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MEDIA RELEASE

26 June 2008 – IWC 60, Santiago, Chile

DECISIVE ACTION REQUIRED TO PROTECT SEAFARERS

The Institute of Cetacean Research (ICR) said today that IWC member states should actually take demonstrable action in maintaining the safety of lives at sea.

“The IWC resolution on safety at sea must be followed up with decisive action – especially by the country providing the flag that allows Sea Shepherd vessels to commit illegal and life-endangering actions in the Antarctic,” said Mr Minoru Morimoto, the Director General of the ICR.

“All flag and port states must take responsibility for enforcing international safety regulations and demonstrate tangible results to ensure the safety of workers at sea. For example, flag states should decline to register any Sea Shepherd vessels and, in addition, port states must deny access to ports when they are used by these groups to launch violent attacks in the Antarctic.

“Furthermore, countries in which these organisations are headquartered, and from where their members conspire to carry out criminal acts, must bring these perpetrators to justice,” Mr Morimoto said.

“The ICR supports the rights of people to peacefully protest. However, it has been clearly demonstrated over years that the actions of Sea Shepherd are far beyond peaceful. Over the 2007/2008 research season in the Antarctic, the ICR was required to defend its research vessels against increasingly violent attacks.

“In the absence of these flag and port states taking responsibility, the ICR supports initiatives by the Government of Japan to protect its vessels by all means possible,” Mr Morimoto said.

Evidence of these attacks by the group is documented on the ICR website:

<http://www.icrwhale.org/eng-index.htm>

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