

MEDIA RELEASE

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Steve Irwin activists attack Japanese research vessel Yushin Maru No. 2

On February 12 the Yushin Maru No.2 (YS2), an Antarctic whale research (JARPAII) vessel was subjected to attack by the Sea Shepherd (SS) ship Steve Irwin (SI). The attack lasted from around 0720 to 0950JST and follows similar aggression perpetrated the previous day.

Around 0720JST SS activists aboard two rubber boats sent from the SI approached the YS2 and, aiming to disable the Japanese vessel rudder and propeller, repeatedly deployed ropes 9 times just in front of the YS2's bow. The deployed ropes were fitted with buoys, metal pipes and wires. In addition, the activists threw by hand 5 smoke bombs and about 21 glass bottles containing paint or butyric acid toward the YS2.

During the attack the YS2 besides making use of its water pump as a preventive measure to make SS activists desist from further approaching, repeatedly broadcasted a warning message to stop their attack. Further, in order to secure her own safety, the YS2 towed from its stern a rope with keep-your-distance-warning buoys thus containing the rubber boats' closing in, but for the second time the rope was cut off with a large knife by one of the activists.

There were no injuries to the Japanese crew from this attack although some of the butyric acid bottles hit the YS2, and a rope (or ropes) entangled on the YS2's propeller.

Even though there is some hindrance to the YS2's navigation as result of the propeller fouler attack perpetrated yesterday and today by the SS, the Japanese vessel still continues monitoring the SI's movements.

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). The Institute of Cetacean Research strongly condemns the SS and its continued imprudent and violent actions perpetrated day after day against the integrity and safety of Japan's whale research vessels and crews. Over and over again, we call on all related countries including the Netherlands which is the SI's flag State, New Zealand and Australia which are the port States of SS vessels to take every measure available to restrain them and deal with their criminal actions in a strict and objective manner.

NOTE: Photos to be attributed to the INSTITUTE OF CETACEAN RESEARCH, TOKYO JAPAN. (<http://www.icrwhale.org/gpandsea.html>)