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### **MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **RELEASE OF SEA SHEPHERD INTRUDERS**

Since the night of the 15<sup>th</sup> of January (Antarctic time), the Institute of Cetacean Research in Tokyo has been attempting to contact the Sea Shepherd vessel, the Steve Irwin, to return the intruders to their group.

Mr Minoru Morimoto said today that transfer must be done in a manner that ensures the safety and protection of the crew and scientists aboard the Yushin Maru No.2, and therefore the ICR has prescribed the conditions for the handover.

During the handover, the Steve Irwin must remain at least 10 nautical miles away from the Japanese vessels. The men are to be transported using the same method for their illegal boarding – by zodiac boat.

The Steve Irwin must remain in a static position as instructed and the helicopter is to remain on deck of that vessel during the handover.

The decision to return the men is without prejudice to follow-up legal action that might be taken by the ICR or another Japanese organisation in relation to the men's illegal boarding of the Japanese flagged vessels.

Mr Morimoto said that while efforts have been taken for the last two days to communicate with the Steve Irwin through the ICR in Tokyo, Sea Shepherd has yet to formally respond to us. The organisation has, however, distributed to media false and misleading information on these conditions and is misrepresenting the ICR letter.

“The transfer of the two intruders can only be done in the manner as prescribed by the ICR and which is designed to secure the safety of our crew and research vessels. The protection of the Japanese crew is paramount, and Sea Shepherd must agree not to conduct harassment activity while this is being carried out,” Mr Morimoto said.

ENDS

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