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ALI report spotlights emerging animal welfare practices in commercial fisheries

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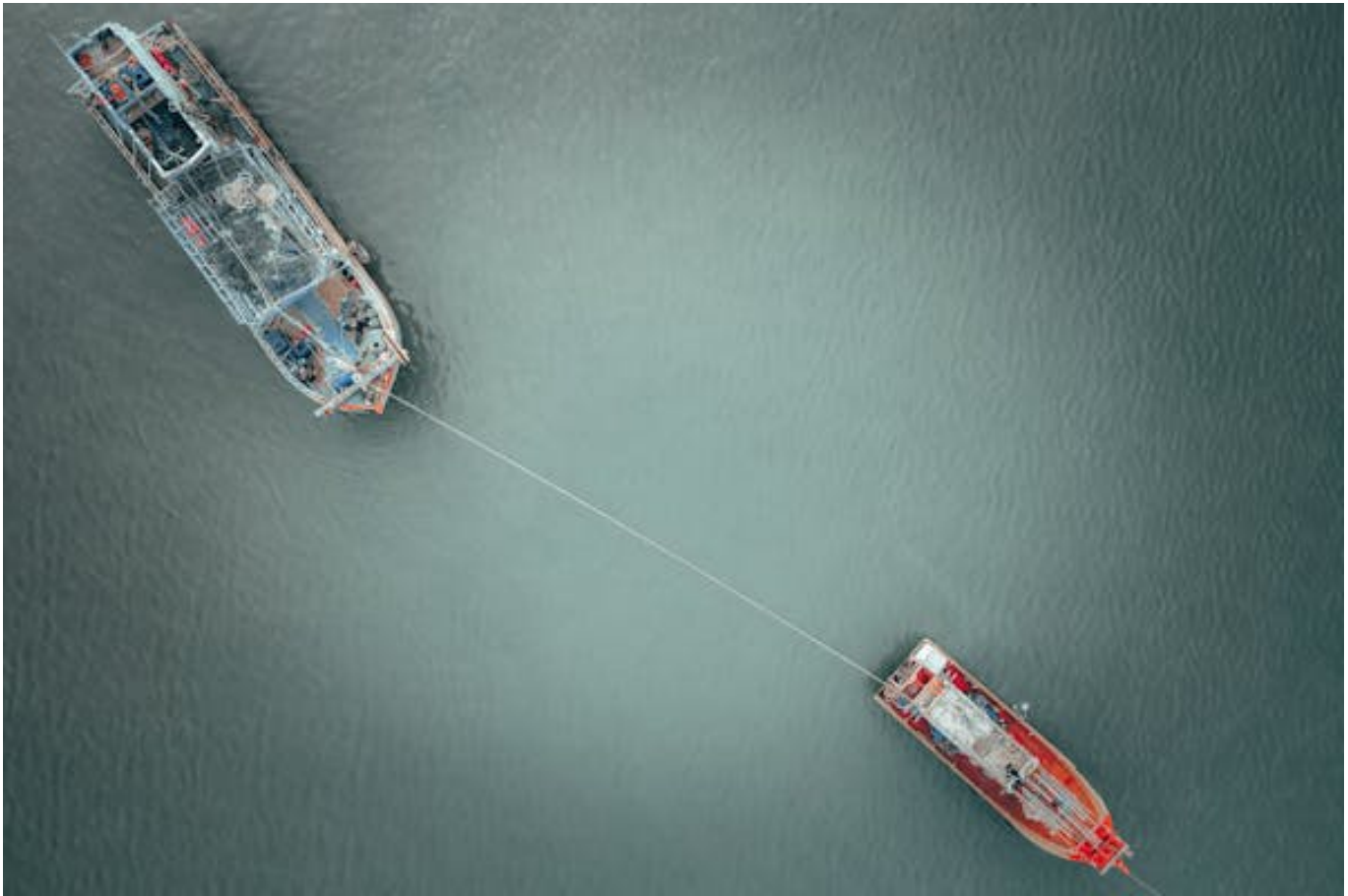
By Responsible Seafood Advocate

Aquatic Life Institute report highlights animal welfare innovations for fisheries, linking humane practices to sustainability and product quality

The Aquatic Life Institute (ALI), an international nonprofit focused on advancing aquatic animal welfare in both aquaculture and wild-capture fisheries, has released its latest ***Marine Capture Fisheries: Innovative Practices for Aquatic Animal Welfare*** (<https://www.ali.fish/capture-fisheries-resources/innovative-practices-for-aquatic-animal-welfare>) report. Now in its fourth edition, the report highlights emerging technologies and research aimed at improving animal welfare in global commercial fisheries.

The report focuses on animal welfare practices during key stages of the capture process – from retrieval and onboard handling to stunning and slaughter – which influence both fish welfare and broader sustainability efforts in commercial fishing.

“Our *Innovative Practices* report addresses a major gap in wild capture fisheries: Aquatic animal welfare



Aquatic Life Institute report highlights animal welfare innovations for fisheries, linking humane practices to sustainability and product quality. Photo by Pok Rie (<https://www.pexels.com/photo/berge-and-boat-with-fishing-nets-on-rippling-water-7038708/>).

is often overlooked by the fishing sector, yet they make up the largest group of animals impacted by human activity,” said Christine Xu, Head of Fisheries Welfare.

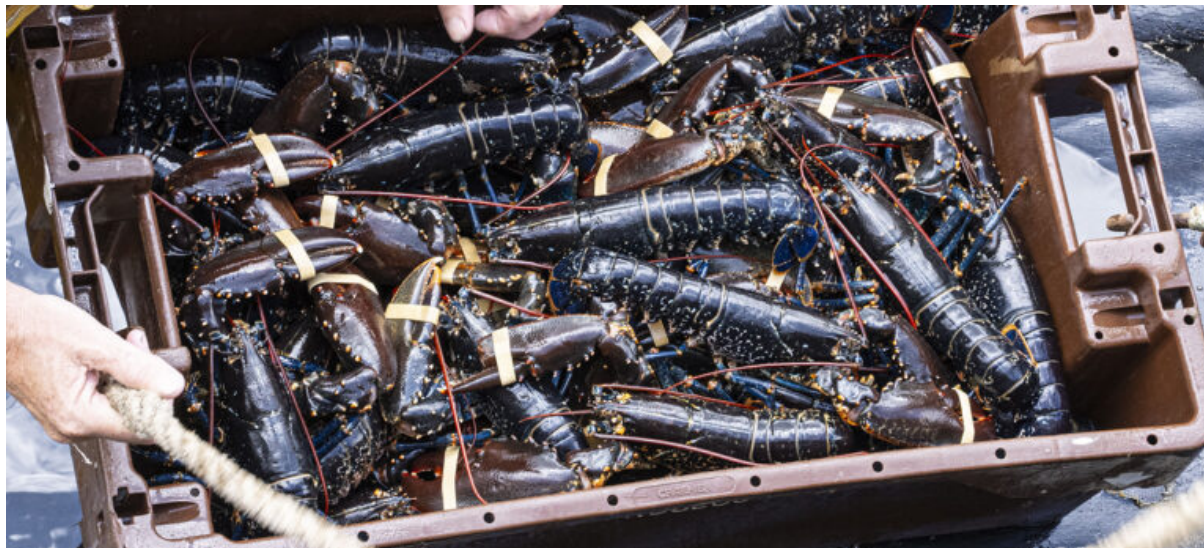
Integrating welfare-focused practices into commercial fisheries remains a complex undertaking, shaped by the challenges of mixed-species catches, limited deck space and unpredictable sea conditions.

A blue banner for Best Seafood Practices. On the left, there is a photo of a worker in a yellow protective suit and mask handling fish. In the center, a photo shows a fishing boat on the ocean. To the right of the photos, the text reads: "A comprehensive solution for the wild seafood supply chain." Below this text is a list of three items with checkmarks: "Crew rights", "Food safety", and "Environmental responsibility". On the far right is the Best Seafood Practices logo, which consists of a stylized eye icon and the text "Best Seafood Practices". Below the logo is a button that says "LEARN MORE" with a right-pointing arrow.

(<https://bspcertification.org/>).

Nonetheless, some fishing companies are exploring higher animal welfare approaches, working with research institutions and technology startups to test new tools and techniques in the field. The report highlights several of these collaborations, pointing to partnerships between fisheries, scientists and technology developers as a potential pathway for advancing more humane fishing practices.

Some innovations highlighted in the report are positioned not only as animal welfare improvements but also as measures that support broader sustainability goals. Technologies designed to reduce bycatch, minimize habitat damage and prevent lost fishing gear – often referred to as **ghost fishing gear** (<https://www.globalseafood.org/advocate/topic/ghost-fishing-gear/>) – can contribute to healthier marine ecosystems.



Spotlight on crustacean welfare: How the UK is showcasing ways to improve practices and consumer trust

Growing demand for ethical food is pushing the UK seafood industry to prioritize crustacean welfare, improved quality and worker satisfaction.



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The report also points to potential economic benefits, suggesting that higher animal welfare practices can lead to improved product quality, longer shelf life and increased market value. For instance, methods such as shorter fishing durations and smaller catch volumes have reportedly been shown to reduce fish stress and injury in both target and non-target species. According to ALI, lower stress levels result in less lactic acid build-up, which can improve the texture and longevity of the final product.

With its *Innovative Practices* report, ALI aims to drive broader adoption of welfare-focused technologies, stronger regulations and greater investment in aquatic animal welfare. Framed as a resource for policymakers and industry leaders, the report offers examples and case studies to guide new policies and corporate standards.

“We hope that [the report] encourages more industry leaders to adopt aquatic animal welfare commitments and to opt for innovative, high-welfare fishing practices that enhance sustainability and profitability,” said Xu.

Read the full report (<https://www.ali.fish/capture-fisheries-resources/innovative-practices-for-aquatic-animal-welfare>).

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