was still necessary: the human factor.

Research is an expensive enterprise, particularly when it is aimed at a better understanding of the remote and often harsh marine environment. To carry out oceanographic research, we require proper resources for facilities and personnel, in the form of public and private funding. However, advance in ocean research is only possible thanks to the dedication and enthusiasm of its actors, the oceanographers. The ICM was and still is no exception. During the last 40 years the principal actors have been oceanographers with a sustained enthusiasm for grasping an integral perspective of the ocean, regardless of whether the focus is on a very specific or a very broad challenge.

Marta Estrada, Jordi Salat and Jordi Font were among those enthusiastic young scientists with different backgrounds who arrived at the IIP in the 1970s, a period of uncertainty and transition. Through their long-term commitment and energy, they led a real revolution at the ICM, establishing new lines of research that have provided substantial advances in the way we understand the marine system and have helped many other people to carry out further research.

Marta Estrada currently holds a position of emeritus professor, Jordi Font has retired, though he continues to collaborate with the ICM occasionally, and Jordi Salat remains active but threatens his colleagues with retiring very soon. It therefore seems to be the right time to express our recognition and gratitude to the two Jordis and Marta. Planet Ocean—a special issue of *Scientia Marina*, the international oceanographic journal that they have supported throughout their careers—is our humble tribute to three extraordinary oceanographers who began working at the IIP in the 1970s and have been a crucial part of the initial transformation and continuous growth of ICM. The volume starts with three biographical papers and its main body comprises 19 articles divided into two parts—biological and physical oceanography—that represent the main research fields that Jordi Font, Jordi Salat and Marta Estrada have worked on and influenced throughout their careers.

We would like to sincerely thank all the contributing authors for their willingness to contribute to this special issue and for partly covering the expenses involved in the publication of the articles in both digital and paper formats. We are also very grateful to the many fine oceanographers who have reviewed the original manuscripts, helping to produce an excellent set of articles. Likewise, we wish to acknowledge the outstanding work of our managing and production editors, María Victoria Martínez de Albéniz and Jordi Corbera, without them this volume would have not been possible. Finally, we are pleased to acknowledge the following institutions and projects that have contributed to the funding of this special issue: the ICM, the State-owned Spanish Port Authority (*Puertos del*

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