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MEDIA RELEASE

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Flagless ship attacking with illegal weapon

The Nisshin Maru research vessel working for Japan's Antarctic whale research program (JARPA II) was subjected today to an illegal high-power green laser photonic disruptor attack by the flagless ship, the Bob Barker.

The photonic disruptor fired by the Bob Barker is an illegal weapon that can cause flash-blindness and could cause more permanent damage to the human eye including retinal burns.

The now flagless Bob Barker had stopped following the Nisshin Maru and disappeared from the scene on the 16 February evening but rejoined the Dutch ship the Steve Irwin on the 19 February evening. Since February 20 both ships have been repeatedly approaching the Nisshin Maru to near miss distance.

On the 21 February the Nisshin Maru reached the Antarctic pack ice area.

At about 17:30hrs JST February 21 (2130hrs NZDT February 18; 1930hrs AEDT), the Bob Barker approached to near miss distance firing repeatedly an illegal green laser weapon to the Nisshin Maru crew while the Steve Irwin helicopter filmed the scene from the air.

There was no damage to the Nisshin Maru nor were there injuries to its crew.

The Institute of Cetacean Research strongly condemns Sea Shepherd's dangerous and violent actions carried out against Japan's whale research vessels and crews who are conducting perfectly legal research activities in the Antarctic.

The ICR urges again the Netherlands (the Steve Irwin's flag state), Australia (the de facto home port country to the Steve Irwin), and all other related countries to take every means available to prevent the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society illegal and violent actions.

The ICR strongly requests that these countries observe their international obligations and deal with the Sea Shepherd in a strict and objective manner.

Photographs and video of the incidents in the Antarctic can be seen at:
<http://www.icrwhale.org/gpandsea.htm>

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