

Prologue

In *Oceánicas: women pioneers in oceanography* we tell the life and work of 20 illustrious female marine scientists, some of them forgotten by history. From the first and only woman to sail around the world during the time of the great explorations, to women who today lead the fight for ocean conservation.

Their stories tell us about the development of marine sciences over the last centuries, but also of the difficulties they have faced for being women—in oceanography, in science, and in life—and of the fight for equality of many generations.

Climate change, overfishing and pollution threaten to transform our oceans forever. The challenges are enormous and to meet them we need to count on all the talent available. Therefore, equal access of women and men to marine science, including positions of responsibility, is more necessary than ever.

We hope these twenty stories, which are only a few examples of the many illustrious female scientists of the past and present, will provide a source of inspiration for anyone dreaming to engage in marine research.

This book is part of the dissemination project «*Oceánicas: women pioneers in oceanography*» (www.oceanicas.ieo.es), developed by the Spanish Institute of Oceanography (IEO-CSIC) with the collaboration of the Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology – Ministry of Science and Innovation (FECYT-Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación).