



by Sarah Zierul

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Non-Fiction

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## Scramble for the Deep Sea

### *Kampf um die Tiefsee*

#### review

The subject of deep-sea exploration and exploitation could not be more topical, and this important new book by an award-winning documentary film-maker succeeds in bringing their implications to the attention of a public that is largely uninformed about the corporate and governmental activities currently taking place in the oceans.

Zierul interviewed not only leading scientific figures from various fields, but also members of the oil corporations; she was able to participate in international scientific expeditions and visit floating oil rigs. Zierul is thus able to portray both the concerns of the scientific community and the marketled priorities of the corporations, but also to point out the interdependency of the two groups: the corporations are reliant on scientific research for their operations; scientists are reliant on the corporate world for funding, and for access to certain sites of interest.

We witness the launch of a new remote-controlled robot off the coast of New Zealand, capable of withstanding conditions at 6,000 metres below the ocean's surface and therefore able to obtain video footage and to collect geological samples, including gold, silver, copper and zinc.

We discover details of the decade-long Census of Marine Life which is coming to an official close this year, with its extraordinary number of newly found marine species. We visit floating drilling stations off the coast of Angola, and consider whether the oil companies have any interest in the environmental consequences of their activities or

whether the wealth garnered by the Angolan government from the sale of their waters shows any sign of trickling down to the general population. We look at nation states scrambling to claim marine territory and the resulting geopolitical tensions. We hear the concerns of marine biologists fighting for legislation to enforce fallow spaces in the ocean. We also learn that some corporate groups are keen to see deepsea ecosystems preserved – the cosmetics industry sees a potential source of ingredients at the bottom of the sea, for example, and the chemical industry is interested in the organic plastics that might be created with deep-sea microbes.

*Scramble for the Deep Sea* is a fascinating and wellresearched introduction to the commercial and scientific value of the deep sea; it weaves a history of deep-sea exploration with an exposé of contemporary geopolitical issues and informs without being didactic or overly partisan.

## press quotes

*'We still have the chance to learn from our mistakes – from mistakes that have already been made. The disaster in the Gulf of Mexico should be warning enough.'* – Sarah Zierul, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*

*'A breathtaking scientific thriller – an extremely well-researched, authentic round-the-world trip [...] Tremendously gripping as well as critical, it opens the reader up to a newcosmos, to a whole new world-view.'* – *Deutschlandradio Kultur*

*'The new Gold Rush is taking place on the sea bed... In her non-fiction thriller, Zierul sets off on the heels of these international treasure-seekers, describing a global adventure with an unknown ending.'* – *Stern*

## about the author

**Sarah Zierul** was born in Düsseldorf in 1978. Since 2002 she has been working as a writer and producer of television documentaries. She studied Politics and Theatre, Film and Television in Cologne and Malaga and worked as a trainee with NDR in Hamburg. She now lives in Berlin und Cologne and works on scientific films, cultural programmes and political documentaries for WDR, NDR, ZDF and

Arte. She made several award-winning films on the deep sea before beginning to record her experiences in this book.

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