

Sea Shepherd Conservation Society

Sea Shepherd agrees \$2.55m payment to Japanese whalers for injunction breach

Radical environmental group does not accept it is in contempt, but agrees payout after getting involved in confrontations with whalers in 2013



Sea Shepherd activists attempt to block the Japanese whaler Yushin Maru No 2 during Operation Divine Wind in 2012. Photograph: Sipa/Rex Shutterstock

AFP

Wednesday 10 June 2015 12.19 BST

[Share on Facebook](#) [Share on Twitter](#) [Share via Email](#)

This article is **7 months old**

A radical environmental group has agreed to pay \$2.55m (£1.6m) to Japanese whalers for breaching a US court

injunction to stay clear of their vessels in the Antarctic Ocean.

The United States-based [Sea Shepherd Conservation Society](#) and former senior officials of the group last week agreed to pay the sum to resolve civil contempt charges against them in the US ninth circuit court of appeals.

The payment will go to the Institute of Cetacean Research and Kyodo Senpaku, the two main bodies behind Japan's "research" whaling programme.

The injunction prohibited Sea Shepherd founder Paul Watson and any person acting with them from physically attacking the vessels operated by the Japanese entities in the Southern Ocean or acting in a manner to endanger their navigation.

The preliminary injunction, issued in late 2012, also bans the defendants from coming within 457 metres of the vessels.

But Sea Shepherd boats were involved in [high seas confrontations with the whalers in early 2013](#).

Video: Anti-whaling group Sea Shepherd claims two of its vessels were rammed by Japanese whalers in 2013
Japanese authorities have previously described methods used by Sea Shepherd – such as blocking the Japanese ships' propellers – as terrorism.

In December 2014, the US court issued an opinion finding Sea Shepherd, Watson and others in contempt of the injunction.

Japan's Institute of Cetacean Research (ICR) hailed the payment, saying in a statement that it hopes the move would lead to the "prevention of unreasonable hindrance to our research" for now and in the future.

Sea Shepherd legal counsel Claire Loeb Davis said in a statement that the group did not agree that it was in contempt.

"But after more than two years of litigation, we are very pleased to be putting the contempt action behind us," she said.

Davis added that the group would now focus on other continuing litigation, which she said would give it an opportunity to expose the ICR's "dangerous and illegal activities" in the Southern Ocean.

The commercial hunting of whales is prohibited in the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary, but [Japan](#) has hunted the animals there using a “scientific research” loophole.

It has never made any secret of the fact that meat from the whales caught in the course of this research makes its way onto menus.

Japan was forced to call off the 2014-2015 hunt after the United Nations’ top court, the international court of justice, [ruled last year](#) that its annual mission to the Antarctic was a commercial hunt masquerading as science to skirt the international ban.

Tokyo maintains it is seeking scientific answers to questions about the size and health of the ocean’s whale population, for which it has to slaughter the animals and examine the contents of their stomachs, or the condition of their internal organs.

[Critics say nothing very scientific has ever come from these missions](#), which have been carried out for nearly three decades. They say any properly-designed research programme would by now know the answers it is purporting to seek.

[More news](#)

Topics

[Sea Shepherd Conservation Society](#) [Whaling](#) [Activism](#) [Protest](#) [Japan](#) [More...](#) [Asia](#) [Pacific](#) [Antarctica](#) [Animals](#)
[Conservation](#) [Marine life](#) [Whales](#) [Wildlife](#) [Cetaceans](#)
