



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

15 February 2007

UPDATE: NISSHIN MARU FIRE

A fire broke out on the whale research vessel Nisshin Maru in the Antarctic during the early hours of Thursday 15 February (New Zealand Standard Time). One crew member has gone missing.

The Director-General of the Institute of Cetacean Research, which carries out Japan's research whaling in the Antarctic, said today: "It is our priority at this stage to locate the missing sailor. We are unsure whether he is still on board the Nisshin Maru or whether something happened during the evacuation of the vessel."

Most of crew and scientists on board were evacuated onto other vessels accompanying the Nisshin Maru while around 30 people remained on board to extinguish the fire.

At this stage, the cause of the fire is unknown. Further investigation should reveal the cause.

The crew and scientists were evacuated as a safety precaution.

Damage assessments are currently being carried out.

Dr Hatanaka said a decision on continuing with the research programme will be made once the assessment has been completed.

An update will be provided when more information comes available.

ENDS

For further information contact ICR spokespeople:

Glenn Inwood +64 21 498 010

Gabriel Gomez +81 3 3536 8227