

UK RETAILERS RACE AHEAD OF LIVE BOILING BAN TO PROTECT CRUSTACEAN WELFARE

Wednesday 25 March, 2026

London, March 2026 - The days of seeing live crabs and lobsters for sale in UK shops may soon be over, as new figures reveal that most major seafood suppliers and supermarkets have now stopped selling live crustaceans for home cooking. Many are also making major strides to ensure crabs, lobsters and prawns are treated humanely across the supply chain.

According to *The Snapshot 2025* benchmark report from Crustacean Compassion, nineteen of the thirty companies assessed now have published policies prohibiting the sale of live crustaceans for home cooking, including most UK major supermarkets. Retail giant ASDA has also committed to not sell live animals in stores but their policy change came too late for inclusion in the animal charity's assessment.

This marks a clear shift in expectations in crustacean welfare and signals a tipping point for other retailers to follow suit. Combined with strong statements from the UK government who just before Christmas announced plans to ban live boiling and provide guidelines on humane slaughter for crustaceans, it appears the moment has come where it is no longer possible nor ethical to buy, kill and cook crustaceans at home. This move has been 'welcomed with open claws' by animal welfare group Crustacean Compassion.

"In the four years since The Snapshot was founded, we have seen significant progress on company welfare policies. Many businesses are now ahead of the law, adopting best practice for crustacean welfare, as well as listening to consumer demands," said Dr Ben Sturgeon, CEO of Crustacean Compassion. *"Our campaign urging supermarkets to stop selling live crustaceans was instrumental in this shift, and we're delighted to see almost all major retailers now upholding this standard."*

The Snapshot: who's leading the way in crustacean welfare

- Sykes Seafood takes top spot after a huge two-tier jump in its welfare policies and transparency.
- Marks & Spencer, Young's Seafood, and New England Seafood International – Paignton all sit in the top tier, demonstrating strong, consistent commitments.
- Nineteen of the 30 companies (63%) now publish policies committing to continue, adopt, expand or trial use of electrical stunning in their supply chain, including most supermarkets.
- ASDA remains the only supermarket in the bottom tier.

New support for shoppers: The Snapshot Supermarket Scorecards

To help shoppers navigate these changes and choose shops that treat animals responsibly, Crustacean Compassion is today launching a new consumer guide. Based on the results of The Snapshot, the guide offers clear and simple advice on which supermarkets are performing well on crab, lobster and prawn welfare.

Dr Sturgeon continued, *"Consumers want to know that innovative companies can supply ethical, high-welfare seafood and will reward those who take their responsibilities to animal welfare seriously. The Snapshot gives businesses a roadmap towards higher welfare, and now our Supermarket Scorecards help shoppers make informed choices too. Together, these tools support a food industry that is innovative, responsible, and compassionate."*

Media:

Media: How many times the company has been mentioned in the media

Company	Media
Sykes Seafood	10
Marks & Spencer	8
Young's Seafood	7
New England Seafood International	6
Paignton	5
ASDA	4
Other	3



THE SNAPSHOT: SUPERMARKET SUMMARY

Company	Welfare	Stunning	Policy	Score
Sykes Seafood	Green	Green	Green	10
Marks & Spencer	Green	Green	Green	8
Young's Seafood	Green	Green	Green	7
New England Seafood International	Green	Green	Green	6
Paignton	Green	Green	Green	5
ASDA	Red	Red	Red	4
Other	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	3

Related Sectors:

Environment & Nature :: Farming & Animals :: Food & Drink :: Government :: Health ::

Related Keywords:

Lobster :: Crabs :: Supermarkets :: Retailers :: Seafood :: Industry :: Consumers Habits ::

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