

85 years of the Scientific Library at the Sea Fisheries Institute in Gdynia and some treasures of the collection

Malgorzata Grabowska-Popow

Sea Fisheries Institute in Gdynia. SFI Centre for Scientific Information.
81-332 Gdynia, 1, Kołłątaj str., Poland
popow@mir.gdynia.pl

ABSTRACT: The Sea Fisheries Institute in Gdynia was founded in 1949, as a result of merging of two institutions: the Marine Fishery Laboratory (established in 1921) and the Sea Fisheries Institute Association (established in 1928), and is the oldest sea research institution in Poland. The principal areas of research conducted by the institute include fishery biology and oceanography, fish processing technology and fisheries economics. Together with the Institute its library has developed. In the beginning it possessed only dozens of books and periodicals (1921), now it houses about 15 000 of books and 833 titles of journals. The SFI Library offers a unique and the only collection in Poland dedicated to sea fisheries research. Since 1921, a rich collection of books, journals etc. has been built and it encompasses publications from numerous international publishers and organizations related to fisheries; the latter cover those of the FAO, ICES (a full documentation of the meetings), NEAFC, NAFO, CCAMLR, the International Baltic Sea Fishery Commission – IBSFC. Besides, the Library has collected a number of atlases, encyclopedias, dictionaries, keys for identifying fish and living sea organisms. It also offers the Polish Bibliography of Sea Fisheries from 1945 to 1991. The topics of the collection are: biological and physical oceanography; ichthyology and the biology and ecology of the seas; living resources and their management; catch techniques; processing technologies for raw food of marine origin; fishery market economics. The most precious collections of the library are the collection of old Polish and foreign scientific books and journals from the early XX- th century and even older.

Translation into English – Jennifer Zieliński
Translation from German – Dejan Popow

Eighty-five years ago legislation was passed to “establish the Marine Fisheries Department”, which included setting up a laboratory for biological research. This provided the foundation of the Marine Fisheries Laboratory in Hel, (from 1932 known as the Marine Station). Overcoming various challenges in subsequent years, the institution grew progressively, and in late 1938 and early 1939 it moved from the Hel location to its new building in Gdynia.

The Sea Fisheries Institute Association was founded in 1928 and worked closely with the Marine Station.

After the end of World War II, both the station and the association resumed their work and in 1949 they joined forces to create one powerful scientific institution named the Sea Fisheries Institute. Its five departments focused on research issues from ichthyology, oceanography, technology, economics, and fisheries techniques.

As the institute grew, so did its library. The modest collection in 1921 was comprised of thirty or so Polish and German books from Prussian institutions including the Westpreussischer Fischerei-Verein in Gdańsk.

By 1932, the collection at the station's library numbered approximately 1,000 volumes, and by 1938-1939 this number had grown to 3,000. The library was assigned a special room in the new building to house its collection, which included works from the fields of ichthyology, biology, oceanography, and economics.

During the war the lion's share of the library's collection was removed through Świnoujście to Germany. Only about one hundred books were saved.

The recovery of the books began in 1945, and in mid 1946 Feliks Chrzan, Eng. traveled to the British occupation zone of Germany on a mission to retrieve the collection. After a long search, the collection of the Gdynia Marine Station was located in the library of the Seefahrtsschule in Hamburg. In August 1946, two thousand volumes (approximately 70% of the pre-war collection) were returned to Poland aboard the vessel *Toruń*.

By the end of 1947, the institute library collection already numbered 3,000 volumes, which included those retrieved from Germany, a German natural history collection recovered from the rubble of Gdansk, donations, and volumes bought in second-hand bookstores. At this time, the library was also receiving a total of fifty periodicals.

From 1951, the library was incorporated into a new institute department - the Center for Scientific and Technical Documentation. Along with this change, the collection grew with the addition of volumes from other fields including economics of the marine fisheries industry, catch techniques, fishing gear technology, netting properties, and sonar devices. Henryk Ganowiak was the department head for 31 years from June 1, 1967 until January, 1998.

In 1958, the center received a new space at the institute. A reading room was created while the ever growing collection (numbering then 5,000 books and 4,000 periodicals and annuals) gained more storage space.

In 1970, the library collection, which was still part of the center, numbered nearly 8,500 books and about 414 Polish and foreign periodical titles. Nevertheless, the library's distinguishing feature was, and remains, its collection of specialist materials from conferences and congresses organized by the FAO, the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), the International Commission for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries (ICNAF), UNESCO, etc.

A significant year for both the institute and the library was 1991, when the headquarters were moved to the new building. Here, the library had at its disposal vast storage for its collection of books and periodicals, a spacious reading room, and a staff room. In 1998, Bożena Janusz, M. Sc. Eng., became the director of the center, which was renamed the Scientific Information and Publishing Center. Dr. Małgorzata Grabowska-Popow has been department head since April 2006, when the center was renamed the Scientific Information Center.



Photo 1. Marine Station in Hel



Photo 2. Current headquarters of SFI in Gdynia

Currently, the Scientific Library of the SFI in Gdynia continues to collect volumes in the tradition of its established collection; these include works from scientific fields such as biological and physical oceanography, ichthyology, marine biology and ecology, live marine resources and their management, fishing techniques, processing technology of marine organisms for human consumption, and fisheries industry economics.

The library holds the only collection in Poland of literature from the field of marine fisheries research and rich resources of publications from international organizations and fisheries conventions. The library's collection also includes reference materials such as atlases, encyclopedias, dictionaries, fish and marine organism identification keys, and the Polish Bibliography of Marine Fisheries from 1945-1991.

The Scientific Library of the SFI in Gdynia has approximately 15,000 books and subscriptions or exchange agreements for 820 periodical titles from Poland and abroad. The collection is supplemented with video cassettes, CDs, and DVDs.

The traditional library card catalogue provides an alphabetical listing of the book collection (author-title), an alphabetical periodical catalogue, an alphabetical title catalogue of FAO publications, and a subject catalogue for books arranged by field.

The computerized catalogue was created using the MICRO CDS ISIS package and is comprised of two databases: one for books (4081 records) and one for periodicals (842 records). These two databases can be searched through the key word index, author index, title index, and the signature index.



Photo. 3. Reading room at the Scientific Library of the SFI in Gdynia

The library subscribes to important scientific periodicals such as the *Canadian Journal of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences*, *Fish and Fisheries*, *Fisheries*, the *Journal of Aquatic Animal Health*, *Marine Biology*, *North American Journal of Fisheries Management*, *North American Journal of Aquaculture*, and *Transactions of the American Fisheries Society*.

The center conducts wide-ranging scientific publication exchange with Polish and foreign institutions. It is also the national co-coordinator of the international information system ASFISIS FAO/CSA (the world's leading database of aquatic sciences article abstracts). The Scientific Information Center at the SFI in Gdynia not only send abstracts to the database, it also coordinates other Polish institutions that enter data into the system. Thanks to this, the Sea Fisheries Institute in Gdynia has access to the IDS ASFA database.

Since January 2005, the Elsevier Science Direct on-line full-text database has been available to SFI employees and library users on the library's computers. This resource offers full-text access to approximately 600 periodical titles subscribed to by the Polish Consortium of Scientific Libraries, as well as to abstracts and tables of contents of another 1,400 Elsevier Science publications.

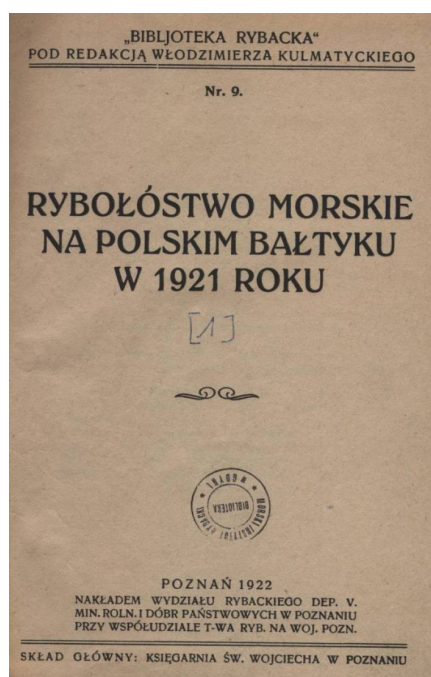
The Sea Fisheries Institute in Gdynia has belonged since 1994 to the European Association of Aquatic Sciences Libraries and Information Centres and through this association to the International Association of Aquatic and Marine Science Libraries and Information Centers.

Annually, the Sea Fisheries Institute in Gdynia serves approximately 1,000 readers (SFI scientific staff, students, and high school pupils) and conducts interlibrary loans with Polish and foreign libraries.

Among the many valuable books and periodicals held in the collection, the oldest publications are especially worthy of closer inspection. The majority of the volumes discussed below are only available in Poland at the SFI library. Incidentally, I would also like to draw your attention to the stamps in the publications, the variety of which reflects the history of the collection and times in which they were gathered.

Let's begin with Polish publications.

Poland gained independence in 1918 providing the country with access to the sea. As this country busy rebuilt itself, marine fisheries issues were dealt with from 1921 by the Marine Fisheries Department. Reports from this office from the 1921-1935 period are one of the library's most valuable holdings. These reports contain descriptions of Polish fisheries, statistical data on catches and resources (graphs and tables), fishing grounds with maps, legislation and governmental directives (including those on the founding of the laboratory on Hel and the Sea Fisheries Institute Association), descriptions of fisheries organizations, photographs of vessels, and educational programs for fishermen. The specialist sections of the reports contain scientific articles with summaries in French by such leading Polish scientists as Borys Dixon and Józef Borowik. These reports are an excellent source of information for the study of the history of Polish fisheries and economics as well as biology.

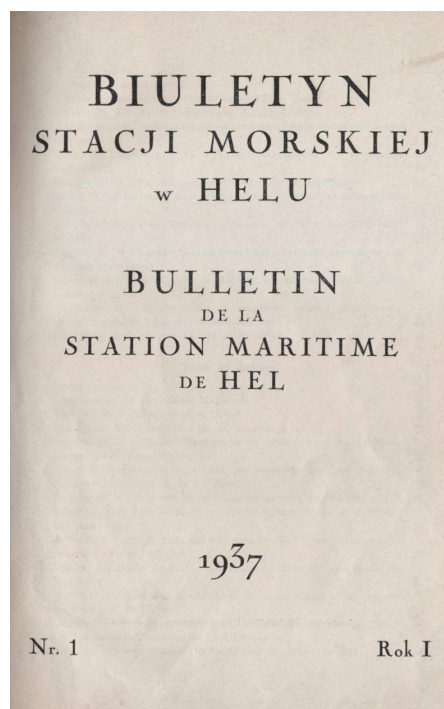


The Marine Station in Hel, which has been mentioned several times, published two periodicals, *Prace* and *Biuletyn* (*Papers* and *Bulletin*), during the interwar period. Later this publishing effort would be continued under the title of *Bulletin of the Sea Fisheries Institute in Gdynia*.

The scientific articles published by the Marine Station in Hel in *Prace* appeared in various languages – English, French, German, and Polish (always accompanied by a summary in French). The SFI library is the only one in Poland to hold a complete collection of this periodical, which appeared from 1932 to 1938. The large number of students who request to view it or order photocopies of it attests to the value of the articles published in it by scientists such as Dixon, Bogucki, or Demel.

Equally as popular is the station's second publication - *Biuletyn*, which, in addition to scientific notes and communications with summaries in foreign languages, contains annual reports for the station. The *Biuletyn* was published in 1937-1938, and the only complete set of all published issues in Poland is held by the SFI library.

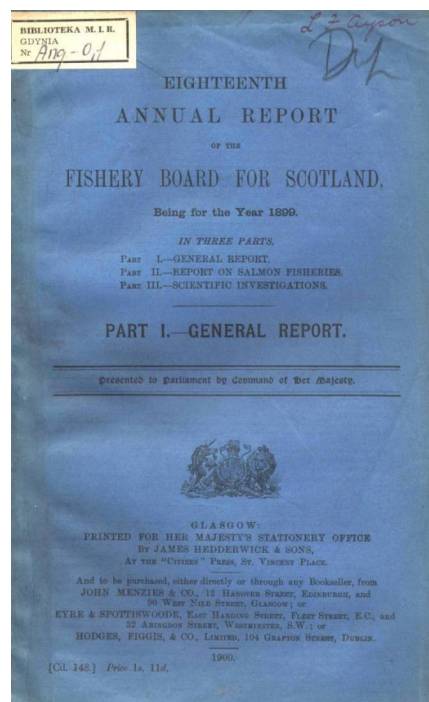
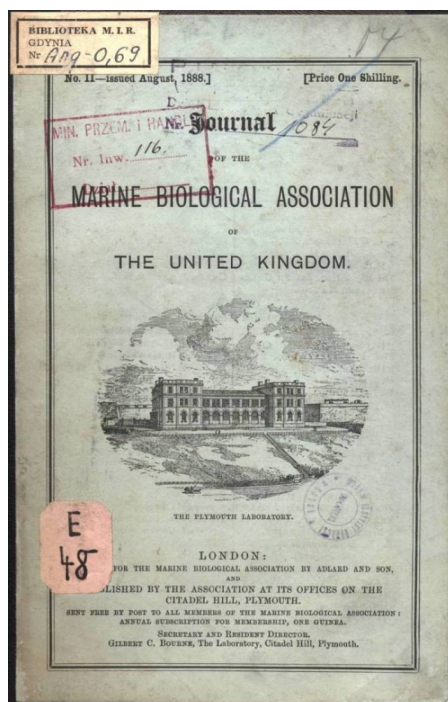
During the interwar period, fish consumption in Poland was promoted in specialist periodicals published by industrial and trade chambers and associations. One of these was *Ryba* (Fish) which first appeared in 1929 (from 1932 it was the journal of the Sea Fisheries Institute Association). The articles published addressed such issues as the benefits of fish consumption, recipes for fish dishes, descriptions of technological processes, trade, catch gear, catch size, and the sizes of inland and marine fish catches.



The SFI library also holds many valuable periodicals and publication series from the world over. It would be impossible to mention them all here.

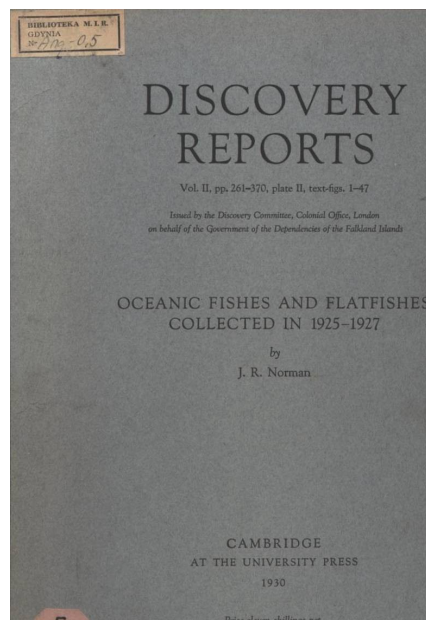
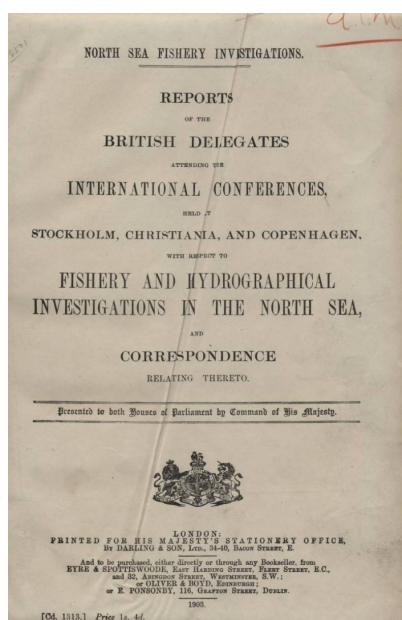
Some of them include:

The collection of the widely-known *Journal of the Marine Biological Association of the United Kingdom* beginning with issue number 1 of July 1, 1888 and continuing to the present day.

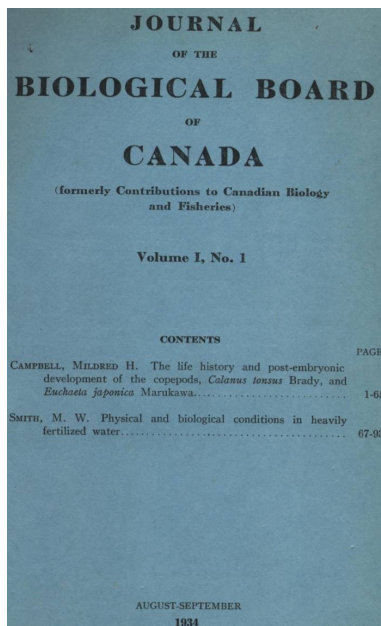


Other valuable holdings include:

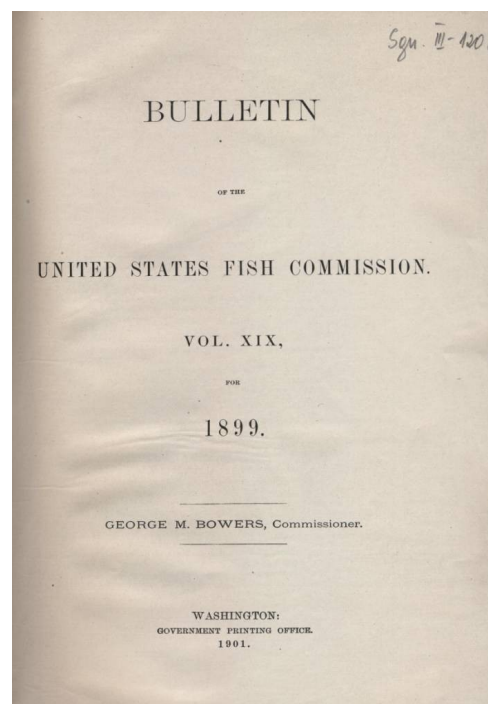
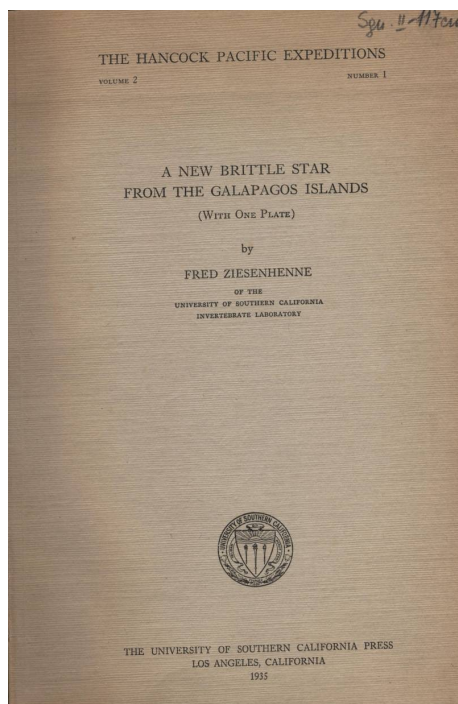
Discovery Reports – in the collection since 1930; *Annual Reports of the Fishery Board for Scotland* (the oldest report was published in 1900 and refers to 1899); *Reports of the British Delegates attending the International Conferences held at Stockholm, Christiania and Copenhagen with respect to Fishery and Hydrographical Investigations in the North Sea and Correspondence relating thereto* – the oldest of the reports in the collection dates from 1903.



The SFI library collection also includes the well-known Canadian periodical *Journal of the Biological Board of Canada* from its first issue of 1934 to the current issue in its new format.



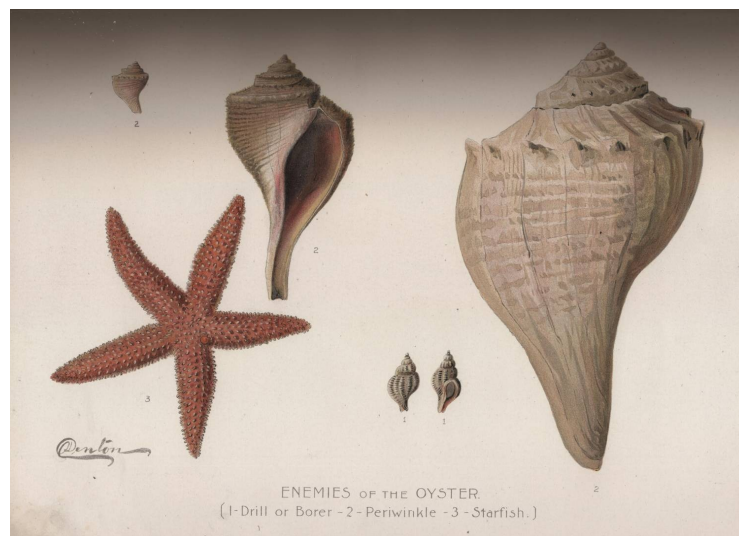
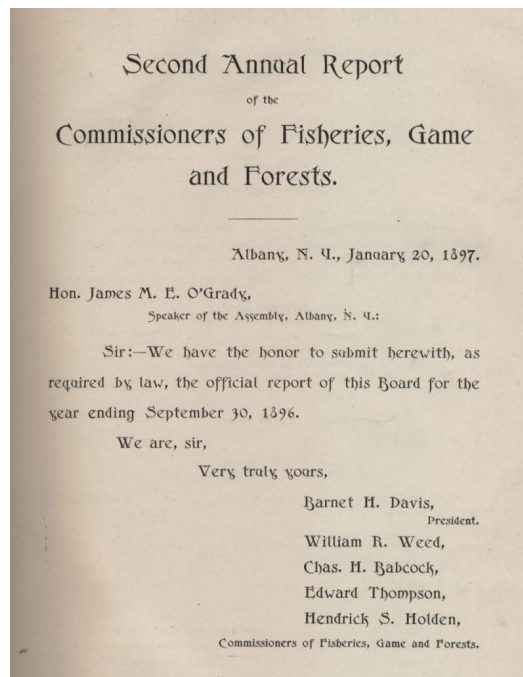
Large numbers of periodicals from the USA enrich the series of holdings from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the interwar period. For example, the library holds volumes published by Hancock Pacific Expeditions, beginning with volume 2/1.



Among other valuable publications from the USA, it is worth mentioning the *Bulletin of the United States Fish Commission* from 1899. This is a real rarity that includes descriptions of marine and inland fish species, fish disease, catch methods, etc.

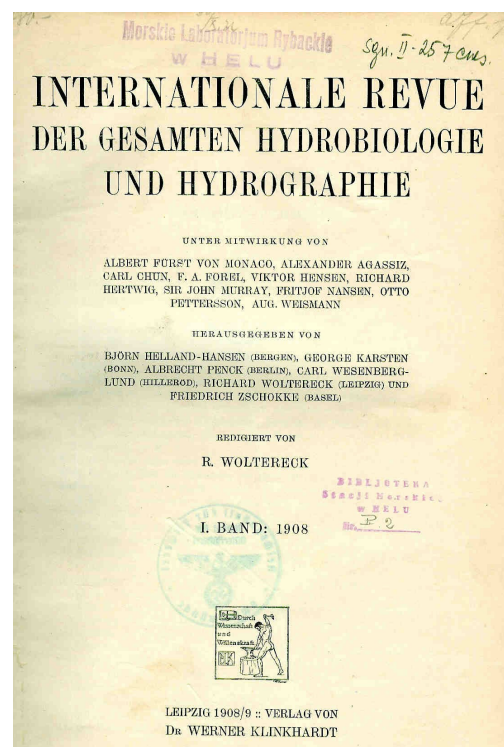
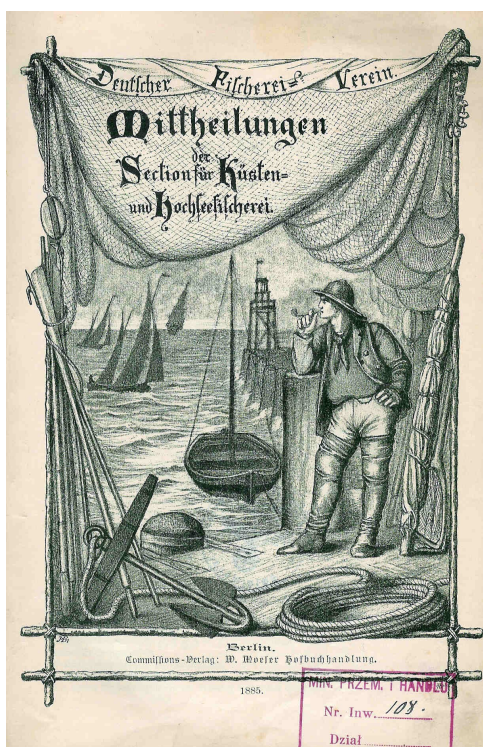
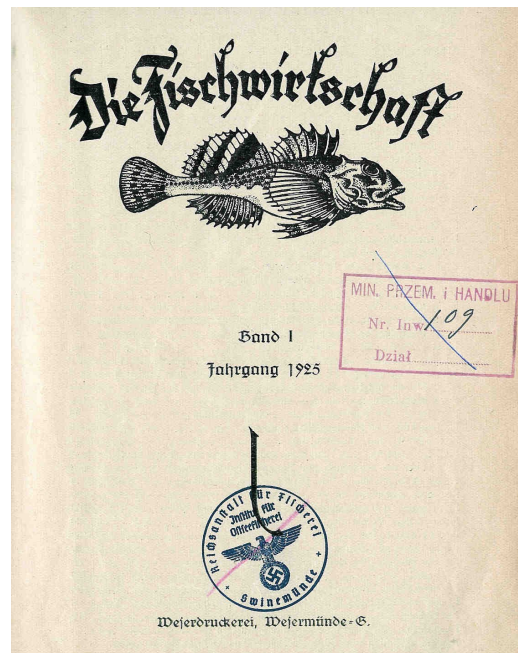
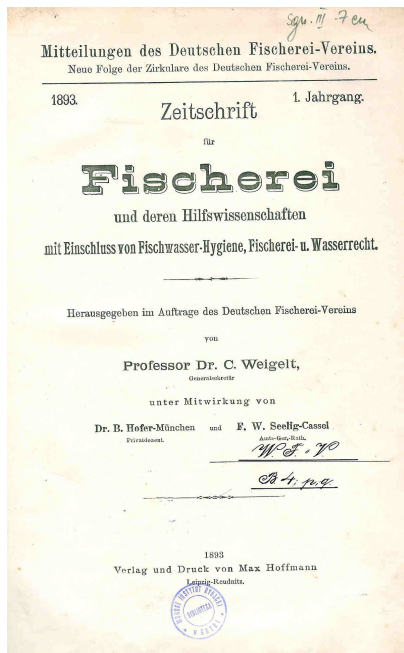
It also worthwhile having a look into the articles in *Fisheries Game and Forest Commission*, the first volume of which was published in 1897. Not only do these reports describe species, catches, resources, and the trade of fish and other marine organisms, they are also richly illustrated.

Collected Reprints of Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution is a rich source of information regarding American.



Collected Reprints of Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution is a rich source of information regarding American scientific institutions; the earliest issue in the SFI collection dates to 1934 and contains publications from 1933.

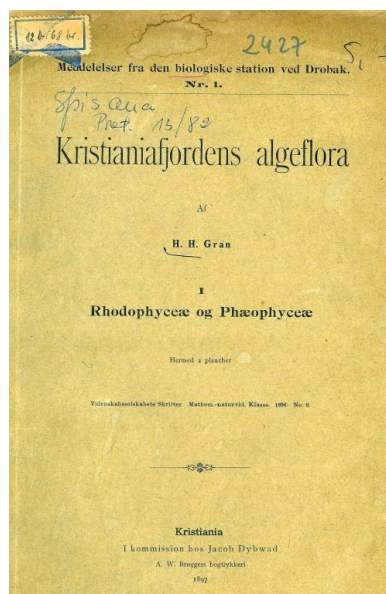
Articles presenting a wide range of fisheries issues including economics, catch strategies, legislation, technology, biology, and hydrobiology were published in periodicals such as *Zeitschrift fuer Fischerei und dern Hilfswissenschaften mit Einschluss von Fischwasser-Hygiene, Fischerei-u. Wasserecht* (the collection includes the first issue from 1893), *Die Fischwirtschaft* (also from the first issue of 1925), *Mittheilungen der Section fuer Kuesten- und Hochseefischerei* (from the first issue of 1885), and *Internationale Revue der gesamten Hydrobiologie und Hydrographie* (also from the first issue of 1908).



The real rarities, however, are found in the book collection, which includes titles from the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries. These volumes originate from Poland, Germany, and Scandinavia, among other countries, and describe the biology of marine and inland organisms, the history of coastal territory and fisheries, geography, coastal and inland fauna and flora. There are also dictionaries dating from the nineteenth century.

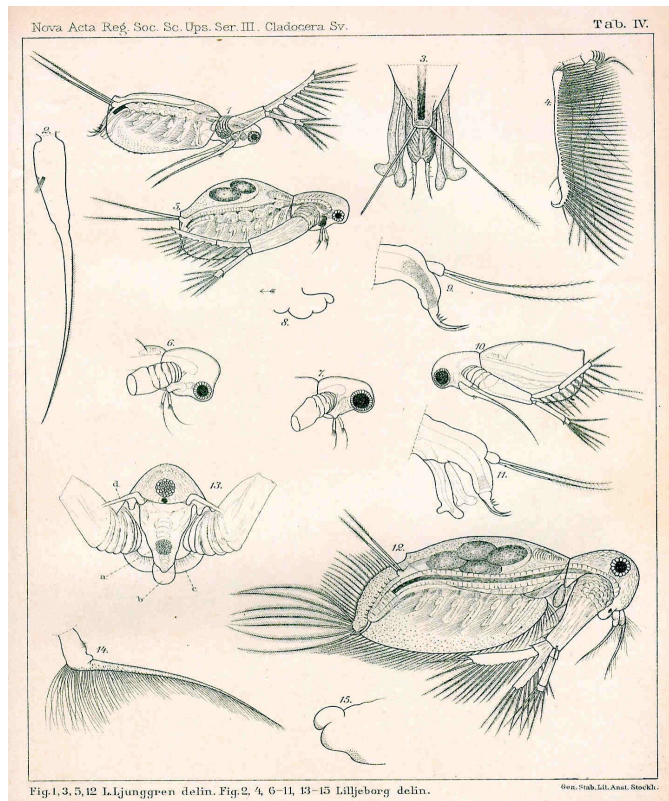
Describing all of the interesting printed materials in the library's collection would require too much time and space, so I'll restrict myself to just a few examples of the libraries most valuable holdings.

The first is the description of algae from Kristiania dating from 1897 in Norwegian.



Other classics of biological science, including ichthyology, are the keys for identifying zooplankton (ichthyoplankton), such as the series published by Sars, or that dedicated to the biology of the seas, which includes a description of the living organisms of the Baltic and North seas. These keys are richly illustrated.

UPSALIAE,
EXCUDIT ED. BERLING REG. ACAD. TYPOGRAPHUS.
MDCCCC.

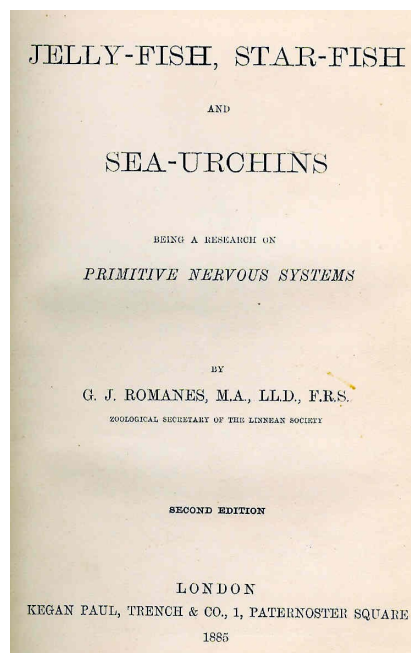
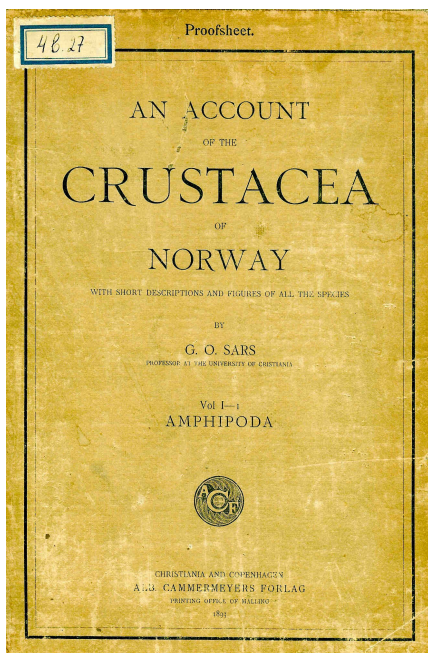
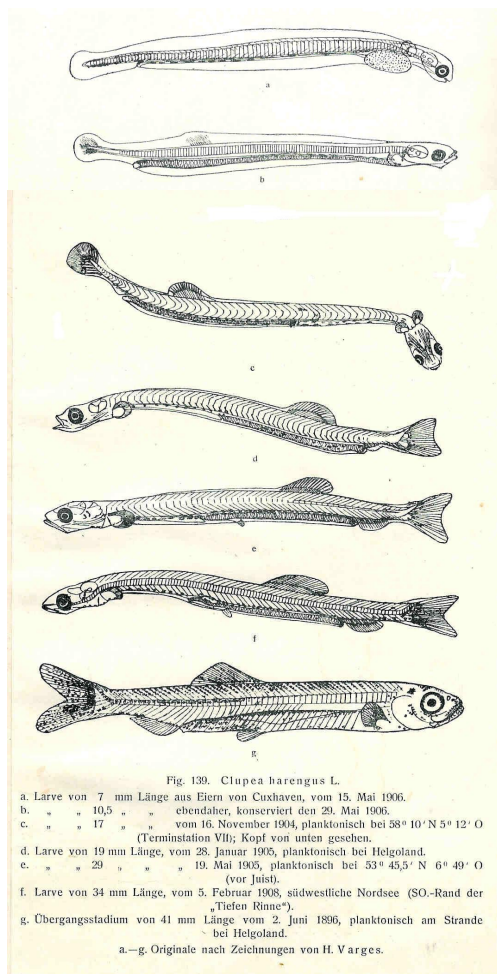


Zoologischer Teil

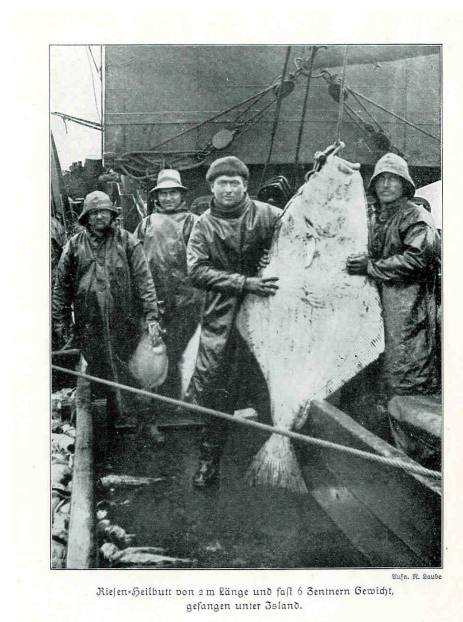
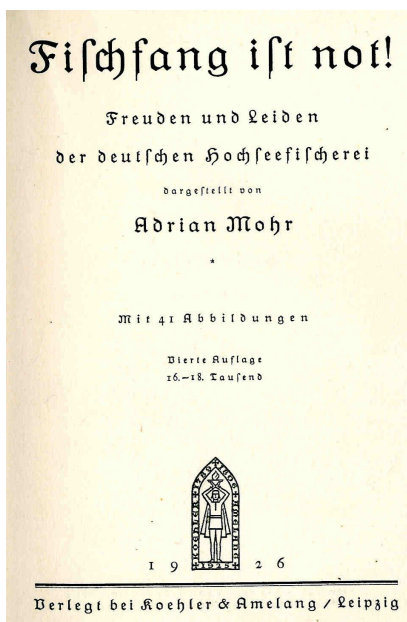
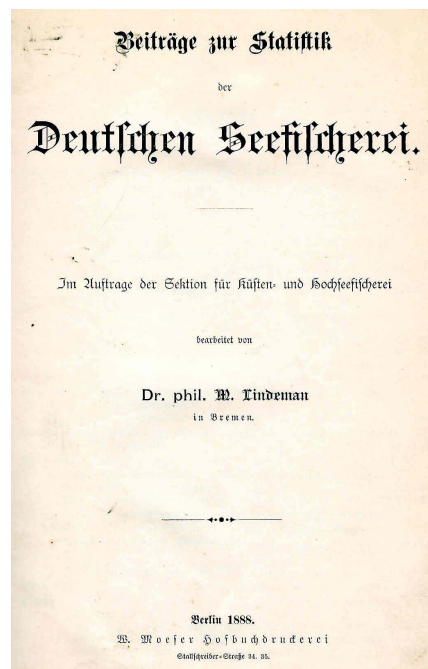
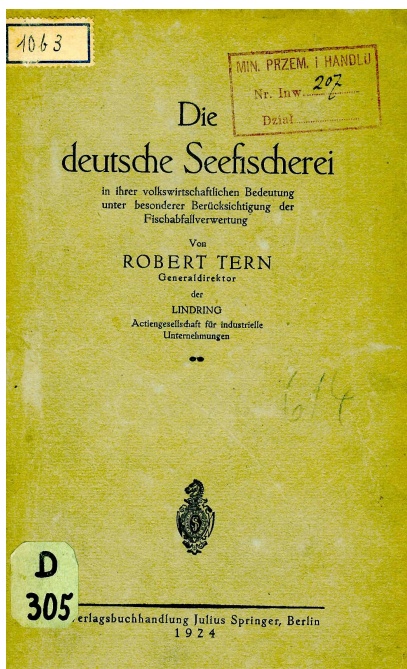
Erster Band



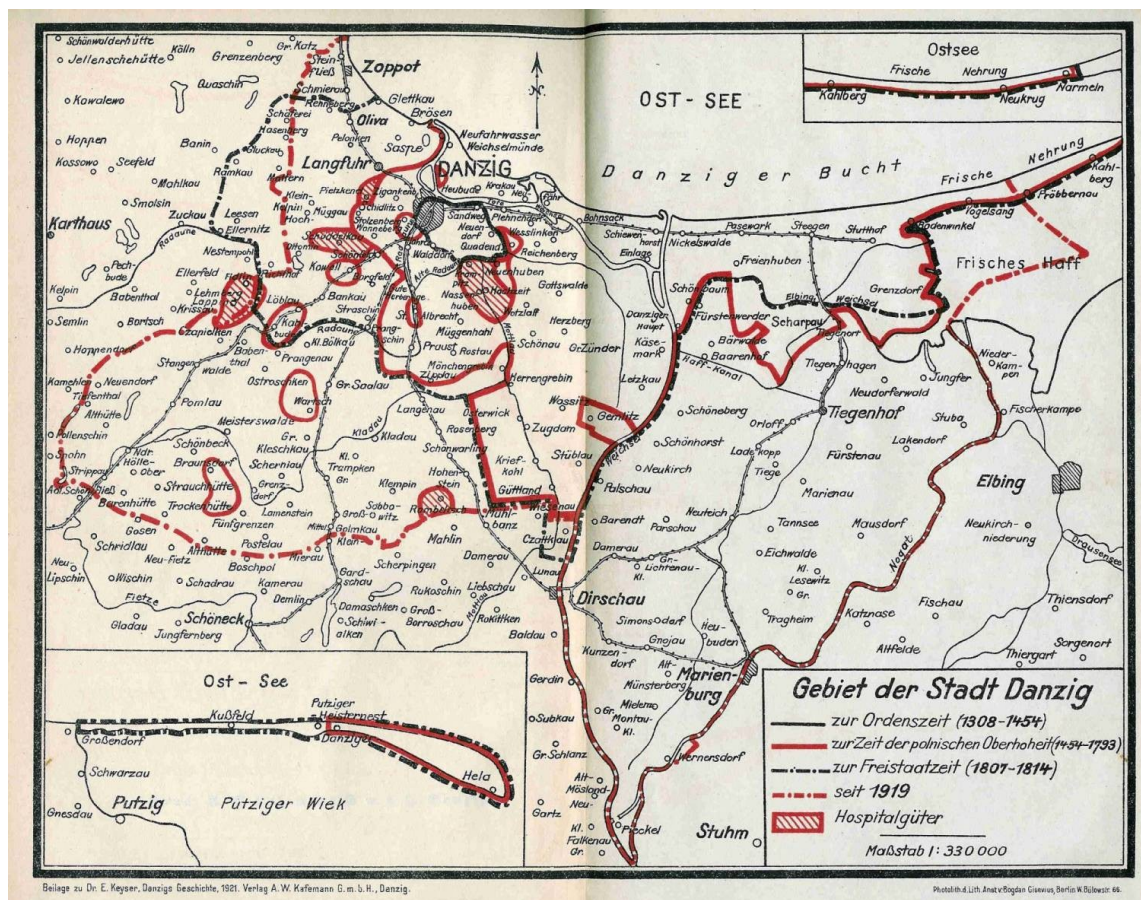
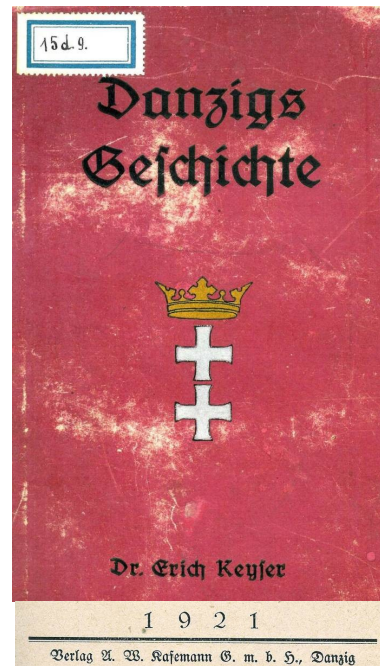
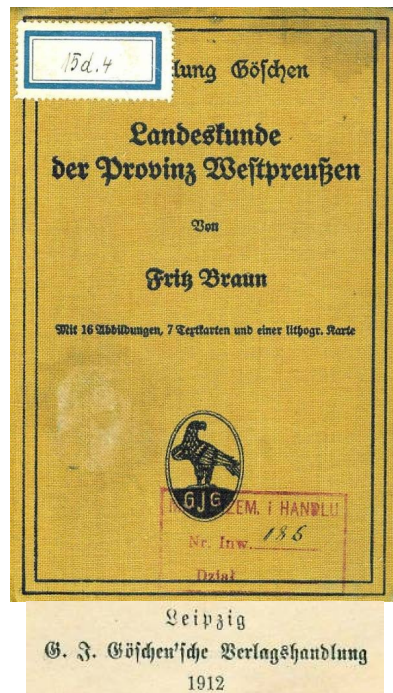
Kiel und Leipzig
Verlag von Lipsius & Tischer

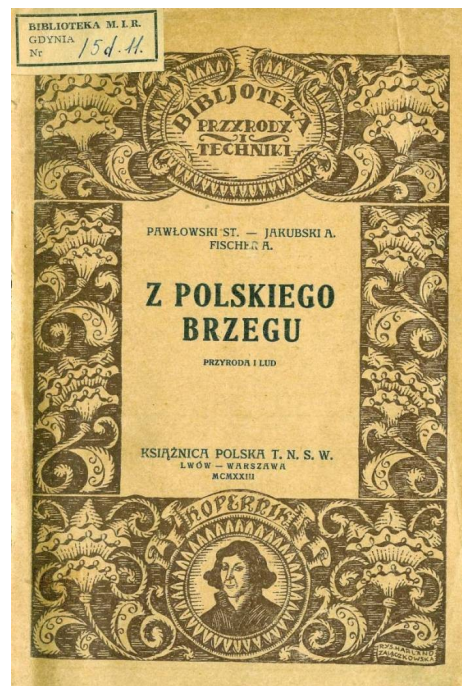
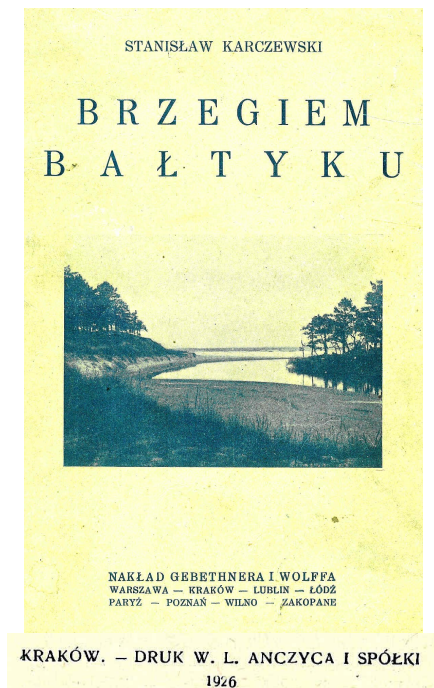


Among books dedicated to fisheries in all of its aspects, but with an emphasis on economic issues, the collection contains such rarities as *Die Seefischerei von Danzig* from the series entitled *Handbuch der Seefischerei Nordeuropas* of 1931. This volume is a rich source of maps, tables, and illustrations that provide a history of the fisheries in the Gulf of Gdansk in the 1930s. *Beiträge zur Statistik der Deutschen Seefischerei* describes German fisheries in the North Sea in the second half of the nineteenth century (1888). *Die deutsche Seefischerei* of 1924 focuses primarily on the recycling of fish waste, while *Fischfang ist not* presents deep-sea fisheries issues from the 1920s.

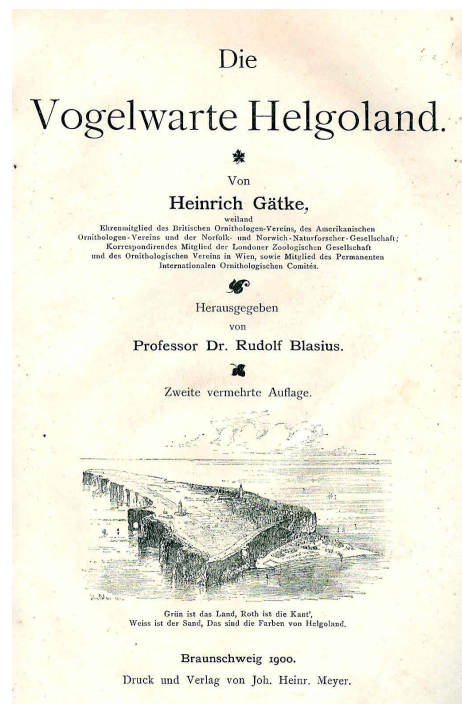


The geography, populations, and regional history of the Baltic area are described in, for example, *Landeskunde der Provinz Westpreußen* of 1912, *Danzigs Geschichte* which presents interesting maps of cities and their environs from 1921, and two publications in Polish - *Brzegiem Bałtyku* (*The Baltic Shore*) from 1926 and *Z polskiego brzegu* (*From the Polish Coast*) of 1923.



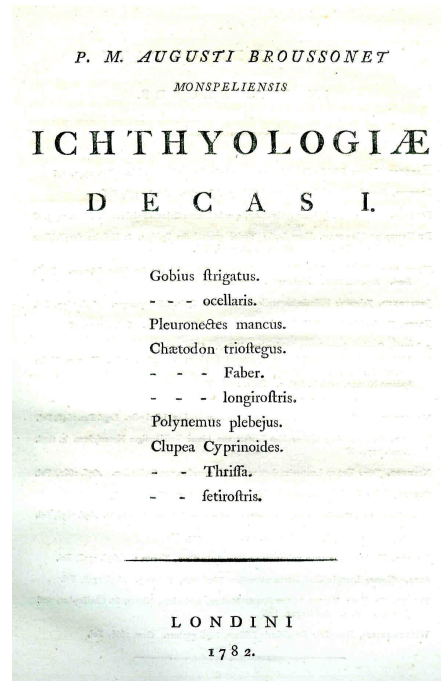
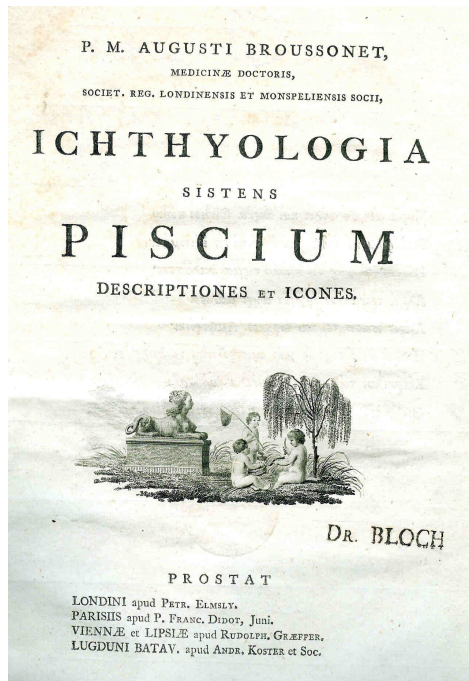


Naturally, the SFI library also holds books from other scientific fields such as physics, chemistry, or other more closely-related topics like ichthyology, near-encyclopedia volumes on general zoology, and ornithological publications focusing on birds that inhabit the coastal regions. The following two titles are examples of these - *Vom Nordpol zum Aequator* from 1890 and *Die Vogelwarte Helgoland* from 1900.

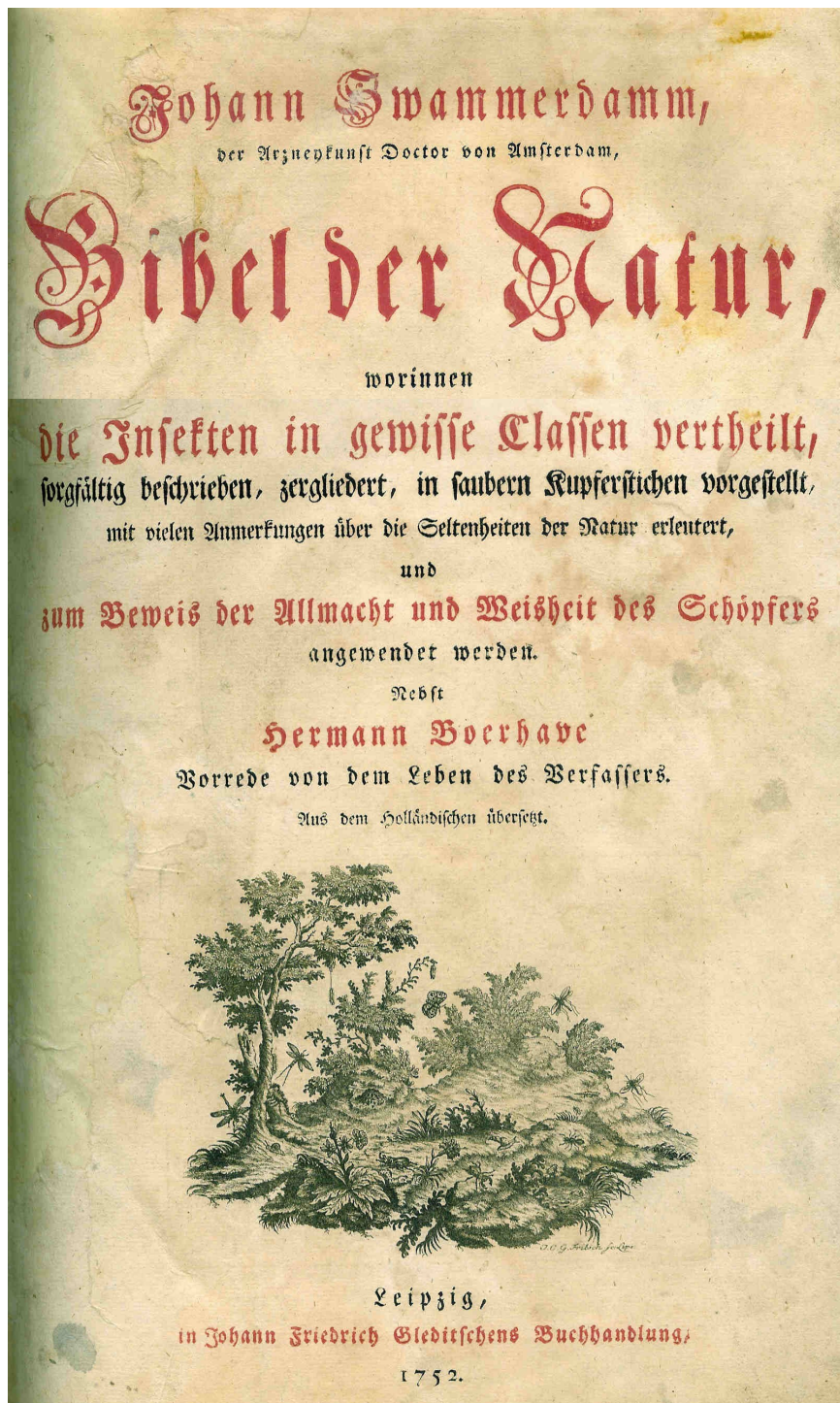


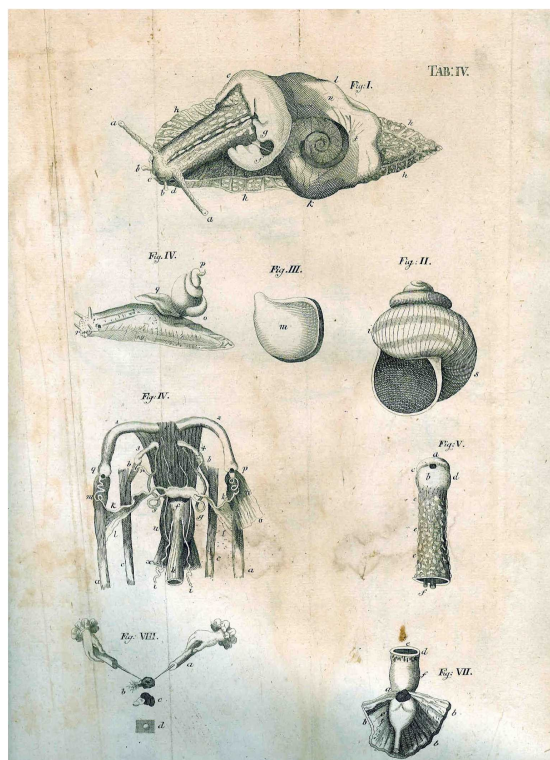
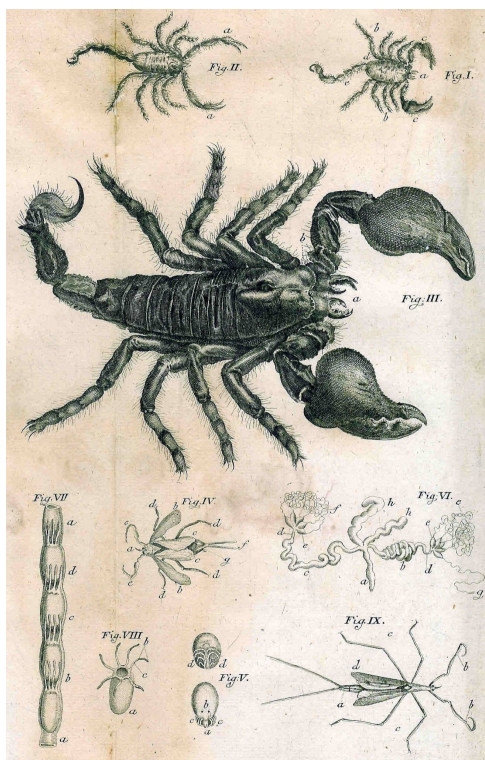
In conclusion, I'd like to present two eighteenth century books from the library's collection that are true treasures.

The first dates to 1782 and is entitled *Ichthyologiae*. It is written in Latin and was published in London. It describes flatfish, gobies, clupeids and others. The text is accompanied by beautiful copperplate engravings.



The second book dates from 1752 and is the oldest volume in the library. It is entitled *Bibel der Natur worinnen die Insekten in gewisse Klassen vertheilt, sorgfältig beschrieben, zergliedert, in saubern Kupferstichen vorgestellt, mit vielen Anmerkungen über die Seltenheiten der Natur erleutert, und zum Beweis der Allmacht und Weisheit des Schöpfers angewendet werden* and contains descriptions from the animal kingdom with a focus on insects. It is also illustrated with wonderful copperplate engravings, just as the previous volume.





Bibliografia:

1. Ropelewski A.: Morski Instytut Rybacki. Ludzie i wydarzenia 1921-2001. Gdynia: MIR, 2001.
2. Ropelewski A.: Połowy ryb w polskiej strefie przybrzeżnej w ujęciu historycznym. Gdynia: MIR, 1996.
3. Ropelewski A., H. Ganowiak: 75 lat Morskiego Instytutu Rybackiego. Rocznik Gdynski 1998 nr 13, s. 31-37.
4. Oral and written information obtained thanks to Mr. Henryk Ganowiak.