

# Petware House

Your Neighborhood Pet Store

## Hermit Crab (Land)

Coenobita clypeatus

## CARE SHEET



Hermit crabs are nocturnal scavengers that will eat almost anything. With practice and patience, hermit crabs can be handfed. Hermit crabs live in large groups in the wild.

**Average Size** 2 to 6 inches long, depending on species.      **Life Span** Up to 20 years with proper care.

**Feeding** Use high quality commercial hermit crab food. Treats are recommended, but also include natural foods: any non-citrus fruits (especially mangoes, coconut and papayas); vegetables (except starchy vegetables, such as potatoes); nuts; applesauce; seaweed, drained brine shrimp; and fish flakes. Also use a calcium source, such as cuttlebone.

Crush all pelleted foods before feeding and feed at night. Also use a non-metallic, non-porous water dish, shallow enough to prevent drowning.

**Housing** Hermit crabs require a 10-gallon aquarium or larger with a glass or screen lid. New shells for your crab must be larger than the current one, to ensure room for growth. The shell opening should be the same size as the hermit crab's larger pincer. Also provide climbing materials in the tank.

Use sand or smooth aquarium-safe gravel (not treated with epoxy), bark or mulch as a substrate for your crab.

**Maintenance** First you want to check the tanks humidity daily. You will then want to bathe your hermit crabs every week in fresh, dechlorinated water. Immerse the crab upside down in room temperature dechlorinated water, the crab may get out of the shell and walk around. Remove the crab from the tub (crabs can drown), allow the crab to air dry for a few minutes; drain the remaining water from the crab's shell and return the shell to it's owner.

Remove debris and old food from the substrate every other day.

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**Temps** It's important to maintain a range from 70 degrees F to 80 degrees F.

**Humidity** Maintain humidity by placing damp moss in the habitat. Humidity levels should remain at 70% to 80%. If their gills dry out, they cannot breathe.

### **Water & Accessories**

Always have a shallow dish of chlorine-free water available. If using a sponge it must be replaced often, as the mold and bacteria that grows in sponges is fatal to hermit crabs. A second shallow bowl of saline water is recommended as it helps to maintain the correct ion balance in the crabs "shell water".

### **BASIC REPRODUCTIVE INFORMATION**

CRAZY CRABS breed by scattering their eggs into the water. The eggs develop in the ocean as part of the plankton community. They return to land after a few years once grown to the size of a pea. They cannot breed in captivity.

### **NOTES AND COMMENTS**

.Hermit crabs are nocturnal, but may be active on a cloudy day. Hide food in the crabs substrate, it will only eat very little and very slowly as well. Hermit crabs usually molt once a year and will bury itself in the sand. It is important not to disturb the crab during this process as the crab is very fragile. It will need to be protected from other crabs by installing a divider in the tank, but keep it moist.

Hermit crabs enjoy being in a tank with other hermit crabs. They also enjoy climbing so put a small climbing apparatus in the enclosure as well.

If your hermit crab grabs you with its claw, hold the crab under running water or support the crab with the other hand so it feels secure; the crab should release you.