Giant lobster and octopus descend on Westminster as charities call on government to 'get its acts together' for sentient animals

Friday 11 September, 2026

London, 10 Sept 2026 - Crustacean Compassion and Compassion in World Farming launch new Protect the 'Pods campaign calling for decapod crustaceans and cephalopod molluscs to be included in the Animal Welfare Act.

A giant lobster and octopus appeared in Westminster today as animal welfare charities Crustacean Compassion and Compassion in World Farming joined forces to launch **Protect the 'Pods** – a new campaign calling for stronger legal protection for animals including crabs, lobsters, prawns, octopuses and squid.

Campaigners took to Westminster with eye-catching lobster and octopus stilt walkers to highlight a glaring gap in UK animal welfare law. Decapod crustaceans and cephalopod molluscs are recognised as sentient under the Animal Welfare (Sentience) Act 2022, but they remain excluded from the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

Now, as the Animal Welfare Act marks its 20th anniversary, the two charities are calling on the UK Government to "get their Acts together" and bring these animals within its scope.

The launch saw campaigners and supporters take the message through Westminster, including Westminster Bridge and Downing Street, calling on Government to turn recognition of these animals' sentience into meaningful legal protection.

Dr Ben Sturgeon, CEO at Crustacean Compassion, said:

"The law recognises that crabs, lobsters, prawns and other decapod crustaceans can feel pain and suffer. But recognition means little while the Animal Welfare Act still leaves them out. The Sentience Act says they can suffer. The Animal Welfare Act should protect them. It's time to close the gap, align the Acts and give these animals the protection they deserve."

James West, Chief Public Affairs Manager at Compassion in World Farming, said:

"Octopuses, squid and other cephalopods are extraordinary animals, and the science on their sentience is clear. Recognition was an important first step, but now it must lead to meaningful protection. Together, we're calling on Government to bring animal welfare law up to date and make sure no sentient animal is left behind."

The campaign comes amid growing calls for consistency across UK animal welfare legislation.

Earlier this year, the Animal Sentience Committee called for the definition of "animal" to be applied consistently across relevant legislation. It specifically recommended that applying the definition already used in the Animal Welfare (Sentience) Act to the Animal Welfare Act would bring cephalopods and decapods within its scope. The Committee said that sentient animals should receive equivalent levels of protection. The Government's own Animal Welfare Strategy has also acknowledged that gaps remain in the welfare of decapod crustaceans and cephalopod molluscs.

Through **Protect the 'Pods**, Crustacean Compassion and Compassion in World Farming are asking members of the public to join the **Pod Squad** and call on Government to extend the Animal Welfare Act to decapod crustaceans and cephalopod molluscs.

Two organisations. One clear ask. It's time to put the 'pods in the Act.

ENDS

Notes to editors

1. **About Protect the 'Pods:**
2. Protect the 'Pods is a joint campaign from Crustacean Compassion and Compassion in World Farming calling for decapod crustaceans and cephalopod molluscs to be included within the

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Animal Welfare Act 2006.

3. The Animal Welfare (Sentience) Act 2022 defines “animal” to include vertebrates other than humans, cephalopod molluscs and decapod crustaceans. The Animal Welfare Act 2006 currently defines “animal” as a vertebrate other than a human.
4. In 2026, the Animal Sentience Committee recommended greater consistency in the definition of animals across relevant legislation, including the inclusion of cephalopods and decapods within the Animal Welfare Act.
5. The Government’s Animal Welfare Strategy for England recognises decapod crustaceans and cephalopod molluscs as sentient beings capable of experiencing pain and suffering and acknowledges that welfare gaps remain.

6. **About Crustacean Compassion:**
7. Crustacean Compassion is an award-winning animal welfare organisation dedicated to the humane treatment and legal protection of animals like crabs, lobsters & prawns (decapod crustaceans). We engage with legislators and policy makers to strengthen and enforce animal welfare law and policy; we work to persuade and enable companies to sell higher welfare products across their shellfish product ranges; and we seek to educate both the public and policy makers on the science of decapod crustacean sentience and on their humane treatment and care.
8. **Website**: www.crustaceancompassion.org
9. For more information, or for an interview with Dr Ben Sturgeon, please contact **020 3870 3302** or email **info@crustaceancompassion.org**

10. **About Compassion in World Farming:**

11. **Images:** High-resolution photographs from the Westminster launch are available on request.

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