

MEDIA RELEASE

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Steve Irwin activists attempt to sabotage Japanese research vessel Yushin Maru No. 2

On January 18 the Yushin Maru No. 2 (YS2) Antarctic whale research (JARPAII) vessel was subjected to attack by the Sea Shepherd (SS) ship Steve Irwin (SI). The attack lasted from around 0010 to 0200JST.

Around 0010JST Sea Shepherd activists aboard two rubber boats sent from the SI approached the YS2 and, aiming to disable the Japanese vessel rudder and propeller, deployed 6 ropes and wires just in front of the YS2 bow. Two of the deployed ropes had iron weights attached to both ends. Further, the SS activists threw ropes with hooks attached to their ends several times toward the YS2 protective nets. In addition, directly aiming to the YS2 crew, the activists threw at least 30 paint-containing glass bottles.

In addition to that, coming alongside the YS2 brandishing a knife, the activists cut the fixing rope of one of the intruder-prevention protective float fenders.

During the attack the YS2 besides making use of its water pump as a preventive measure to make SS activists desist from further approaching, made efforts to retrieve the deployed ropes before they reached the propeller. Further, when the activists started using a knife to cut the YS2 float fender rope, the Japanese vessel crew used bamboo poles as a measure to push the boat back.

There were no injuries to the Japanese crew although two crewmen got paint spilled from the bottle projectiles onto their bodies. Up to the present, damage to the YS2 from the activists' attack has not been confirmed although one of the intruder-prevention float fenders set on the YS2 bow was taken away by the SS activists.

The Institute of Cetacean Research strongly condemns the Sea Shepherd and its continued dangerous and violent actions perpetrated against the integrity of Japan's whale research vessels and crews. Their illegal intrusion attempt and their destruction and stealing of property is tantamount to piracy and should not be condoned.

Japan's research whaling in the Antarctic (JARPAII) is a perfectly legal activity carried out under the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW). Once again, we call on all related countries including the Netherlands which is the SI flag state and Australia which is the home port of the SS vessels to take every measure available to restrain them and deal with their criminal actions in a strict and objective manner according to their international and domestic obligations.



Sea Shepherd activist holding a knife (on the right hand) in front of the Yushin Maru No. 2's crews.



Sea Shepherd activists deploy a rope in front of the Yushin Maru No. 2 bow. The rope had wire entwined and iron weights attached to its ends.