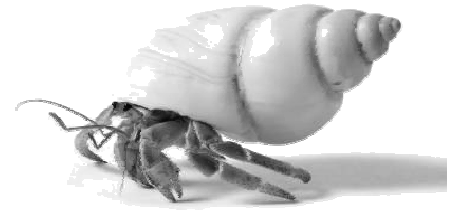


HERMIT CRABS

- Hermit Crabs have five pairs of legs, including one pair with strong claws to climb and hold food.
- Hermit Crabs are not "true crabs." They have a smaller, soft abdomen which is protected by living in an empty snail shell. As they grow and molt, they need to move into larger shells.
- Though the average lifespan is much less, Hermit Crabs can live up to 30 years or more in captivity.



Diet

Land Hermit Crabs are omnivores, requiring a diet of both plant and meat. A commercial hermit crab diet can be supplemented with assorted fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grain breads, and small pieces of fish and meat. For extra calcium requirements cuttlebone or boiled egg shells should be offered.

Water is important to keeping your Hermit Crab healthy and happy. Fresh water should be provided at all times; they also need saltwater provided to them. Some species of hermit crabs need saltwater for survival, the other species like to soak in it occasionally. When mixing the saltwater, use a salt made for marine aquarium fish. (Table salt is poisonous.) The easiest way to offer the two types of water is in dishes deep enough for the crabs to submerge themselves yet shallow enough to get out without help. Placing a piece of natural sponge in the water will help smaller crabs get out while still offering enough water for larger crabs to soak in.

Housing

Hermit crabs will be very comfortable in a 10-gallon or larger aquarium with a few inches of sand or stones at the bottom. Keep the crabitat between 72 - 82°F with an under-tank heater, or low wattage lighting. It helps to have a lid on your tank to keep in moisture, and to keep your crabs from escaping. Originating from tropical parts of the world; the humidity inside the crabitat should be kept at 70-75% at all times. This is important because hermit crabs have modified gills that they breathe through, not lungs. If the humidity levels are too low, the gills will dry out and become stiff and the crab will essentially suffocate. If the humidity rises above 75% for too long, fungus can grow on the gills and inside the tank causing disease and death.

Handling & Care

All food and water dishes need to be cleaned and refilled daily. Also remove any uneaten bits of food from the tank. Clean the Crabitat thoroughly once per month with hot water. Avoid detergents and chemicals as these can be harmful to your pets. Replace the sand with fresh clean sand.

To help keep your Hermit Crabs healthy, bathe them weekly. Fill a bowl about one inch deep with lukewarm water. Slowly place the hermit crab into the water. The crab may initially seek shelter inside its shell during this process. As the crab emerges, the water will go into his shell and rinse it clear of any debris. Allow a few minutes for your crab to enjoy walking around its bath.

Wash your hands with anti-bacterial soap after handling any animal.

Shells

Provide a variety of shells for your crab to move into as it grows, molts, or just decides it wants a new shell. You never know what kind of shell a Hermit Crab may like – providing a good selection of various sizes and shapes will help keep your crabs happy and help prevent fights over the best ones! Do not disturb a crab that is in the process of molting. This is a very stressful time and bothering them now could cause death. Bathing the new molted crab with the others will ensure that they smell the same to each other, making the molter less likely to be a victim of hungry crabs.

HERMIT CRAB CHECKLIST

- Crabitat / 10 gal tank
- Heavy Dishes
- Natural Sponge
- Decor
- Vitamin/Mineral Supplement
- Heat Source
- Sand
- Thermometer
- Hygrometer
- Small Transport Carrier
- Hermit Crab Book