

# Hermit crabs

## What are they?

Hermit crabs are crustaceans. They are found in Africa, Australia, Europe, North and South America.

Unlike other crustaceans, they don't have a hard shell (exoskeleton) around the outside of their body.

The back part of their body is soft and squishy.

## What do they look like?

There are over 1000 species of hermit crab in the world. Some can be as small as a finger nail while others are longer than 30 cm.

Species can be many different colours. Some hermit crabs have patterns, stripes or dots on their body.

## Habitat

Hermit crabs can live in different places. They can be found in rock pools, along the seashore and on the ocean floor.



## Finding a shell

Hermit crabs live in shells which used to belong to other animals.

When they have found a suitable shell, they squeeze in backwards and hold themselves inside with their four small back legs.

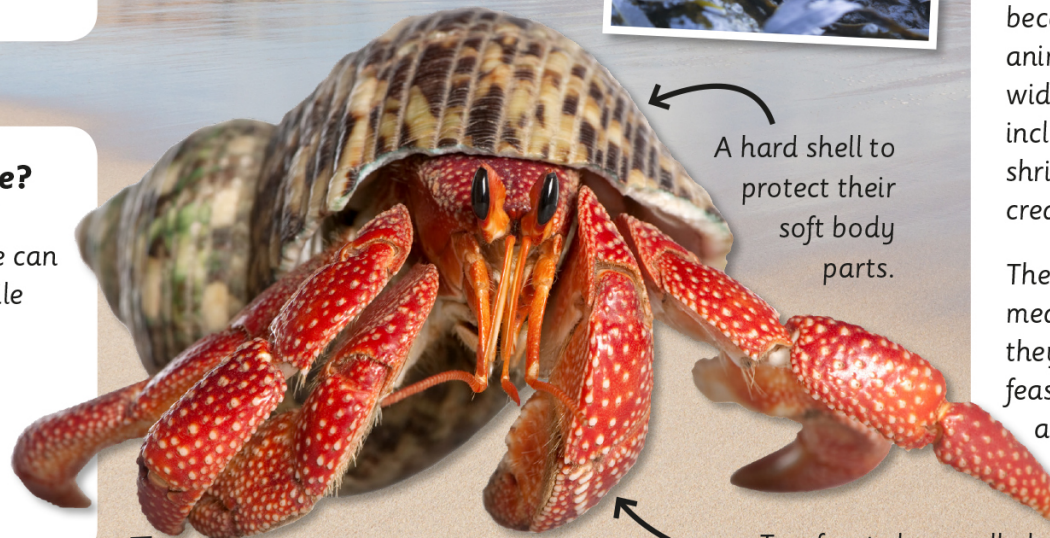
As they grow, they must find bigger shells to live inside.

## What do they eat?

Hermit crabs are omnivores, because they eat both plants and animals. They eat a wide variety of foods including seaweed, shrimps and tiny creatures called plankton.



They are also scavengers, which means they eat dead animals that they find. A hungry hermit crab will feast on decaying fish, seahorses and even other crabs.



A hard shell to protect their soft body parts.

Legs used for walking.

Two front claws called chelipeds, one for feeding and the other to defend itself from predators.