

Russian oceanography

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Russian research in oceanography seems to compare favorably in quality with American, according to a survey of U. S. oceanographers conducted recently at The University of California's Scripps Institution of Oceanography.

But the Russian results are almost inaccessible to U. S. workers because of the language barrier. Over 80 percent of the American oceanographers reported they cannot read Russian. Of those who could, only a handful were fluent in it. Russian oceanographic papers are not systematically translated into English.

Warren S. Wooster, Associate Research Oceanographer, queried leaders in the field in connection with an English translation of several hitherto unavailable papers from the Transactions of the Institute of Oceanology of the Russian Academy of Sciences. They dealt with work in the Kurile-Kamchatka Trench area, a Pacific Ocean region little known to U. S. oceanographers.

Eighty-five percent of the oceanographers who received the translations believed that systematic translation of the principal Russian oceanographic journals was desirable. The rest also thought translations would be useful, but that a policy of selective translation the best.

Russian oceanographic work is known to American scientists not only through occasional translations of Russian papers, but also by visits and by speeches given at various meetings. American oceanographic journals are readily available to the Russians, and Russian visitors show considerable knowledge of recent developments in the field here.

Wooster is at present seeking methods of establishing a permanent translation program for oceanographers. His experimental translation program received support from the Office of Naval Research.