



s Surprisingly Human

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**“WHALE WARS” RETURNS TO ANIMAL PLANET JANUARY 2 WITH A
WORLD PREMIERE THREE-HOUR EVENT**

**IN A HISTORIC FIRST, LEGALLY BOUND CAPTAIN PAUL WATSON
STAYS AGROUND**

(New York, New York, December 19, 2014) – The Sea Shepherds are headed back to frigid Antarctica for a tenth mission to stop Japanese whaling – but for the first time they’ll make the voyage without their leader. Under legal siege, Captain Paul Watson, founder of the direct-action environmental organization Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, is forced to hand the mission over to youthful veteran Peter Hammarstedt following a ruling from the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. The ruling has Watson's hands tied as it imposes strict limits on how he and his U.S. cohorts in Sea Shepherds can interact with Japanese whaling activities. Animal Planet’s Emmy®-nominated series **WHALE WARS** goes deep inside the Sea Shepherd organization to document this latest perilous campaign, “Operation Relentless.”

Season 7 of Whale Wars documents “Operation Relentless” in a three-hour special event, which premieres on **Friday, January 2, from 8 PM - 11 PM (ET/PT)**, preceded by an all-day marathon of the series on Animal Planet. From **December 23 - January 19**, every episode of the previous six seasons of **WHALE WARS** will be available on video on demand, so viewers can catch up with the Sea Shepherds before tuning in to the season premiere event.

Last season, the Sea Shepherds forged ahead as Watson watched from the sidelines aboard the Steve Irwin vessel. Hammarstedt’s determined leadership style made that Antarctic campaign the most treacherous to date, but the Sea Shepherds claimed success by preventing the whalers from reaching even 10% of their whaling quota.

With Captain Hammarstedt once again at the helm and tensions with the whalers at an all-time high, this new campaign will likely be the most aggressive and dangerous the Sea Shepherds

have faced. **WHALE WARS** chronicles the latest Sea Shepherd's mission of putting a stop to the Japanese whaling season before it even begins. And Hammarstedt's core strategy for this campaign is based on a hunch.

Hammarstedt asserts his confidence before he sets off on the campaign saying, "I think that the Japanese government is under this impression that if they take Captain Paul Watson out, then our campaigns down in Antarctica will cease. But if that's their belief then they're completely wrong. It isn't about one man. We're going to prove to the whaling fleet just how relentless we are."

At the start of the campaign, the United Nation's International Court of Justice (ICJ), is reviewing a suit bought by the Australian government claiming that Japan has been hunting whales for commercial purposes in Antarctic waters under the guise of science and research. Hammarstedt believes the Japanese plan to avoid the waters considered Australian territory and focus instead on an area called the Ross Sea. If he's right, finding the whalers will prove easier, and the Sea Shepherd's can achieve their goal of putting a stop to the whaling season sooner rather than later. [Editor's Note: As of March 2014, the ICJ ruled that Japan's previous program, JARPAII, was not based on science and is in violation of the moratorium on commercial whaling.]

The Academy of Television Arts and Sciences recognized **WHALE WARS** in 2009 for exploring issues of concern to our society in a compelling, emotional and insightful way by bestowing the series with a Television Academy Honor, which identifies it as "television with a conscience." The series has been nominated for a Primetime Emmy® for Outstanding Cinematography in a Non-Fiction Series (three times), Outstanding Picture Editing for a Non-Fiction Series and Outstanding Sound Editing for a Non-Fiction Series. Seasons one through four of the series are available on DVD at AnimalPlanetStore.com.

WHALE WARS is produced by Lizard Trading Company for Animal Planet, using raw footage filmed by the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society during its campaign. Liz Bronstein is the executive producer for The Lizard Trading Company. Jason Carey is the executive producer and Patrick Keegan is the producer for Animal Planet. Charlie Foley is the executive vice president of development for Animal Planet and creator of the series.

Animal Planet Media (APM), a multi-media business unit of Discovery Communications, is the world's only entertainment brand that immerses viewers in the full range of life in the animal kingdom with rich, deep content via multiple platforms and offers animal lovers and pet owners access to a centralized online, television and mobile community for immersive, engaging, high-quality entertainment, information and enrichment. APM consists of the Animal Planet television network, available in more than 97 million homes in the US; online assets www.animalplanet.com, the ultimate online destination for all things animal; the 24/7 broadband channel, Animal Planet Beyond; and other media platforms including a robust Video-on-Demand (VOD) service; mobile content; and merchandising extensions.

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