

# SEA SHEPHERD'S VIOLENT HISTORY

**1977:** Founding member of Greenpeace, Paul Watson, expelled from the organisation after a campaign against sealing during which he threw the sealers' clubs and skins into the sea.

**1977:** Watson establishes Sea Shepherd organisation. States that Sea Shepherd is not a protest organization. "We are [a] self-appointed policing organization given credibility by the terms of the United Nations Earth Charter of 1982."

**1978:** Watson admits to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) programme *As It Happens* that his work is aimed at raising funds for his organisation, Sea Shepherd.

Watson: "You see, the seal is very easy to exploit as an image. We have posters, we have buttons; we have shirts ... all of which portray the head of the baby seal with tears coming out of its eyes. Baby seals are always crying because the salt tears keep their eyes from freezing. But they have this image of ... they are baby animals; they are beautiful. And because of that, coupled with the horror of the sealer hitting them over the head with a club, it is an image which just goes right to the heart of animal lovers all over North America."

**1979:** A Sea Shepherd vessel rams the whaling vessel "Sierra", causing considerable damage. "Sierra" survives attack.

**1980:** The IWC at its meeting in Brighton, United Kingdom, assigns high-level protection to two Canadian Government delegates after Watson threatened to kill them for voting against a moratorium on sperm whales. Delegates given Royal Canadian Mounted Police protection until their return home to Canada.

**1980:** The "Sierra" is sunk in Lisbon harbour. Sea Shepherd claims responsibility. Investigation shows limpet mines used to blow up the vessel.

**1981:** Sea Shepherd claims responsibility for the sinking of the two whaling vessels, Ibsa I and Ibsa II, in the Spanish harbour of Viga.

**1983:** Paul Watson and "Sea Shepherd" vessel engineer Paul Pezwick, tried and convicted in a Quebec, Canada, court for "interfering in the annual seal hunt in the Gulf of St. Lawrence". Trial followed arrest in March 1983 when "Sea Shepherd" vessel boarded by Canadian police. "Sea Shepherd" fortified including electric barbed wire around the deck's edges. Seventeen crew arrested. Watson and three others flee across ice to Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, but caught and arrested. Watson charged additionally with piloting a ship in a dangerous manner, intimidation of the sealers and being unlawfully within a half mile of the seal hunt – a violation of the Seal Protection Regulations. Watson sentenced to 15 months imprisonment.

**1983:** In retaliation for Watson's arrest by Canadian police, animal rights extremists slash car tires and spray paint slogans on walls of buildings in the inner city of Quebec. "Fisheries Murder Seals" and "Set Paul Watson Free" slogans spray painted on the Department of Fisheries and Oceans offices in Keele Street. Animal Liberation Front delivers letter to the Quebec Star newspaper admitting causing several thousand dollars worth of damage to the Department's Keele Street offices.

**1986:** Sea Shepherd attempts to stop Faroe Islands pilot whale harvest. Using rifles, Sea Shepherd activists shoot at Faroe Islands police in an attempt to sink their rubber dinghies. The vessel "Sea Shepherd" was ordered to leave Faroese territorial waters. The police report of 7 October 1986 states: "One of the rubber dinghies was attacked directly by a "Speed Line" line rifle. The attack ... endangered the lives of the police crewmembers ... and signal flares containing phosphorous was thrown at the police. At a later stage the Sea Shepherd used "toads" (rotating iron spikes, pointed and sharp at both ends) against the rubber dinghies ... petrol was poured over the side of the ship and signal flares were thrown from the "Sea Shepherd" in an attempt to set the petrol on fire."

**1986:** Sea Shepherd claims responsibility for the sinking of two whaling vessels in Reykjavik, Iceland, and for malicious damage to a whaling station. (This act of violence was carried out after Iceland stopped whaling in line with the IWC moratorium on commercial whaling.) Attack carried out by Sea Shepherd members Rodney A. Coronado and David Howitt. (Coronado linked to Animal Liberation Front and arrested eight years later by United States FBI for his part in an ALF attack on Michigan State University research laboratory. Charges included use of an explosive device, theft and arson.)

**1988:** Paul Watson returns in Iceland demanding to be held responsible for the sinking of the whaling vessels in Reykjavik in 1986. (He is arrested and held for questioning and told he could face several years' imprisonment. In a press release, the Icelandic Ministry of Justice stated: "At questioning, Paul Watson has admitted that he has given some remarks that connect him with the sabotage, but in spite of this he now claims that he neither took part in the planning nor the execution of the sabotage.") There was no evidence incriminating Watson. He was ordered to leave the country and declared *persona non grata* in Iceland.

**1991:** A US crew member on a Mexican fishing vessel, reports that Sea Shepherd, some of whose crew were armed with rifles, rammed his vessel causing considerable damage.

**1991:** Scott Trimmingham, president of Sea Shepherd quits in protest. "We had rules about not hurting anyone, about not using weapons. I left because those rules and that philosophy seems to be changing." *Outside* magazine (Sept. 1991). Paul Watson admits there are arms on board "Sea Shepherd". "We confront dangerous people. As the captain, it is my responsibility to protect the lives of my crew ... Therefore, I have prepared myself for the possibility of defending my crew in a situation that could go never occur, but if it does I will use firearms to first intimidate and then to defend," Watson tells the *Los Angeles Free Weekly* (April 24, 1992).

**1992:** Sea Shepherd makes unsuccessful attempts at ramming three Costa Rican fishing vessels. In a written complaint to the local authorities the fishermen report that the Sea Shepherd crew shot at them with bullets containing a red substance, hitting two of them and causing them great pain.

**1992:** Sea Shepherd makes unsuccessful attempt at scuttling the whaling and fishing vessel "Nybræna" at her moorings in the Lofoten Islands, northern Norway. Attack committed by Paul Watson, girlfriend Lisa DiStefano and one other Sea Shepherd member. Watson later states: "The scuttling of the Nybræna was not a terrorist or criminal act. We were responsible for removing an instrument of death and destruction without causing death or injury." Charges laid against Watson, who fails to turn up in court. Watson convicted in absentia and sentenced to 120 days in prison.

**1992:** Sea Shepherd vessel "Whales Forever" collides with Norwegian Coast Guard vessel "Andenes" on July 4. Charges against Paul Watson include negligent navigation, refusal to leave

Norwegian waters on orders of the Coast Guard and transmitting false distress signals. (Tape supplied)

**1993:** Paul Watson orders the crew on board the Sea Shepherd vessel “Edward Abbey” (formerly US Navy) to open cannon fire at a Japanese fishing vessel. Sea Shepherd crew do not carry out the order, but instead fire a shot across the bow of the Japanese vessel. The Japanese vessel does not stop. (Recorded by Yorkshire Television Documentary “*Defenders of the Wild – Ocean Rider*”.)

**1993:** Paul Watson claims in an open letter to the people of Norway that Sea Shepherd has sunk eight ships and rammed and damaged a further six vessels. In the same letter, he states: “The Sea Shepherd Conservation Society is a law abiding organization. We rigidly adhere to and respect the laws of nature or *lex natura*. We hold the position that the laws of ecology take precedence over the laws designed by nation states to protect corporate interests ... the smell of guilt is already a stench in the nostrils of God.”

**1993:** Federal Grand Jury in Michigan State hands down five-count indictment against Coronado for illegal use of explosives, extortion, threats to interfere with interstate commerce and interstate transportation, to commit arson, theft and destruction of government property and for receiving stolen property. Indictments stem from February 1992 fire-bombing of Michigan State University in East Lansing. Coronado involved in sinking two whaling vessels in Iceland in 1986.

**1994:** Sea Shepherd claims responsibility for the unsuccessful attempt at scuttling the combined minke whaling and fishing vessel “Senet” at her moorings in Gressvik. The vessel was salvaged, but the water had caused considerable damage. Paul Watson tells Norwegian newspaper *Dagbladet* on January 26 that former US navy “Seal” commandos took part in attack on the Senet. “Certainly these men are trained to kill, but they are also well disciplined and respect my orders,” he told the newspaper.

**1994:** Sea Shepherd loses observer status at the International Whaling Commission. IWC Secretary, Ray Gambell, declares that the IWC and all its member states ardently condemn Sea Shepherd’s acts of terrorism.

**1994:** US National Fisheries Institute asks for investigation into Sea Shepherd. “The recent alleged actions against Norwegian fishing vessels constitute a clear case of piracy,” it says in a letter to former US IWC Commissioner James Baker. “Acts of violence against fishermen of any nation cannot be tolerated. Their safety and livelihood could be threatened unless US officials vigorously condemn violence on the high seas.”

**1997:** Paul Watson arrested at Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam, Netherlands, for the 1992 attempted scuttling of the Norwegian combined whaling and fishing vessel “Nybræna”. Arrested by Dutch police after Interpol issues warrant. Serves 80 days in prison in the Netherlands, the equivalent of the necessary two-thirds of the 120-day prison sentence handed down by Norway.

**2000:** Watson campaigns against the Makah people of Northwest United States. He uses intimidation to prevent the Makah from carrying out their IWC approved catch of the gray whale.

**2002:** Watson tells Animal Rights 2002 Conference in Washington DC that if a person dies from one of his actions, he would consider it “collateral damage”. He believes it is not possible to “commit violence against non-sentient objects. Property damage is not violence.”

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