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MEDIA RELEASE

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Greenpeace labeled “eco-terrorists”

Dr. Seiji Ohsumi, Director General of the Institute of Cetacean Research in Tokyo today referred to Greenpeace as an “eco-terrorist organization” and issued a public statement following the sighting of the Greenpeace vessel *Arctic Sunrise* in the Antarctic where Japanese vessels are conducting the 15th year of their whale research program.

Dr. Ohsumi said:

“Two years ago, the Greenpeace vessel *Arctic Sunrise* went to the Antarctic and attempted to disrupt our research. At that time, the Greenpeace vessel caused a collision with our research ship. Greenpeace activities caused damage to property and included theft of personal property and trespassing.

This was a malicious and reckless threat to the lives and safety of the vessel’s crew and scientists. It was also a serious violation of maritime navigation laws. Japan views the Greenpeace protest against our scientifically valid and perfectly legal research program as eco-terrorism and as a publicity stunt designed to misinform the public and increase the support and financial wealth of its organisation.

Today, our research vessel has sent a message to the *Arctic Sunrise* and Greenpeace warning them that any attempt to bring their vessel or persons into close proximity to our research vessels poses a serious safety risk. We also call on the public and all nations involved in maritime activities including those that also sustainably utilize the ocean’s resources based on scientific findings to condemn any unlawful activity by Greenpeace.

Japan’s research program poses no threat to Antarctic whale stocks. Greenpeace’s criticism of the program is based on emotional reasons, ignores both science and international law and is a rejection of the basic principle that resources should be managed on a scientific basis.

Japan has been very open about its research on Antarctic minke whales in the Southern Ocean – not only with the International Whaling Commission’s Scientific Committee, but also the general public around the world. By continually misrepresenting the science, organizations such as Greenpeace do nothing towards educating and informing the public of the true worth of Japan’s Antarctic minke whale research.

Japan began its whale research program after members of the IWC said that scientific information was insufficient to properly manage the sustainable utilization of whale resources. Since then, Japan’s research program has received strong support from the IWC’s Scientific Committee.

The IWC Scientific Committee has acknowledged that the research has “made a major contribution to understanding of certain biological parameters” and that “the information produced has set the stage for answering many questions about long-term population changes regarding minke whales in the Antarctic.”

This research is particularly important since the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling requires that the IWC’s regulations be based on scientific findings.

Our program continues to make major contributions to understanding the biology of whales in the Antarctic. It involves non-lethal research, including sighting surveys and biopsy sampling, as well as a small take of whales for research that cannot be effectively done by non-lethal means.

This includes examination of earplugs for age determination studies, reproductive organs for examination of maturation, reproductive cycles and reproductive rates, stomachs for analysis of food consumption and blubber thickness as a measure of condition. The number of minke whales taken (440) is the smallest number required to obtain statistically valid results. This take in no way threatens the population, which was estimated by the Scientific Committee of the IWC in 1990 to number 760,000 animals.

Japan would also like to remind Greenpeace that the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling specifically provides that member countries of the IWC may issue permits for research. The research program is legal under international law. Further, the IWC’s Southern Ocean Sanctuary specifically does not apply to research and the Convention requires that the byproducts of the research – the meat – be processed.

The Institute of Cetacean Research advocates sustainable use of abundant species of whales such as minke whales under a reasonable international conservation and management measures. The ICR recognizes that the whaling issue is contentious and, therefore, believes that an open discussion on the basis of objective facts and scientific data is essential.”

Seiji Ohsumi
Director General

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

PLEASE LOOK AT THE FOLLOWING WEBSITES:

<http://www.whalesci.org/Q&Ajapanswhaleresearchpro2.html>

<http://www.icrwhale.org/JWhaleresAntarctic.htm>

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