



MEDIA RELEASE

6 February 2009

DUTCH VESSEL RAMS JAPANESE RESEARCH SHIP

Violence perpetrated by the Dutch vessel, the Steve Irwin, in the Antarctic continued for a second day, with the deliberate ramming of the Japanese vessel, Yushin Maru No.2.

The Steve Irwin attempted to stop the transfer of a minke whale onto the Nisshin Maru.

“Just after the second whale was being transferred to the Nisshin Maru, the Dutch vessel came forward and rammed the Yushin Maru No.2 at the stern. While no-one was injured, the circumstances could have been much worse, even fatal,” said Mr Minoru Morimoto, the Director General of the Institute of Cetacean Research.

After the ramming, crew from the Steve Irwin threw bottles containing acid at the Yushin Maru No.2 and the Nisshin Maru. Most of the bottles just ended up in the Antarctic waters.

Today’s incident comes after an orchestrated illegal attack on the Japanese research vessels yesterday when the Sea Shepherd crew attempted to entangle the propellers of the Japanese vessels. The Dutch vessel also launched a projectile attack firing repeatedly what seemed to be signal flares towards the Yushin Maru and the Yushin Maru No. 2.

The Nisshin Maru is the research platform where Japanese researchers take more than 100 kinds of biological data and samples from each whale carcass which are used for studies of the role of whales in the Antarctic ecosystem.

Photographs and video of the incidents in the Antarctic can be seen at:

<http://www.icrwhale.org/gpandsea-img.htm>

PHOTO CAPTION: Researchers take more than 100 kinds of biological data and samples from each whale carcass from a minke whale aboard the Nisshin Maru in the Antarctic. Photo: Institute of Cetacean Research.



ENDS