



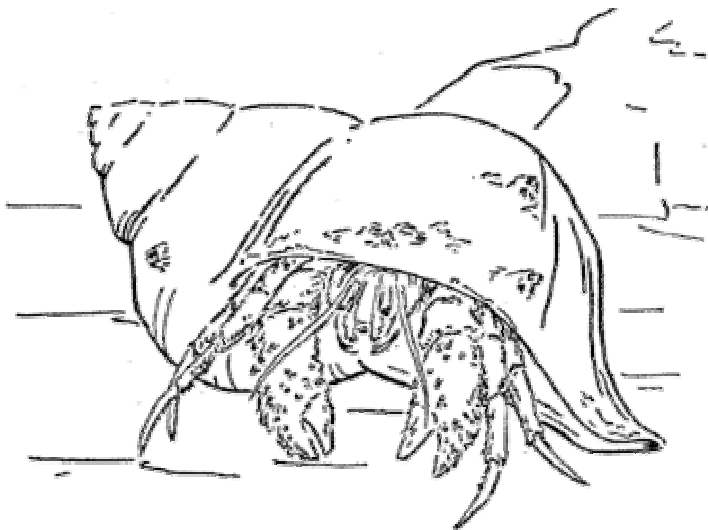
Here's a hairy hermit crab

## HERMIT CRABS

### ROBBERS OF THE DEEP



By Pamela Coleman



And here's a crab for you to color.

A  
LearningIsland.org  
15 - Minute Book

*Editor: Caitlind Alexander*  
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Hermit Crabs/Pamela Coleman

Summary: A brief look at hermit crabs.

1. Hermit Crabs. Juvenile Literature. 2. Ocean Creatures Juvenile Literature. 3. Land Crabs. Juvenile Literature.

Created in USA

Words: 757

Reading Level: 1.4



They like to live in warm places. Be sure to keep them warm.

Hermit crabs like to crawl. There should be some rocks and wood for them to climb on. They will also climb on you. They don't bite but they will pinch you to hold on.

Be careful not to let it fall! This could kill your hermit crab. Also, never try to take it out of the shell. This could kill it.



Many people like to keep land hermit crabs for pets.

All you need to keep a crab is an old fish tank. Put sand and shells in it. You also need water and food. Make sure the dishes are small enough for the crab to climb out of. You don't want him to drown!

Now you are ready for your crabs! You can buy them and their food at the pet store.

Land hermit crabs like to live in groups. So, if you want one for a pet you should buy him some friends.



## Hermit Crabs

How would you like to carry your house around on your back? That is just what a hermit crab does.

Most crabs have a shell to protect them. A hermit crab is not so lucky. He doesn't have a shell of his own. So the hermit crab must find a shell to protect itself. He will search and search until he finds a shell that is just the right size. Then he will move in.

Some hermit crabs can't find a shell. They will use the next best thing. They will move into a small can or a piece of tube.

When the hermit crab is in danger, it pulls itself inside its shell. Then it sticks out its large claw and tries to fight.



Hermit crabs eat anything. They use their big claw to dig in the sand. That's where they find food.

Hermit Crabs also eat their skin when they shed. This gives them the calcium they need to grow.



Hermit Crabs shed their skin just like a snake. When they shed their skin, they might break a leg off. That's OK because they can just grow a new one.

Then the hermit crab hides in sand. That will protect it until its new skin grows hard.

There are three kinds of hermit crabs. There are land, marine and deep sea hermits.

Marine hermit crabs live in tide pools. These are puddles of water on the rocks.

Deep sea hermits live in the ocean.

Land hermits live on the land. They live in many places like trees. Some land hermit crabs live over a mile away from the shore.





You might pick up a shell and think it is empty. But hermit crabs are nocturnal. That means they wake up at night. During the day they like to bury themselves in the sand.

Hermit crabs need lots of water to live. Hermit crabs can store water inside their bodies.

Hermit crabs cannot stay in the hot sun for too long. If they get too much sunlight they will dry out and die.



A baby crab will float in the water. Soon they will be big enough to find a shell. When they find a shell, they will crawl inside.

Baby hermit crabs grow very fast. So they will change shells many times.



Hermit crabs hatch from eggs. The mother lays her eggs in the water. All hermits lay their eggs in water. Land hermits will walk to the water to lay their eggs.

Hermit crabs are not really crabs. They are more like shrimp.

Hermit crabs do not have bones. That makes them very soft. So they use a hard seashell to protect themselves.

They have 10 legs, five on each side!

The front two legs are claws called pincers. One front claw is often smaller than the other one is.





The back legs are very small. They use their back legs to hold themselves inside the shell.

But there is not much room in the shell. So hermit crabs can only bring one claw inside to hide. That is why one claw is smaller than the other.



Hermits have lungs that act like gills. This helps the hermit crab to breathe under water.

These gills also hold water. So a land hermit crab can go a year without eating or drinking.

Hermit crabs come in many colors. Many are red, orange or black. Some have stripes or dots on their body.