

# Japan says no decision on 2015-16 whaling

April 14 2014

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Image taken on February 15, 2013 shows Japanese whaling vessel Yushin Maru No. 2 with a minke whale in the Southern Ocean

Japan on Monday insisted it had made no decision on whether to resume whaling in the Southern Ocean next year, after a militant environmental group said Tokyo intended to evade an international court ruling.

Tokyo this month said it was "deeply disappointed" that the UN's top court declared the annual Antarctic whaling hunt was a commercial activity disguised as science, but was calling the 2014-15 hunt off.

The Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, whose vessels have repeatedly clashed with Japanese whaling ships in the southern seas, said at the weekend Japan was redesigning its programme to get around the court ruling.

Japan's Institute of Cetacean Research (ICR) has filed [court](#) briefs in the United States stating it intends to return to hunt whales in the Southern Ocean for the 2015-16 season with a newly designed "research" programme and will seek a permanent injunction against Sea Shepherd USA, the group said.

The filing was made despite the fact Sea Shepherd USA is no longer operating in the Southern Ocean, the group said, adding the ICR was seeking to ban other Sea Shepherd entities from coming near its vessels.

The ICR refused Monday to comment on the report, while an official at the government's fisheries agency said "there has been no decision yet" on what to do in the 2015-16 season and beyond.

## Japan's Antarctic whale catch

For more than two decades Japan has used a loophole in a 1986 IWC\* ruling that has allowed the killing of whales for "scientific research"



Graphic charting Japan's annual Antarctic whale catch

Tokyo has used a legal loophole in the 1986 moratorium on whaling that allowed it to continue slaughtering the mammals in the name of science. It never made a secret of the fact that the whale meat from these hunts often ends up on dining tables.

Australia, backed by New Zealand, hauled Japan before The Hague-based International Court of Justice in 2010 in a bid to end the annual Southern Ocean hunt.

Japan had argued that its JARPA II research programme was aimed at studying the viability of whale hunting, but the ICJ found it had failed to examine ways of doing the research without killing whales, or at least

while killing fewer of them.

Tokyo said it would abide by the judgement, with officials saying the next Antarctic hunt, which would have started in late 2014, would be scrapped.

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