



## 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**

17 December 2009

### **Dutch vessel attacks Japanese ship Shonan Maru No. 2**

The Shonan Maru No. 2, a Japanese Antarctic whale research vessel was subject to attack today by the Dutch anti-whaling vessel Steve Irwin. The attack started at about 1500 JST and lasted about two hours.

The Shonan Maru No. 2 has been monitoring the Steve Irwin movements in the Antarctic. At past 1500JST a helicopter took off from the Steve Irwin deck and started circling above the Shonan Maru No. 2. After that, the Steve Irwin changed course and started approaching toward the Japanese vessel. To avoid any dangerous actions by the Steve Irwin, the Japanese vessel continued to maintain its pursuit position behind the Steve Irwin. At this time, the Shonan Maru 2 broadcasted a warning message through a long range acoustic device (LRAD). The Japanese vessel also made use of its water cannons as a preventive measure to make the Steve Irwin desist from any further approaching and harassment.

After that, at around 1600JST, the Steve Irwin deployed from its stern a rope with buoys aimed at the propeller and rudder of the Shonan Maru No. 2. Immediately after that, what appeared to be a green laser device was shot from the Steve Irwin deck against the Shonan Maru No. 2. Neither injuries to the Japanese crew nor damage to the Shonan Maru No. 2 resulted from the Steve Irwin attack.

If the green light shot from the Steve Irwin is actually a laser ray device, given that the distance between vessels about 200 meters, one cannot but conclude that it is a high-powered contrivance. Although the manufacturing and sale of high-power laser pointers are regulated domestically, they are readily available overseas and are known to be extremely dangerous as they can produce blindness if irradiated to the naked eye.

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 which has ignored again and again the IWC member countries' criticism and request for self-restraint. In addition, we call on all related nations including the Netherlands which is the Steve Irwin's flag state and Australia which is the virtual home port, to take 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>

ENDS