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MEDIA RELEASE

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SEA SHEPHERD CRITICIZED BY WHALING COMMISSION

The international community has condemned the illegal acts committed by the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society against Japan's whale research program in the Antarctic.

The Institute of Cetacean Research (ICR) welcomes the International Whaling Commission's condemnation of Sea Shepherd, as well as the IWC's call that port states and the flag state of the Sea Shepherd vessel "Steve Irwin" take legal action against the organization.

The ICR's Director General Mr Minoru Morimoto said all members of the IWC, including Australia, which is acting as the port state of Sea Shepherd, and the Netherlands, which has given the "Steve Irwin" legal recognition under international maritime rules, have rejected the organization's illegal acts.

"We welcome the fact that Australia and the Netherlands joined in unanimous rejection of Sea Shepherd's anti-whaling methods and now expect the two IWC member nations to match their concerns with concerted action," he said.

"The international community has called on Sea Shepherd to leave the Antarctic, allow Japan's legal research to continue without harassment, and importantly the IWC is asking the port state of Australia and the flag state of the Netherlands to take the strongest action against the group," Mr Morimoto said.

The agreed statement by the IWC urged IWC member governments to take every action under international and national laws and regulations and to work together to prevent Sea Shepherd's continued dangerous actions that risk human life and property at sea.

"It is up to Sea Shepherd and its cult leader Paul Watson to decide whether they will give effect to the requests of the international community or whether they will continue to act illegally under the wrong illusion they are enforcing the law."

"Japan's research has been commended by the IWC Scientific Committee, it is perfectly legal and will continue," Mr Morimoto said.

Sea Shepherd has been rejected since 1987 from attending any IWC meeting because of threats to individuals and various delegations.

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