M&S AQUACULTURE AND WILD CAUGHT DECAPOD CRUSTACEAN WELFARE POLICY

SEPTEMBER 2026

M&S

EST. 1884

INTRODUCTION

We recognise the integral role of animal health and welfare in sustainable food production, and we are committed to continue progressing towards delivering the highest welfare standards possible within our supply chains. Our continued commitment to animal welfare has been recognised by leading animal welfare groups and benchmarks including Crustacean Compassion, Business Benchmark on Farm Animal Welfare (BBFAW) and RSPCA.

Our goal is to ensure that all wild caught and farmed seafood, as well as aquafeed, comes from the most responsibly managed fisheries and farms.

Our top 4 priorities as part of our Forever Fish Sourcing Strategy in 2026/2027 are to:

1. **Improve the lives of all the seafood we source** by working with industry, scientists and innovation partners to advance all wild fish, farmed fish, shellfish, decapod crustacea or mollusc welfare, address knowledge gaps, and drive improvements in the handling, management and harvesting of all wild and farmed fish, shellfish, decapod crustaceans and molluscs.
2. **Support healthy and resilient fisheries** by encouraging robust stock management, addressing data gaps and driving continuous improvement. Strengthen fishing communities through participation in credible certification and improvement programmes such as the Marine Stewardship Council Improvement Programme (MSC IP), Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs), and Community Catch, where appropriate.
3. **Accelerate innovation in wild capture fisheries** by supporting the adoption of technologies such as underwater cameras, lighting systems, selective fishing gear and environmental monitoring tools to improve fishing precision, reduce bycatch and minimise environmental impacts.
4. **Improve the lives of people throughout our seafood supply chains** by supporting the safety, wellbeing, livelihoods and development of fishermen, women and aquaculture workers, while helping build resilient coastal and farming communities.

Data included in this report relates to April 2025 – March 2026 unless otherwise specified.

OUR APPROACH

Our requirements for the welfare of all farmed and wild caught seafood (including decapod crustaceans) are covered by our Farm Animal Welfare policy, Select Farm Sourcing Standards and Forever Fish Sourcing policy.

Our Forever Fish Sourcing policy has recently been updated to align with our seascape approach and it references all wild and farmed species we source globally, including decapods: *Cancer pagurus* (Brown crab), *Homarus americanus* (Canadian lobster), *Procambarus clarkii* (Crayfish), *Nephrops norvegicus* (Langoustine), *Pandalus borealis* (Cold-water prawn), *Pleoticus muelleri* (Argentinian red shrimp), *Penaeus monodon* (Black tiger shrimp), and *Penaeus vannamei* (White leg shrimp).

Day-to-day management of our welfare and sourcing policies and their implementation is the responsibility of our team of agriculture, aquaculture and wild fisheries specialists. Our CEO is ultimately accountable for the whole sustainability programme (covering livestock and all farmed and wild caught seafood, including decapod crustaceans) and oversight is provided by the Board and our ESG committee.

All our agriculture, aquaculture and wild fisheries managers undergo animal welfare training. We worked with industry experts, PHARMAQ Analytiq (previously Fish Vet Group), to develop and launch a comprehensive training course on fish and shrimp welfare, which is followed by all our aquaculture partners.

Adherence to our welfare policies forms part of the terms of trade with all our suppliers and is reviewed as part of our M&S Select Farm Assurance programme, Welfare Audit programme and annual supplier assessment based on data collected via our Fish Tracker survey.

We continue to partner with industry and invest in research projects focusing specifically on welfare.

OUR COMMITMENTS TO DECAPOD CRUSTACEAN WELFARE

M&S commits to the following:

1. To never sell any live, wild or farmed, crustaceans. This is prohibited within our Farm Animal Welfare and Forever Fish Sourcing policies.
2. To never sell any warm-water prawns from supply chains which permit eyestalk ablation of their broodstock.
3. To ensure that all decapod crustaceans within our supply chains are humanely stunned and slaughtered. Where this is not already the case, clear action plans will be in place to improve the stun and slaughter methods in as short a timescale as possible.
4. To reduce the negative effects of capture methods on decapod crustacean welfare through adapting equipment, fishing and handling practices.
5. To improve welfare throughout the entire supply chain, including capture, handling, transport, holding, processing and slaughter, by identifying and addressing the major causes of stress, injury and mortality.
6. To establish transparent welfare outcome measures and monitoring programmes across our decapod crustacean supply chains, enabling us to measure progress and identify opportunities for continuous improvement.
7. To reduce bycatch associated with decapod crustacean sourcing through adapting equipment, fishing and handling practices.
8. To use our 'voice for good' globally to lead and collaborate with industry, scientists and technology companies to drive change and develop solutions and improvements in all seafood welfare matters especially those relevant to decapod crustaceans.
9. To support the development, validation and adoption of innovative technologies and practices that improve decapod crustacean welfare, reduce environmental impacts and enhance supply chain resilience.
10. To continue to fully engage and participate as part of the working groups with the Shellfish Association of Great Britain (SAGB) to develop industry best practice and push for compulsory adoption and robust stretching codes of best practice for the UK decapod crustacean industry.

Our recent progress against these commitments, where not already fully achieved, is detailed in the relevant sections below and we will continue to update annually.

CERTIFICATION, AUDITING AND DATA COLLECTION

Farmed

Whilst third-party certification provides important safeguards for farmed animal welfare, M&S seeks to go beyond certification through our Forever Fish Policy and M&S Select Farm Standards. Through these standards, all decapod crustacean farms supplying M&S are independently assessed against additional welfare, environmental, social and ethical requirements. Relevant hatcheries, nurseries and feed mills are also assessed, providing oversight and continuous improvement across the wider production system.

In addition to our M&S Select Farm Standards, we recognise the following third-party certification schemes as our base standards (all are GSSI benchmarked): Aquaculture Stewardship Council (ASC) certified, Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certified (relevant to certain farmed species such as rope-grown mussels), Global GAP Aquaculture Standard assured, Best Aquaculture Practices (BAP) certified, or RSPCA Assured.

M&S direct suppliers are responsible for undertaking M&S Select Farm assessments. The supplier must sign off all audit actions within agreed timescales to remain part of the M&S supply base. Further information on our auditing process and the actions undertaken in the event of non-compliance are detailed in our welfare and sourcing policies. How each non-compliance is dealt with will vary based on severity and could involve one or more of the following:

- Remedial action agreed with supplier
- Deadlines set for compliance
- Training and knowledge transfer
- Increase in auditing or visits by M&S team
- Suspension/removal from supply base where improvements are not made, or the breach is unacceptable.

Wild

We take a beyond-certification approach to the sourcing of our wild caught decapod crustaceans. Since 2004, M&S has partnered with WWF to assess the environmental and social risks within our seafood supply chains and ensure they align with our responsible sourcing requirements.

Alongside our WWF partnership and risk assessments, we recognise seafood sourced from fisheries certified to GSSI benchmarking standards, including the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), Community Catch and Certified Seafood International (CSI). We also fully support fisheries participating in credible Fishery Improvement Projects (FIPs) aligned with recognised certification pathways such as MSC, Community Catch or CSI.

Data

We collect detailed information on welfare, catch, environmental and human rights issues from our entire fish and seafood supply chains on an annual basis via our 'Fish Tracker'. All data collected is reviewed and progress is tracked. We regularly meet with our suppliers and agree action plans which, where relevant, include welfare improvements for decapod crustaceans. We also collect monthly or quarterly Outcome Measure data from our main aquaculture species and aim to roll this out to all farmed species as they are developed. Some data is included in our published annual welfare performance summaries.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE SUPPLY CHAIN

Since 2023, M&S has advanced decapod welfare through supplier engagement, stunning implementation, research and industry innovation and collaboration. Highlights include Seafood Welfare Week, Catch Welfare Platform membership and conference attendance in 2023, 2024 and 2025, supplier welfare training in 2025, continued support for Vannamei, crayfish and Nephrops stunning research and contributions to Shellfish Association of Great Britain (SAGB) best-practice guidance to help raise welfare standards across the sector.

We recognise the importance of supply chain partnerships in advancing decapod crustacean welfare and supporting supplier capability-building through knowledge sharing, site visits and collaborative research programmes that promote the adoption of best practice across our supply chains. In 2026, we further strengthened these partnerships by incorporating specific decapod crustacean welfare objectives and improvement projects into our annual Joint Business Plans with major suppliers.

For the past four years we have been recognised as the leading retailer by Crustacean Compassion in their Snapshot Benchmark for our work on decapod crustacean welfare. In 2024 we also received a Special Recognition Award (Innovation category) from Compassion in World Farming (CIWF) for eliminating eyestalk ablation and developing a comprehensive protocol to monitor health and welfare in our shrimp supply chains.

We are committed to using science and innovation to identify the most humane slaughter and handling methods across seafood supply chains and this commitment has helped establish several active projects focused on improving handling, transport and stunning/slaughter practices across seafood supply chains - some of which are listed below.

R&D project 1: Nephrops tail and stun machine project

Since 2023, M&S has been a founding partner and Board member of a FIS-led project developing electrical stunning and mechanical tail removal for Nephrops on board vessels.

Focus: Find a practical improved welfare solution where Nephrops may still be alive during tail removal.

Findings: One machine was produced and sea trials on a commercial fishing vessel have successfully proved the technology and its commercial potential, with the machine hitting the target throughput of 200 animals per minute infeed, and no unacceptable loss of meat yield. This success has earned industry recognition through a global innovation award. An independent cost benefit analysis has shown that for fishing businesses in the Irish Sea and West of Scotland, investment in the machine would be paid back in around three years, due to more efficient use of available labour.

Next steps: Further trials are planned to improve the design of the tailing mechanism, to ensure that the animals cannot recover after stunning, and that the machine is fit for purpose before wider commercialisation.

Recognition: The project was named a finalist for Global Seafood Alliance's 2025 Responsible Seafood Innovation Awards and was awarded the first ever Catch Welfare Innovation Award by the Catch Welfare Platform in 2025.

R&D project 2: Improving welfare in the brown crab supply chain

In 2025, M&S became a founding partner and Steering Group member, alongside Seafish initially, the Shellfish Association of Great Britain (SAGB) and Clawbinder Pro, in an innovative project exploring alternatives to claw nicking in the brown crab supply chain.

Focus: Claw nicking has historically been used on some vivier vessels to reduce the risk of crabs injuring one another during storage and transport. While effective, the practice raises animal welfare concerns. The project was established to assess whether claw banding technology could provide a practical, scalable and more welfare-friendly alternative while maintaining crab quality and operational efficiency.

Findings: Working closely with fishermen, processors and technology developers, the partnership has been trialing prototype claw banding equipment under a range of operating conditions. Early results are encouraging, suggesting the potential to significantly reduce or eliminate the need for claw nicking while maintaining product quality throughout the supply chain. Feedback from vessels and processing facilities has been instrumental in assessing practicality, ease of use, equipment durability and potential welfare benefits.

Next steps: The project remains ongoing, with the prototype continuing to be refined based on industry feedback. With support from an international team of scientists, the extent to which this approach is beneficial from an animal welfare perspective is also being verified. Further trials are planned during 2026 to validate performance across different stages of the supply chain and assess the long-term feasibility of claw banding as a commercially viable welfare improvement for brown crab.

Recognition: The innovation was winner of the Catch Welfare Platform Innovation Idea Challenge in 2025.

R&D project 3: Effective Penaeus vannamei stunning

In 2024, our supply farms were the first industry partners to collaborate in the research project led by the University of Stirling in collaboration with the Shrimp Welfare Project to develop best practice for the stunning and slaughter of warm-water prawns.

Focus: Develop welfare indicators for verifying humane slaughter of shrimp across various stunning techniques.

Findings: Research demonstrated that certain electrical stunning approaches, when combined with ice slurry, have the potential to improve shrimp welfare. The work also highlighted the need for robust welfare verification measures to confirm effective stunning and found that farms using thermal shock can improve welfare outcomes by reducing ice slurry temperatures to 0°C. These findings have recently been peer-reviewed and published by the Institute of Aquaculture at the University of Stirling (https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0044848626007581?via%3Dihub).

Next steps: Continue commercial-scale trials of alternative stunning technologies with support from the Shrimp Welfare Project and our supply chain in early 2027. Using the learnings from these trials, alongside emerging research, define industry best practice and support its implementation.

R&D project 4: Spanish crayfish stunning trial

In 2026, M&S co-funded a pioneering research project with the University of Stirling, our supplier and welfare partner to identify the most humane stunning and slaughter methods for Spanish crayfish. As one of the first studies of its kind, the project aims to address a significant gap in welfare science for this species.

Focus: There are currently no commercially available stunning solutions for crayfish and limited scientific understanding of how to humanely slaughter this species.

Findings: Research trials using electroencephalography (EEG) have begun to assess different electrical stunning approaches and develop welfare indicators to verify stunning effectiveness. The work is ongoing and is generating valuable new insights into crayfish responses to different stunning methods.

Next steps: Trials are continuing through to the end of 2026. The findings will help establish the scientific evidence needed to identify best practice and support the future implementation of humane stunning methods for crayfish. This research will shape future standards for this species.

Project Partners

OPTIMAR

UNIVERSITY of STIRLING

lawbinder Pro

FIS Fisheries Innovation & Sustainability

SWP SHRIMP WELFARE PROJECT

Shellfish Association of Great Britain

Catch Welfare PLATFORM

ACE AQUATEC

CAPTURE/HARVEST METHOD AND BYCATCH

All seafood sold by M&S is sourced from fisheries that use gear types designed to have a lower impact on marine habitats and are more selective in targeting specific species.

We actively encourage and support innovations that reduce unwanted bycatch and minimise impacts on seabed habitats throughout our supply base. By implementing targeted mitigation methods aligned with the WWF What's In the Net report - such as sinking lines, pingers, circle hooks, sea lion excluder devices, bird scarers, and best-practice handling and release protocols - we are achieving improvements in catch selectivity and ecosystem protection.

Fishing gear must allow for the escape of animals if lost or abandoned, for example escape hatches are required in all lobster and crab pots. All wild crab and lobster must be returned to the ocean should they carry berries or are undersize.

Capture/Harvest Method

- 100% of our wild caught crab and lobster are caught by pot/creel.
- 100% of our crayfish are caught using fyke nets or traps.
- 100% of our wild caught langoustine, cold water prawns and Argentinian red shrimp are caught by bottom otter trawl.
- 77.19% of our farmed warm-water prawns (*Penaeus vannamei and Penaeus monodon*) are harvested by drainage of ponds and 22.81% are harvested using seine nets.

ROUTINE MUTILATIONS AND SEX REVERSAL

Sex reversal in any species is not permitted.

Non-therapeutic mutilations are not permitted within our seafood supply chains (including decapod crustaceans) unless veterinary advice deems it strictly necessary to protect the animals from subsequent loss of welfare due to injury. Data is collected every year from all suppliers on whether any mutilation procedures are undertaken, and in 2025/26, 96.45% of our decapod crustacean supply was free from mutilations.

We can confirm 100% of our warm-water prawns are eyestalk ablation free. Since 2019 we have not approved/sourced any new warm-water prawns (*Penaeus vannamei* or *Penaeus monodon*) supply chains which allow eyestalk ablation of their broodstock.

No de-clawing occurs within our supply chains.

Crab claw nicking is still present (46.58% of crabs in 2025/26). The practice of crab claw nicking is specific to the crab we purchase from vivier boats and is currently used to prevent the live crab from injuring each other whilst stored in seawater during transportation.

We are part of a live project with Seafish, SAGB and Clawbinder Pro, to trial automated machines on board vessels which applies a sleeve to the claw, to prevent the need for claw nicking (R&D project 2).

Subject to viability, successful commercial-scale trials and robust scientific validation of solutions such as Clawbinder Pro, M&S will transition to a claw-nicking-free supply chain.

TRANSPORT TIMES AND SPECIES-SPECIFIC HOLDING CONDITIONS

Our Animal Welfare policy states that live animal transportation (road and/or sea) should be kept to a minimum and must not exceed 8 hours. The only exceptions to this within our seafood supply are the transportation of farmed Atlantic salmon, oysters and mussels, which are covered within species-specific Select Farm Sourcing standards, and the transportation of wild caught crab, lobster and crayfish.

Our suppliers hold agreements with fishermen on the appropriate storage methods of live shellfish (including decapod crustaceans) during storage and transportation to their factories for processing in line with industry codes of good practice which includes species-appropriate environmental environmental conditions during holding and transport, covering temperature control, water quality management, protection from injury, minimisation of overcrowding and reduction of avoidable stress.

Data is collected annually from all suppliers on methods of live handling, storage, and transportation. Details for each of our decapod crustacean species are summarised below.

Catch landed and transported live

Canadian lobsters have their claws banded and are stored and transported on boats inside plastic crates which are covered with ice to keep them cool and moist for the length of the fishing trip (~8 hours).

Once unloaded from the boats, lobsters are transported on refrigerated trucks at 4°C with ice. Transport times via road depend on the port of landing and can vary from <1 hour to 25 hours. On arrival at the processing facility, lobsters are stored live in purpose-built seawater holding tanks for up to 48 hours prior to stun and kill.

Brown crabs are transported (sea and land) for a maximum of 5 days prior to processing. Crabs are stored on board in plastic tubs which are watered constantly (day boats) or in tanks (vivier boats). Transport times by lorry can vary depending on the port of landing and range from 5 minutes to 24 hours. For road transport, crabs are held in plastic tubs, covered and kept dark in refrigerated trucks.

Crayfish are transported on boats in sacks or crates (with ventilation holes and covered with damp cloths to keep them out of direct sun) and then transferred to crates at the factory where they are stored in chillers. Maximum storage time on boat is 12 hours, followed by a maximum transport time of 48 hours via road in refrigerated vehicles.

	Catch to landing	
Species	**Max transport time (hours)**	**Proportion (%)**
Crab	120	100
Canadian Lobster	36	100
Crayfish	48	100

Catch landed dead or killed pond side/on vessel

All (100%) of our warm-water prawns are stunned and killed pond side so are not transported or held live.

All (100%) our cold-water prawns, Argentinian red prawns and Nephrops are currently landed dead or are killed shortly after catch and are not transported live.

STUNNING AND SLAUGHTER

We recognise that techniques for the harvesting, stun and slaughter of farmed and wild caught fish and shellfish/decapod crustaceans are evolving quickly. M&S supports the adoption of electrical stunning for decapods where it is scientifically validated to improve animal welfare. Current evidence suggests electrical stunning offers one of the most promising routes to reducing stress and suffering of shrimp at slaughter, but implementation must be underpinned by robust science, effective verification and commercial feasibility. We are working with suppliers and research partners to evaluate and implement best-practice stunning methods across our decapod supply chains as part of our wider commitment to continuous improvement in decapod welfare (See Research & Development section).

In 2025/26, 16.53% of our total decapod crustacean supply was slaughtered using electrical stun prior to kill (100% crab, 100% lobster and 14.45% warm-water prawns).

The stun and slaughter methods for each decapod crustacean species in our supply chains are summarised below:

- 100% of our brown crab are electrically stunned prior to cook (kill).
- 100% of our Canadian lobsters are electrically stunned prior to cook (kill).
- 85.55% of our warm-water prawns were stunned and killed via thermal shock in ice slurry. 14.45% were electrically stunned, followed by thermal shock in ice slurry. There are electrical stunners in place at M&S Penaeus vannamei Select Farms in Vietnam, with trials ongoing in Honduras. M&S partnered in the Stirling University project to optimise electrical stunning from a welfare perspective and is also involved in research to validate the effectiveness of super chill ice slurry stun as a high welfare alternative to electrical stun (R&D project 3).
- 100% of our crayfish are kept chilled prior to cook (kill). This year, M&S funded a research project with the University of Stirling, our supplier and welfare partner to identify alternative slaughter methods using electrical stunning for Spanish Crayfish (R&D project 4).
- 100% of our cold-water prawns and Argentinian red shrimp are landed dead or killed via thermal shock in salted ice water and frozen or processed on board.
- Langoustine, which are sold as tails for scampi, have their tails removed on vessel. Percentages may vary depending on vessel, trawl time and handling but there may be some occasions when the langoustine is alive when its tail is removed. We recognise this is an area for welfare improvement and are working closely with vessels to trial on board electrical stunning for langoustine tail production, or to keep the langoustine whole on board (R&D project 1).

We are committed to ensuring 100% of decapod crustaceans within our supply chains are humanely stunned and slaughtered in line with best practice, supporting the use of scientifically validated electrical stunning methods where these are demonstrated to render animals immediately insensible and minimise unnecessary suffering. Our approach continues to be science-led, with decisions informed by robust evidence and research.

Going forward, to ensure we are meeting this commitment we will:

- Continue to not approve/source any new species of decapod crustacean which are not electrically stunned prior to kill.
- Continue to fully support the FIS-led project to develop and trial electrical stunning and mechanical de-tailing of Nephrops norvegicus on board vessels. We will roll out improved handling and welfare practice on board vessels for Nephrops tail removal (R&D project 1).
- Continue to regularly visit our aquaculture and wild supply chains to understand the current practices and instigate a move towards improved welfare.
- Subject to the success of the trial and robust scientific validation, require by December 2027 that 100% of our crayfish are electrically stunned (R&D project 4).
- Continue to work in close partnership with the Shrimp Welfare Project to sponsor the installation of new electrical stunning machines in our warm-water prawn supply chain in Honduras (R&D project 3).
- By December 2027, complete commercial-scale trials across all whiteleg shrimp supply chains to evaluate the most humane stunning and slaughter methods. Drawing on the findings from these trials, alongside emerging scientific research, we will help define industry best practice and support its implementation. We will use this evidence to establish implementation timelines across our supply chains from 2027, remaining guided by the latest science and best available evidence.
- By December 2026, further engage with our cold-water prawn and Argentinian red shrimp supply chains to understand the current practices and by 2027, establish roadmap for improved humane stun and slaughter where needed.

OVERVIEW OF HUMANE STUN IMPLEMENTATION WITHIN OUR DECAPOD CRUSTACEAN SUPPLY CHAINS:

Completed

Brown Crab

- 100% electrically stunned

Canadian Lobster

- 100% electrically stunned

In Progress

Crayfish

- We will progress towards 100% electrical stunning across our supply chain, informed by the outcomes of ongoing trials due to conclude in 2026

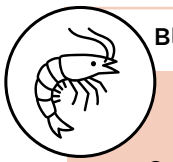
White Leg Shrimp

- 100% will be electrically stunned or rapid chilled by end of 2026. We will complete commercial-scale shrimp stunning trials and use the evidence to guide best practice and implementation in 2027

Nephrops

- Electrical stunning trials at sea are ongoing in 2026

Being Scoped



Black Tiger Shrimp

- Complete scientific trials to validate the most humane stunning and slaughter method by end of 2028 & use findings to guide best practice and implementation

Argentinian Red Shrimp

- Will engage with suppliers to review a move to more humane stun & slaughter by end of 2027 where needed

Cold Water Prawn

- Will engage with suppliers to review a move to more humane stun & slaughter by end of 2027 where needed