

MEDIA RELEASE

11 February 2012

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

On February 11 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 1420 to 1700JST.

Around 1420JST 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 more than 7 times just in front of the YS2's bow. Further, using an air gun, an activist fired several dozens of projectiles containing an irritant chemical. In addition, a jet-ski and a third rubber boat joined the two other boats and the activists threw by hand several dozens of smoke bombs, butyric acid-containing glass bottles and paint-containing glass bottles 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 the rope was cut off by activists.

There were no injuries to the Japanese crew from this attack although some of the butyric acid and paint projectile bottles hit the YS2, and several ropes entangled on the YS2's propeller.

At present the YS2 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 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 is the port State 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>)