Snow Dragon to assess acidification of Arctic Ocean

Members of China's research team set up an ocean profiling float at a short-term data acquisition location near the icebreaker Xuelong, or Snow Dragon, in the Arctic Ocean, Aug 18, 2016. [Photo/Xinhua]

The Chinese icebreaker Xuelong, or Snow Dragon, will set sail on Thursday for a research mission to discover the extent of acidification in the Arctic Ocean.

It is internationally acknowledged that acidification – mainly caused by carbon dioxide emissions into the sea – is rising in the ocean and already covers a larger area, according to Xu Ren, deputy director of the Polar Research Institute of China.

"It may trigger environmental disasters and affect marine biodiversity," he said at a media briefing on Tuesday. "Ocean acidification is a major issue facing the international community, along with global warming and marine pollution.

"Although the situation in the Arctic Ocean is not as bad as other oceans, it will deteriorate with global warming and the decrease of sea ice in the Arctic," added Xu, who is team leader of this year's 83-day expedition.

China has pledged to conduct an annual Arctic expedition to make long-term and systematic scientific observations, and strengthen its position on the world stage regarding international governance of the Arctic region.