

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

The Institute of Cetacean Research / Kyodo Senpaku Kaisha

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Safety at Sea lawsuit against SSCS and Paul Watson

Today, Kyodo Senpaku Kaisha and the Institute of Cetacean Research along with research vessels' Masters filed a lawsuit against the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society (SSCS) and Paul Watson in the United States.

The Institute of Cetacean Research and Kyodo Senpaku are seeking a court order in the U.S. District Court in Seattle, Washington that prevents SSCS and its founder Paul Watson from engaging in activities at sea that could cause injuries to the crews and damage to the vessels. SSCS is based in Friday Harbor, Washington State on the United States Pacific Coast.

Japan's whale research program in the Antarctic (JARPA II) is a legitimate program conducted since 2005/2006 under Special Permits granted by the government of Japan under Article 8 of the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling, and is greatly contributing to the advancement of scientific knowledge of whale resources in the Antarctic.

Sabotage activities against the research fleet by SSCS and Paul Watson have been escalating over several years. Their actions are dangerous, life threatening and contrary to International Law including the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (SUA Convention) as well as to Resolution MSC 303(87) adopted by the Maritime Safety Committee of the International Maritime Organization and Resolutions passed by the International Whaling Commission.

The activities perpetrated by SSCS and Paul Watson not only put at risk the safety of the research vessels at sea but are also affecting the scientific achievement of the JARPA II research program and therefore cannot be overlooked. Despite tremendous efforts we have paid to prevent these sabotage activities, they have not stopped, rather, being escalating as described above. Therefore, we have proceeded with filing a complaint to the United States District Court in Washington State where SSCS is based, in order to protect the lives of crews and safety of vessels engaging in JARPA II.

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