

# Fishery survey ship nearly ready to sail

China's first oceangoing fishery survey ship, Song Hang, will be fully operational by mid-November and will finish its first survey mission by early December, a senior marine scientist said on Wednesday.



Song Hang, China's first oceangoing fishery survey ship, sails toward Shanghai's Luchao Port on Monday. [Photo provided to China Daily]

The Ministry of Agriculture and the Shanghai government invested about 250 million yuan (\$37.7 million) to build the ship. After two years of construction, it arrived at Luchao Port in Shanghai on Monday, according to Shanghai Ocean University.

The vessel is named after the university's first training ship, which was built in 1916 but sunk by Japan during World War II. It weighs 3,166 metric tons, is 85 meters long and has a top speed of 15 knots. It is capable of a 60-day voyage of 10,000 nautical miles (18,520 kilometers) with 59 crew members.

Its primary mission is to survey fishery resources in the open sea far beyond the coastal region, said Chen Xinjun, the president of the university's College of Marine Sciences.

The ship will operate in the northern and southeastern Pacific Ocean, as well as in the southwestern Atlantic and other seas, he said. It will search for tuna, squid, mackerel, Antarctic krill and other species.

“The ship will improve our nation’s control and management over its ocean fishery resources, collect more robust maritime scientific data and protect our maritime interests,” he said.

China’s far-ocean fishing operations began three decades ago, but the production of related goods was only 1.3 percent of the world’s total because of technological limitations, he added.

“The new ship adds capabilities for distant sea operations,” he said. “It has great significance in tapping into China’s ocean fishery resources, protecting ocean ecology and transforming China into a maritime power.”

Song Hang is also equipped with five laboratories for maritime research ranging from maritime biodiversity to climate and water surveys. It can collect biological samples, survey the sea floor and monitor weather and hydrologic patterns, Chen said.

“It will be a platform to train more highly talented people in fisheries,” he said, and for Chinese and foreign scientists to conduct various maritime research. He said the ship will be managed entirely by the university.

The vessel is now undergoing final setup of its fishing and research systems. It will complete a trial voyage and be fully operational by mid-November, Chen said. It is expected to begin its first ocean fishery resource survey mission – commissioned by the Shanghai government – around late November, and complete it by early December.