

MEDIA RELEASE

22 February 2012

Steve Irwin activists attack Japanese research vessel Yushin Maru No. 3

On February 22 the Yushin Maru No. 3 (YS3), an Antarctic whale research (JARPAII) vessel was subjected to yet another attack by the Sea Shepherd (SS) ship Steve Irwin (SI). The attack lasted from around 1125 to 1610 JST.

Around 1125 JST SS activists aboard three rubber boats sent from the SI came toward the YS3 and, aiming to disable the Japanese vessel rudder and propeller, repeatedly deployed ropes 12 times just in front of the YS3's bow. The YS3 retrieved 3 of the deployed ropes.

In addition, the SS activists threw by hand an incendiary device and multiple smoke bombs, glass bottles containing paint or butyric acid toward the YS3. They also fired many paint-ball projectiles using air guns. Among these, eight smoke bombs, two butyric acid bottles, 26 paint bottles and more than 50 paint ball projectiles hit the YS3.

One YS3 crewman was hit by butyric acid spilled when one of the glass bottles broke on impact in the YS3 deck. As it was dealt quickly, no burn injury or swelling was observed. Rope(s) deployed by the SS boats entangled the propeller of the YS3, but it can still navigate.

During the attack the YS3 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.

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. Once again, we call on all related countries including the Netherlands which is the SI's flag state, Australia and New Zealand 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 and video to be attributed to the INSTITUTE OF CETACEAN RESEARCH, TOKYO, JAPAN. (<http://www.icrwhale.org/gpansea/html>)