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**For more information, pictures, or to interview Captain Watson:**

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### **Sea Shepherd Ship Escapes from South Africa**

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The *Farley Mowat*, under the command of Dutch Captain Alex Cornelissen, is preparing to return to the Antarctic Whale Sanctuary in December to once again intervene against illegal Japanese whaling operations. Japan is using their economic muscle to instigate harassment of the Sea Shepherd ship.

Meanwhile, Sea Shepherd has discovered that Japan illegally transships whale meat in and out of Cape Town. "Japan has influence in Cape Town," said Captain Paul Watson. "We have experienced that influence and we have been very disappointed that South African harbor authorities have seen fit to harass people who simply want to save the whales. We have operated the *Farley Mowat* since 1996 and we have never received the level of harassment that we experienced after intervening against illegal Japanese whaling."

Japan is exerting their influence in other arenas as well, spending millions of dollars bribing nations to vote to overturn the global moratorium on whaling. Japan is intent upon returning to Antarctica in December to kill over a thousand whales including the endangered humpback and fin whales.

The International Whaling Commission meeting begins on Friday, June 16<sup>th</sup>, in St. Kitts & Nevis in the Caribbean. Japan will attempt to legalize their whaling activities at this meeting with the help of new member nations they have brought into the IWC to vote against the whales and for the whalers.

The South African authorities insisted upon commercial certificates for the *Farley Mowat* which is registered as a yacht. According to SAMSA bureaucrat Saleem Modak, Sea Shepherd's interfering with the illegal slaughter of whales is a commercial activity. Since the *Farley Mowat* is not registered as a commercial ship the production of commercial certificates presented a catch-22 situation that could not be resolved.

“We may have burned our bridges with South Africa,” said Captain Alex Cornelissen, “but this country has disappointed us by siding with the whalers over the whales. We could not allow them to detain us as the Japanese prepare their harpoons for another season of relentless cruel slaughter. We can't waste any further time dealing with bought and paid for bureaucrats – we have whales to save.”

**END**

### **About Sea Shepherd Conservation Society**

*Established in 1977, Sea Shepherd Conservation Society (SSCS) is an International non-profit conservation organization whose mission is to defend, conserve, and protect the world's marine wildlife and ecosystems. Their website, [www.seashepherd.org](http://www.seashepherd.org), documents SSCS research, direct action, public education and outreach programs, and illustrates how SSCS has continuously worked for decades to eradicate pirate whaling, poaching, shark finning, sealing, unlawful habitat destruction, and other violations of established laws intended to protect the world's oceans. Captain Paul Watson, Sea Shepherd's Founder and President, is also co-founder of Greenpeace Foundation, and is a renowned, respected leader in environmental issues.*

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