



China is launching the world's first AI-powered sea-borne drone carrier | Photo source [An AI-powered sea-borne drone carrier](#)

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AUTONOMOUS RESEARCH SHIP CARRIES FLEET OF MARINE OBSERVATION DRONES

 MOBILITY & TRANSPORT

The ship is currently being tested on open water before fully launching at the end of the year

Spotted: The oceans are a powerful force, and those that work on the seas take care to understand and mitigate the inherent dangers. A new method for keeping researchers safe while expanding maritime knowledge comes from China's State Shipbuilding Corporation. Called the Zhu Hai Hun, a new autonomous vessel serves as the mothership for a fleet of intelligent, self-driven air, surface, and underwater research drones.

The ship can be remotely controlled and manages complex tasks involving deployment of a range of other autonomous vehicles. The vessel uses artificial intelligence to communicate with the network of working drones, and the vehicles can contribute together to a single large research task.

Built by the Huangpu Wenchong Shipyard and named after the city of Zhuhai, the ship is 88.5 metres long and can travel at a top speed of 18 knots. Unmanned maritime research projects can help reduce intrusion to the areas being studied and work longer, more inhospitable hours. Scientists are currently testing the ship's systems in anticipation of fully launching the working vessel by the end of 2022.

Other recent research automation innovations spotted by Springwise include [a dam being built entirely by robots](#), [drones for middle-mile delivery](#), and [autonomous robots that reduce errors at the start of construction projects](#).

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Takeaway:

Much remains to be studied in the world's oceans, and continued environmental damage is hastening the need for baseline data from which to track changes. Projects such as this that expand global research capabilities could provide a substantial boost to conservation efforts while also promoting the usefulness of international science collaborations. Researchers **acknowledge** the benefits of such partnerships while also highlighting the need for discussions around data sharing and tensions between national and international interests.