

# Hilltop Pet & Aquariums

## Hermit Crab Information Sheet

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Open Monday - Friday 9:30am-6pm Weekends & Public Holidays 10am - 5pm

### Introduction

Land hermit crabs are one of the easiest pets to look after. They are very clean, almost odour free and require very little maintenance.

Land hermit crabs are nocturnal and live almost solely on land, only going into the water to drink or bathe. They use other animals discarded shells as their homes (hence the name "hermit crab"), and change into bigger shells from time to time.

Low temperature and low humidity levels will send them into their shells until conditions improve. The warmth of your hand is usually enough to wake them and bring them crawling out.

Hermit crabs can live for two or more decades, providing the proper care is provided for them.

### Housing

The best house for a crab is an all glass aquarium (including the lid), because the humidity level is very important to the crab's survival.

The substrate can be aquarium sand, fine aquarium gravel or fine shell grit. The bottom of the tank should be kept dry at all times.

Hermit crabs need a bowl of fresh water to drink and a bowl of salt water to bathe in. The salt water can be made up using hermit crab salt or aquarium salt. The water bowls must be sturdy enough so as they are not tipped over. Both bowls should be clean and changed regularly. These bowls must be kept apart so the salt water does not contaminate their drinking water if it goes from one to the other.

Hermit crabs LOVE to climb so put plenty of driftwood and other items in there for them to climb up and down on.

### Temperature

Land hermit crabs come from a tropical climate so they do require heating here in South Australia. The temperature should be kept between 24°C and 30°C, not dropping below 20°C. The easiest way to heat the tank is by using a heat cord, heat mat or low wattage heat globe, suspended over or in the tank.

A thermometer should be used to monitor the temperature.

### Feeding

Their main diet should consist of pre-made hermit crab pellets (which is a complete diet) and supplemented with fruit and vegetables to vary their food intake. They only eat a tiny amount of food at a time, so make sure the food is always fresh. Replace any uneaten dry food after two days and fresh food every day.

### Growing Up

Like all other animals, hermit crabs grow from small to large. Unfortunately for the crab, their shells do not grow with them so you should always have a selection of shells in the tank (all slightly bigger than what they are using at the time), to give them a choice when they need to move house.

Hermit crabs also shed their outer skeleton once or twice a year. During, and for two weeks after they molt, they should be left alone while the new skeleton hardens.

This brochure was put together by the staff of Hilltop Pet & Aquariums as a general guide to assist you in raising your pet and advising requirements to keep your friend happy and healthy.

If you cannot provide the proper care and housing, we strongly suggest you not purchase the animal.

We have books available for sale should you require more information.

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