

# MEETINGS

## International Ocean Research: Common Opportunities and Challenges

***Second SCOR Summit of International Marine Research Projects, 7-9 December 2006, London***

The impending interruption of important satellite observations and the need for improvements in data management and communications are of significant concerns to the ocean community.

Plans to reduce satellite observations of the ocean will negatively affect both research projects and observational programs. Progress in our understanding of how ocean physics and chemistry interact with living organisms and ecosystems in space and time will be impaired by the loss of high-quality satellite data streams. Prompt action is needed to prevent this from happening. Satellite observation programs that are particularly imperiled and must be main-

tained include sea surface height, ocean color, and sea surface vector winds and waves. Likewise, the long-term continuity of measurements of sea ice, microwave sea surface temperature, and rainfall measurements must be assured.

Second, it is still difficult to get scientists to submit their data to national and international databases. The problem could be reduced by developing new incentives for submitting data to data centers. Some journals in which ocean scientists publish their research results (e.g., *Geochemistry*, *Geophysics*, *Geosystems* and *Journal of Marine Micropaleontology*) require or encourage submission of the data on which the paper

is based, to a recognized database; this approach should be adopted more widely by ocean science journals. Data reposing in data centers must also be more accessible. The Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research (SCOR) should create a panel to make recommendations about bibliographic citations of data that involve the use of persistent identifiers. Budgets for projects and observational programs should include adequate funding for data management, and these funds should be protected against cuts when research and observations are scaled back.

Many of the projects represented at the meeting are planning research activities in the polar oceans during the International Polar Year (IPY), and the meeting provided an opportunity for information transfer about these activities. Scientists involved in IPY ocean projects should contribute their data to international databases as a legacy of IPY. Particularly important is the availability of information about the bathymetry of the Southern Ocean, which is relevant to many other aspects of ocean research, observations, and modeling. The goal is to produce a seamless database of all Southern Ocean bathymetric data gridded together.

Within the objectives of individual projects, scientists should plan their cruise tracks, including transits to and from Antarctic bases, to fill gaps in existing bathymetric coverage, thus contributing to the building of the bathymetric database for the Southern Ocean and the development of the International Bathymetric Chart of the Southern Ocean (IBCSO).

The Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research (SCOR) convened this summit, which was hosted by the Royal Society and funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. The meeting brought together representatives of the major international projects and programs involved in ocean research and observation to discuss common opportunities, issues, and problems. See [http://www.scor-int.org/Project\\_Summit\\_2/ProjCoord2.htm](http://www.scor-int.org/Project_Summit_2/ProjCoord2.htm) for more information.

The full text of this meeting report can be found in the supplement to this *Eos* edition.

—ED URBAN, Scientific Committee on Oceanic Research, Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Md.; E-mail: ed.urban@scor-int.org