

R/V Polarstern – a floating large scale laboratory



The most important tool in Germany's polar research program is Polarstern, a research and supply vessel.

Application for projects

The present schedule for *Polarstern* cruises lasts until summer 2014. A new call for proposals occurred on 9 March 2012. The proposals have to be submitted according to the [guidelines](#) presented on the Website under [submission of proposals](#) until 1 August 2012. The new plan will cover the period from October 2014 to October 2016.

Change of personnel in the scientific coordination of RV Polarstern

At 1 May 2012 the scientific coordination of *Polarstern* was handed over from Dr. Eberhard Fahrbach to Dr. Rainer Knust since Dr. Fahrbach will retire in June 2012. To contact the coordinator, please use email address [polcoord <Polarstern-Coordination\(at\)awi.de>](mailto:polcoord@awi.de).

Discover Polarstern

Where is Polarstern?

Arctic or Antarctic? Tromsø or Cape Town? The cruise track of Polarstern can be followed in almost real time.

[The course plot ...](#)

Current expedition

Chief scientists report frequently about their expedition and latest discoveries.

[To the expedition reports ...](#)

Sound of Polarstern

A piece of polar science at home: [the horn](#)

310 days per year on duty of science

Since the ship was first commissioned on December 9th 1982 Polarstern has completed a total of more than fifty expeditions to the Arctic and Antarctic. It was specially designed for working in the polar seas and is currently one of the most sophisticated polar research vessels in the world. Polarstern is in the possession of the Federal Republic of Germany, represented by the Ministry of Education and Research, operated by the Alfred Wegener Institute for Polar and Marine Research in the Helmholtz Association, and managed by the shipping company Laeisz.

The Polarstern spends almost 310 days a year at sea. Between November and March it usually sails to and around the waters of the Antarctic, while the northern summer months are spent in Arctic waters.

The ship is equipped for biological, geological, geophysical, glaciological, chemical, oceanographic and meteorological research, and contains nine research laboratories. Additional laboratory containers may be stowed on and below deck. Refrigerated rooms and aquaria permit the transport of samples and living marine fauna.

Research equipment and measuring instruments are positioned with the help of cranes and winches, sometimes at extreme depths. Special sounding devices with depth ranges up to 10,000 metres and which can penetrate up to 150 metres into the sea floor are available for scientific investigations. The computer system on board continuously captures and stores meteorological, oceanographic and other data as required.

The ship has a crew of at most 44, and offers work facilities for a further 50 scientists and technicians.

[The technical data ...](#)

