

ONLINE ARTICLE

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Sheep being unloaded from a live-export ship in Kuwait City.
Picture: supplied



Protesters scrambled aboard the world's largest livestock carrier, The Ocean Shearer, in Fremantle this morning - forcing it into lockdown. Picture: Kerris Berrington

PROTESTERS have descended on the world's biggest livestock carrier, The Ocean Shearer, in Western Australia's Fremantle this morning.

Fremantle Port security called police about 6.30am after an 18-year-old woman chained herself to the massive ship and refused to leave.

The young woman, from the Forest Rescue Group, used a thumb lock to secure herself on some of the ship's railings. The Forest Rescue Group is the same group of activities who were behind the illegal boarding of a Japanese whaling ship in January.

The woman was removed from the ship about 9am (WST) and taken to hospital so the locking device could be taken off her hand. Police say she could face charges.

Up to seven protesters climbed on to the ship under the cover of darkness about 3am armed with a video camera.

Forest Rescue Group spokeswoman Amy Flee said the footage obtained by the protesters on board the ship was "very disturbing". She said the purpose of the protest was to highlight animal cruelty in Australia.

"The cruelty of animals - it doesn't just happen in Indonesia and other places it also happens here," Ms Flee said.

Police, Fremantle Port Security and staff from the Office of Transport Security remain at the port this afternoon.

The *Ocean Shearer* is the world's largest livestock carrier and can carry 125,000 sheep or 23,000 cattle.

A spokesman for the ship's owners, Wellard, said the vessel had not been forced into lockdown, and it was "business as usual".