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**SEA SHEPHERDS RETURN WITH MORE SHIPS, MORE CREW AND
MORE FERVOR AS WHALING BATTLE ESCALATES IN ANIMAL
PLANET'S NEW SEASON OF "WHALE WARS"**

– *New Vessels Bob Barker and Ady Gil Join Steve Irwin to Form Fledgling Sea Shepherd Armada* –
– *New Crew Members Join Captain Paul Watson to Stop Whaling Operations in the Antarctic Beginning June 4* –

(New York, New York, May 4, 2010) – On Wednesday, January 6, 2010, the *Shonan Maru 2* collided with the *Ady Gil* in the Southern Ocean, destroying the vessel and leaving **Captain Pete Bethune** and his crew no choice but to abandon their sinking boat. Several weeks later, Bethune silently slipped under the cover of darkness through the frigid Antarctic waters on a jet ski and boarded the Japanese whaling vessel. He attempted to make a citizen's arrest, claiming the whaling vessel ran over the *Ady Gil*, nearly killing him and his crew, and to deliver a bill for \$3 million for the damages he claims the Japanese captain is responsible for. Instead of receiving the reparations he sought, he was taken into custody and brought to Tokyo where it has been reported that he has been held on charges of trespass, obstructing the passage of a vessel, carrying a knife and damaging property. Bethune currently remains in Japan awaiting his trial and could spend up to 15 years in jail.

Bethune's story is only one of many dramatic moments during the new season of Animal Planet's **WHALE WARS**, which returns for a new 12-episode season on **Friday, June 4 at 9 PM (ET/PT)**. The new season of **WHALE WARS** follows the Sea Shepherds' Whale Defense Campaign, dubbed *Operation Waltzing Matilda* in honor of Australia's unofficial national anthem, on their three-month journey to the South Ocean Whale Sanctuary to stop whaling that the group claims is illegal and exploits a loophole in international ocean law – a loophole which the whalers claim makes their activities legal. As in previous campaigns, the conflict between Sea Shepherd and the whalers grows more intense with each engagement – each pushing the other to the limit to fight for what they believe in.

Captain Paul Watson and his crew of 40 left with the *Steve Irwin* and *Ady Gil* from Fremantle, Australia and from Hobart, Tasmania, respectively last December. It was well-publicized that the Sea Shepherds had added more vessel firepower to keep up with the larger, faster and more numerous whaling vessels. What they kept secret, however, was that Bob Barker, famous for **THE PRICE IS RIGHT** and one of the best-known personalities in the world of animal activism, donated funds to purchase a third vessel to add to the Sea Shepherd's fleet. Ironically, the ship is a former Norwegian whaling vessel but has since been renamed and refitted. With a crew of 26 and led by

Captain Chuck Swift and first officer and WHALE WARS veteran Peter Hammarstedt, the *Bob Barker* was docked off the coast of Africa on the island nation of the Republic of Mauritius, until it was ready to join its Sea Shepherd colleagues and engage in a surprise “engagement” to stop whaling.

“The issues surrounding whaling in the Southern Ocean are important and complex, and WHALE WARS returns once again to capture them in all their intensity,” says Marjorie Kaplan, president and general manager of Animal Planet. “The majesty of these beautiful creatures and the lengths to which the Sea Shepherds will go in order to prevent whaling has made WHALE WARS entertaining yet vital television. The series has become a trademark for the new Animal Planet, and audiences now expect to kick off summer television viewing with its return.”

Returning crew members also include Chris Aultman, aviation director; Laurens de Groot, *Ady Gil* crew; Benjamin Potts, deckhand; Amber Paarman, chief cook; Dan Bebawi, bosun; Luke Van Horn, communications officer; and Arne Feuerhahn, leading deckhand. Joining the crew this season include Lockheart MacLean, first officer; Chad Halstead, deckhand; Bonny Schumaker, second mate; Andrea Gordon, deckhand; Fiona McCuaig, deckhand; and Dave Thompson, deckhand.

Said Captain Watson, “Ships are expendable, endangered and protected whales are not. We lost a ship, and we have one crewmember taken prisoner, and no injuries were caused nor sustained. I think we did bloody well this year, and 528 whales were saved. We won’t stop until whaling ends.”

For the past several years, Captain Paul Watson and his Sea Shepherd Conservation Society crew take to the high seas to attempt to stop Japanese ships from hunting whales in the Southern Ocean Whale Sanctuary. WHALE WARS documents the ongoing battles in the icy Antarctic waters in each adrenaline-fueled season. Watson and his eclectic group of international staff and volunteers – labeled activists and heroes by some, eco-pirates by others – take a hard-line approach to eradicate whaling and what they view as ocean-law violations. Highlighting the controversial whaling trade and the tactics that the Sea Shepherds deploys to attempt to cripple it, the series documents the group’s three-month expedition across icy Antarctic waters. WHALE WARS follows a masterful match at the far end of the globe as both Sea Shepherd and the Japanese whalers engage in an environmental showdown with millions of dollars at stake. The team of oceanic crusaders join forces and set out to risk it all to save the whales, even if that might mean not all crew members make it back to port together

The Academy of Television Arts and Sciences recognized WHALE WARS last spring 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 was also nominated for a Primetime Emmy® for Outstanding Cinematography in a Non Fiction Series. Seasons one and two of the series are available on DVD at AnimalPlanetstore.com.

WHALE WARS is produced for Animal Planet by The Lizard Trading Company. Liz Bronstein is the executive producer for The Lizard Trading Company, and Jason Carey is the executive producer for Animal Planet. Charlie Foley is vice president of development for Animal Planet.

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 96 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; Petfinder.com, the # 1 pet-related Web property globally that facilitates pet adoption; and other media platforms including a robust Video-on-Demand (VOD) service; mobile content; and merchandising extensions.

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