



THE INSTITUTE OF CETACEAN RESEARCH

4-5 TOYOMI-CHO, CHUO-KU, TOKYO 104-0055 JAPAN

PHONE: +81-3-3536-6521 FAX: +81-3536-6522

MEDIA RELEASE

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New Zealand watercraft attacks Japanese ship Shonan Maru No. 2

The Japanese research vessel Shonan Maru No. 2, which has been monitoring the Dutch-registered vessel Steve Irwin activities in the Antarctic was subject to attack today by the New Zealand-registered watercraft Ady Gil. The attack started at about 0030 JST and lasted about three hours and a half.

The New Zealand watercraft came to collision distance directly in front of the Shonan Maru No. 2 bow towing a rope from its stern with the intent to entangle the Japanese vessel's rudder and propeller. The activists onboard the Ady Gil repeatedly irradiated a green laser device aiming at the Shonan Maru No. 2 crew and fired ball-like objects with a projectile launching device. Neither injuries to the Japanese crew nor damage to the Shonan Maru No. 2 resulted from the Ady Gil attack.

The Steve Irwin did not participate in the attack but tried to sneak away from the scene. At about 0400 JST the Ady Gil stopped, apparently having developed trouble, and suspended its attack. The Shonan Maru No. 2 continues to follow and monitor the Steve Irwin activities.

The attack by the Ady Gil surpasses in viciousness past interference and violent harassment by the Steve Irwin. The Ady Gil clung around the Shonan Maru No. 2 at high speed in disregard of the danger of collision, and the closest approach distance was only 20 meters. In addition, their irradiating a green laser device and their firing of projectiles aiming directly to the Shonan Maru No. 2 crew are flagrant unlawful acts.

The Institute of Cetacean Research strongly condemns the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society dangerous and violent actions against Japan's whale research vessels in the Antarctic carried out in contempt of the IWC consensus criticism and demand for self-restraint.

In addition, we strongly urge New Zealand, the Ady Gil's flag state, and the Netherlands, the Steve Irwin's flag state, to immediately take the appropriate measures against their flagships. We also strongly urge to Australia, and New Zealand, the respective home port countries of the Steve Irwin and the Ady Gil to apply every means available to restraint the violent actions by the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society and strongly request that they deal with their criminal actions in a strict and objective manner.

Photographs and video of the incidents in the Antarctic can be seen at:
<http://www.icrwhale.org/gpandsea-img.htm>

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