

CRUSTACEAN WELFARE POLICY



In April 2022, the UK Animal Welfare (Sentience) Act was passed, which legally recognised decapod crustaceans (crab, lobster, langoustine etc.) as sentient animals capable of feeling pain, distress and discomfort.

Being a significant purchaser of langoustine (*Nephrops norvegicus*) in the UK, we understand the importance of humanely treating live decapod crustaceans, and we appreciate that these animals have been included as part of this legislation. We have long recognised the importance of humane handling practices for ethical reasons, and we are working with our supply chain partners towards improved welfare of decapod crustaceans.

Whitby Seafoods sources langoustine and shrimp from multiple fisheries and aquaculture sites, which are sold to the UK retail and foodservice markets:

Species	Scientific Name	Area	Catch Method or Farmed	Sustainability Accreditation	Product ¹
Langoustine	<i>Nephrops norvegicus</i>	United Kingdom & Ireland (FAO 27)	99% Demersal Otter Trawl 1% Creel	UK Nephrops MSC Improvement Program or Ireland Area 7 prawn – trawl FIP	Scampi
White leg Shrimp	<i>Litopenaeus vannamei</i>	Mexico, India, Ecuador and Vietnam	100% Farmed	BAP 4* or ASC	Coated King Prawn & Prawn
Argentinian Red Shrimp	<i>Pleoticus muelleri</i>	Argentina (FAO 41)	100% Twin Demersal Trawl	No accreditation	Bubble Bobble Red Argentinian Shrimp

¹The species used in each of our products will be listed on the packaging.

Whitby Seafoods does not purchase, transport, market or sell any live crustaceans to either consumers or other businesses, this includes both farmed and wild caught.

STUNNING AND REDUCING BYCATCH

Whitby Seafoods are collaborating with our retail customers, other industry bodies, and Optimar to research and develop technology to improve catching and processing methods. We are contributing to an industry project to achieve the humane stunning and tailing of langoustine on board fishing vessels. The equipment manufactured by Optimar was trialled aboard the Golden Ray in March 2025, with further at-sea trials to be conducted in 2026. At Whitby Seafoods, we are committed to adopting the Optimar technology when readily available for use aboard our own vessels, which fish in the Irish Sea and the Firth of Clyde.





To date, we can confirm that 31% of White Leg Shrimp that we source is free from non-therapeutic mutilations and are humanely dispatched (stunned), which equates to 2.5% of our total supply of crustaceans. Whitby Seafoods is committed to only sourcing from aquaculture sites that do not carry out non-therapeutic mutilation and use humane dispatch methods for all farmed decapod crustaceans by the end of 2026. There are no humane dispatch methods adopted for Nephrops and Argentinian Red Shrimp, but we hope to work with the industry to achieve this in the future.

Since 2017, Whitby Seafoods has been involved in the Northern Ireland Gear Trials Project, which aims to reduce unwanted fish bycatch in Nephrops trawls. This project is testing the effectiveness of selectivity devices in allowing unwanted bycatch species to escape. To date, we have trialed the coverless trawl, dual cod-end, lights fitted to the nets and FloMo gear. We are committed to reducing unwanted bycatch throughout the entire Nephrops supply chain (UK & Ireland) and will continue to participate in gear trials to achieve this goal. In the future, we commit to engaging with Argentinian Red Shrimp fishery stakeholders to reduce any unwanted bycatch within their fishery.

All employees working in the Sustainability team or directly with fisheries within our supply chain have received the appropriate animal welfare training.

APPLYING BEST PRACTICE IN OUR SUPPLY CHAIN

We are committed to improving the handling of decapod crustaceans across the seafood industry and implementing best practices in our supply chains.

Previously, Whitby Seafoods chaired the Shellfish Association of Great Britain (SAGB) Nephrops Processor Group, and together with Seafish and the SAGB, developed industry Codes of Practice for the handling and despatching of langoustine. The Codes of Practice will operate across the critical supply chain stages: catching, processing, wholesale and live imports and exports.

These Codes of Practice are not legally enforceable but can be voluntarily adopted by the sector. Adopting these Codes of Practice will ensure that best practices in welfare standards operate across the entire UK shellfish sector. This page will be updated with any progress made by the industry or government. More information can be found on the Seafish website here – Animal sentience and welfare (seafish.org).

The responsibility for the day-to-day management and implementation of our Crustacean Welfare Policy lies with the Sustainability team at Whitby Seafoods, covering both aquaculture and wild-caught operations. Ultimate accountability lies with the Managing Director, while the Board of Directors provides oversight.

This policy is reviewed annually.

