

Inside The Crabitat

August 2025



Community uproar over hermit crab wildlife trade proposal

In July 2025, the Australian hermit crab community banded together to take action against the new proposal to ship thousands of hermit crabs outside of Australia

Winnie

TOPIC OF THE MONTH - ANATOMY



FUN FACTS

Crabitat
REALESTATE

Crab Of The Month!

10 WAYS TO ADD ENRICHMENT TO YOUR CRABITAT



»»» LOVE TO LEARN «««

HERMIT CRAB ENRICHMENT

WHAT IS IT? WHY DO WE NEED IT?



ENRICH THE LIVES OF YOUR PET HERMIT CRABS

**A STIMULATING
ENVIRONMENT LEADS
TO HAPPIER,
HEALTHIER CRABS.**

»»» WHAT IS ENRICHMENT?

Enrichment refers to the activities, items, and environmental changes we provide to stimulate an animal's natural instincts, promote physical and mental well-being, and prevent boredom or stress in captivity. In the wild, hermit crabs engage in complex behaviours like climbing, digging, foraging, exploring, and problem-solving. Captive environments, while safe and controlled, often lack the challenges and diversity of the wild.

WHY DO HERMIT CRABS NEED IT? «««

For hermit crabs and many other animals, enrichment isn't just a luxury—it's essential. It keeps them active, engaged, and healthier both mentally and physically. Without it, captive animals may become lethargic, stressed, or develop repetitive behaviours.

**IMPROVING
THEIR
QUALITY
OF LIFE**

BEATING THE BOREDOM <<<

Just like any intelligent animal, hermit crabs can experience boredom—especially in captivity. In the wild, they're constantly on the move: foraging, climbing, digging, exploring, and interacting with their environment. Without enough stimulation, captive hermit crabs may become lethargic, withdrawn, or inactive for long periods. This isn't just a sign of rest—it could be boredom.

>>> CRABITAT RENOVATIONS

Enrichment helps break that cycle by offering new sights, smells, textures, and activities. Changing the tank layout, adding fresh leaf litter, providing new climbing materials, or offering a variety of foods to forage all keep your crabs mentally and physically active.

HOT TIP!

Try offering:

A rotating menu of dried and fresh foods, as well as leaf litters

Whole foods in different textures: soft, crunchy, leafy, or chewy

Foraging opportunities: scatter food, tuck pieces in leaf litter, or use “food puzzles” like busy balls

Seasonal or limited-time treats to spark interest

ENRICHMENT THROUGH DIET <<<

Enrichment isn't just about toys and tank decor—food variety is one of the most powerful forms of stimulation for hermit crabs.

In the wild, hermit crabs forage for a wide range of natural foods. Recreating this in captivity keeps them engaged, encourages natural behaviours, and supports overall health.



ENRICHMENT

>>> ENRICHMENT IDEAS

Tank decor isn't just for aesthetics—it's a vital part of enrichment that encourages natural behaviours like climbing, hiding, digging, and exploring. Creating a dynamic and stimulating environment helps prevent boredom and supports both mental and physical wellbeing.

Great decor enrichment options include:

- Coconut hides for shelter and privacy
- Climbing ropes and bridges to encourage movement and exploration
- Moss pits for digging, hydration, and sensory play
- Cholla wood, driftwood, and coral for climbing and texture
- Leaf litter and busy balls to mimic natural foraging zones
- Shell shops with a variety of shell shapes and sizes to inspect
- Rotating decor to keep the tank environment fresh and engaging

>>> ENDNOTE

By mimicking the wild, you're giving your hermit crabs a space where they can thrive—physically, mentally, and behaviourally.

A well-enriched crab habitat encourages natural behaviours, reduces stress, and creates a more dynamic and engaging environment—one your hermit crabs will enjoy.





Crabitat

REAL ESTATE



4FT CRABTOPIA PENTHOUSE TOPPER

OWNED BY CHRISTINE ELLIS - QLD

This topper features a totally chill and zen vibe, the perfect palace for hermie relaxation!



4FT JUNGLE

OWNED BY THE HAPPY HERMIE - VIC

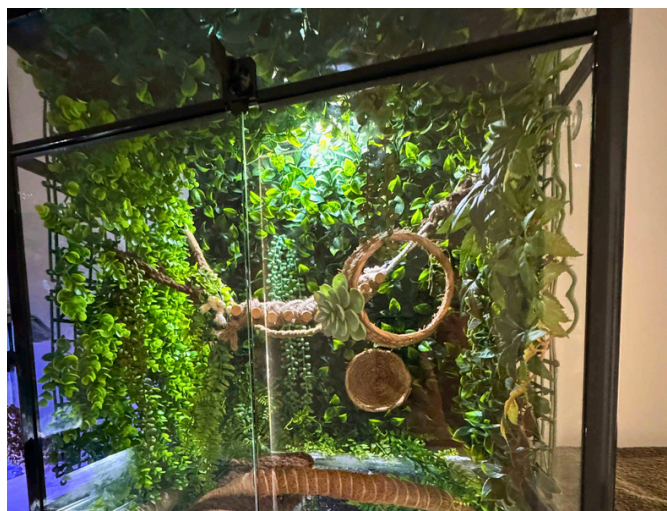
Home to 13 beloved hermit crabs, this beautiful tank features a jungle vibe and plenty of enrichment and activity!



4FT PURPLE PARADISE

OWNED BY TAYLAH DAVIS - VIC

A purple paradise featuring every shade of purple! With gorgeous deep, glass pools for submerging. It's a stunning eden!



TOPPER HAVEN

OWNED BY COURTNEY MARTIN - WA

A green goddess topper packed full of climbing enrichment. With a beautiful natural feel of being in the tree tops.

DO YOU WANT YOUR TANK FEATURED?

EMAIL US A PHOTO!

THEHAPPYHERMIE@HOTMAIL.COM

10 WAYS TO

ADD ENRICHMENT TO YOUR CRABITAT

1

Buy an exercise wheel

2

Add faux plants or safe live plants

3

Add plenty of dark hiding spots

4

Buy a hammock and hang it up high

5

Use a busy ball and fill it with treats

6

Build a moss pit with damp sphagnum moss

7

Add in real driftwood or cork bark

8

Add a tank topper to your crabitat

9

Build a foraging pit filled with leaf litter

10

Add in climbing options - vines, ropes, swings etc.

HAPPY HERMIE

PRODUCT OF

THE MONTH



MONTHLY SAMPLE SPECIAL

6 delightful mixes packed into 5g sample bags. Covering protein, calcium, carotenoids, omega-3s, carbohydrates, fibre, and plant matter.

SOMETHING DIFFERENT EVERY MONTH

Every month the 6 mixes change, check back monthly to grab a different mix to fuel your hermit crabs dietary needs.

Monthly Sample Specials can be purchased directly through The Happy Hermie -
<https://www.happyhermie.com.au/product-page/monthly-sample-special-6pk>

THE HAPPY HERMIE

WWW.HAPPYHERMIE.COM.AU

CRAB OF THE Month

MARBLE

Marble has been living with Alison for 6 months, and thoroughly enjoys eating fresh grapes and boiled egg! When Marble isn't busy digging up holes or munching away on food, you can find them running for hours on their wheel!



Marble loves checking out all of their available shells and trying on the different shapes and sizes. When they aren't digging, changing outfits, or running on their wheel, they're busy eating their faveourite Happy Hermie dish - Bircher Muesli.

Species: *Coenobita Variabilis*

Gender: Unknown

Shell Size: 1.8cm

Owned By: Ali Jane

Favourite HH Food:
Bircher Muesli

Do you want to win a **\$10.00** Happy Hermie voucher!?

Enter your crab into "Crab Of The Month" by emailing us a photo to thehappyhermie@hotmail.com





Feeding From Your PANTRY & FRIDGE

V2.

	Barley Grass		Canned Tuna
	Acai Powder		Coconut Oil
	Cooked Fish		Cooked Beans
	Dates		Melon
	Flaxseed Meal		Egg Shells
	Grapes		Cooked Corn
	Organic Nut Butters		Blackstrap Molasses
	Cooked Organic Pasta		Beetroot
	Unsalted Popcorn		Frozen Prawns
	Organic Roses		Cooked Chicken Bones
	Semolina		Dragonfruit
	Wheat Germ		Zuchinni
	Goji Berry		Pea Protein



BANJO THE HERMIT CRAB LOVES HIS SHELLS

Banjo the hermit crab is excited to show off his favourite shells—from swirly Turbo shells to shiny Natica shells! Inside his cozy tank, Banjo scuttles around with his friends Mango and Higgins on a playful adventure full of curiosity, friendship, and shell-loving fun.



Author - Soraya Lucas

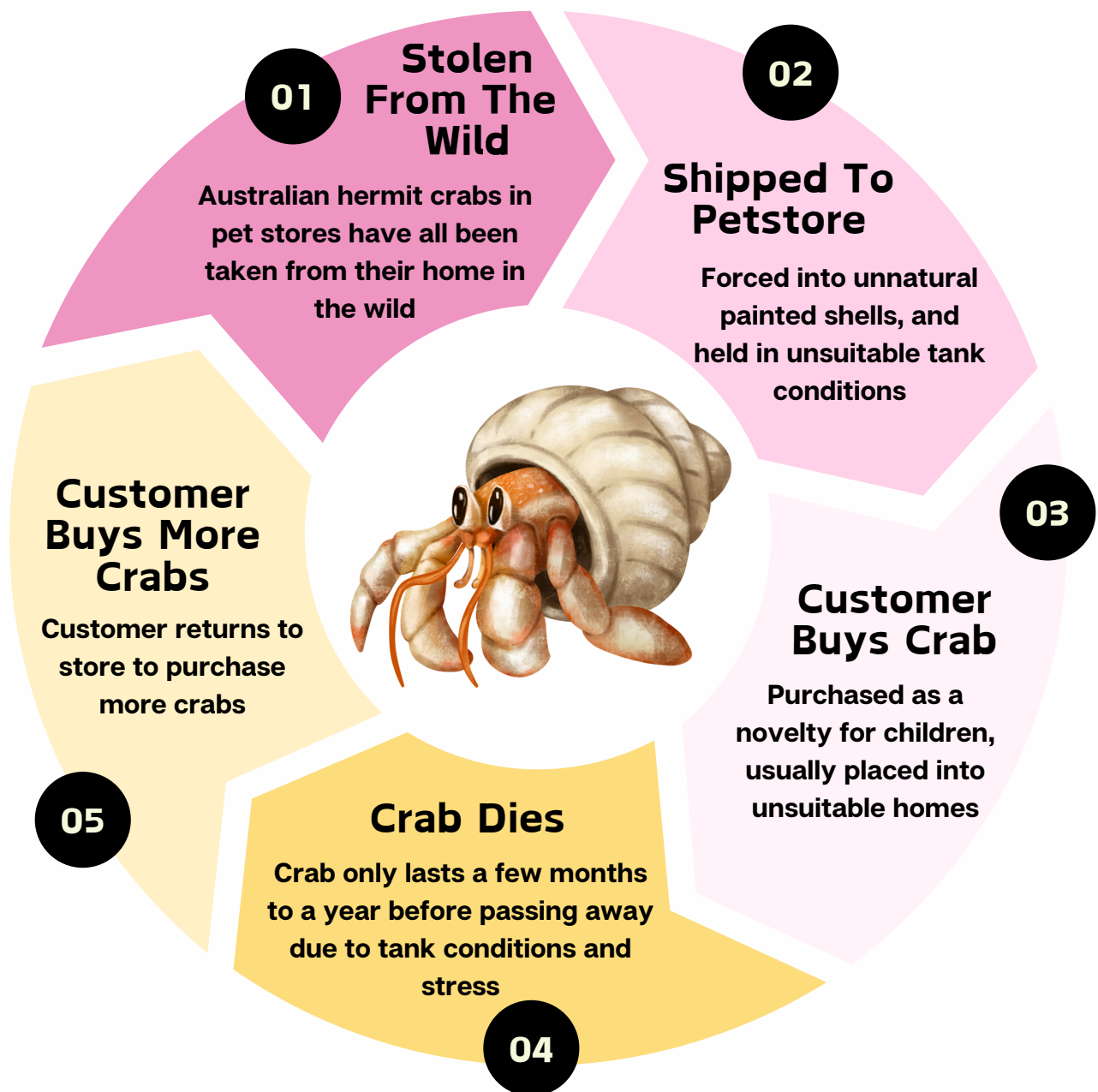
Soraya Lucas is a passionate Australian hermit crab owner and first time author. Writing her very first children's book based on her very own hermit crabs, Banjo, Mango, and Higgins.

PURCHASE HERE: [HTTPS://AMZN.ASIA/D/BTXVP7G](https://amzn.asia/d/BTXVP7G)



THE PET STORE CRAB CYCLE

All pet store hermit crabs in Australia have been taken from their homes in the wild, forced into unnatural painted shells and shipped across Australia to pet stores. Here they will usually be held in unsuitable conditions, overcrowded and stressed, being sold as a novelty pet for children. Unknowing owners will purchase them under incorrect advice that often leads to death, resulting in more purchases of pet store crabs. And the cycle continues with more hermit crabs being taken from the wild.



#adoptdontshop

Aussie Crab News

COMMUNITY UPROAR OVER HERMIT CRAB WILDLIFE TRADE PROPOSAL



Merv Cooper's Crazy Crabs

PROPOSAL

The hermit crab community has been rocked by the release of the Wildlife Trade Operation (WTO) Proposal submitted by Merv Cooper's Crazy Crabs in May 2025, which seeks government approval for the commercial wild harvest and international export of Australian land hermit crabs (*Coenobita variabilis*). While the application claims a low-impact, sustainable practice, its publication has sparked widespread backlash from breeders, ethical crab keepers, conservationists, and welfare advocates across Australia and beyond.

KEY POINTS FROM APPLICATION

- The applicant seeks to collect up to 30,000 hermit crabs annually from beaches between Exmouth Gulf and Derby, Western Australia.
- Wild collection is conducted at night by foot, using torches and buckets, with crabs housed in ventilated plastic tubs and later shipped overseas.
- There is no legal quota, no monitored size limits, and no scientific population monitoring in place.
- The business aims to expand export operations, targeting markets in the USA, Hong Kong, Japan, and more.
- The proposal boasts a zero-death rate during transport, self-regulated ethical harvesting, and low environmental impact.

KEEP WILD CRABS

Wild



WHY THE HERMIT CRAB COMMUNITY IS OUTRAGED!

1. Exploitation Over Conservation

While the proposal claims sustainable practices, the lack of scientific data, population surveys, or regulated limits means the operation is based on personal experience, not ecological evidence.

> "There has never been a long-term population study."

2. No Breeding or Replenishment Programs

The proposal fails to mention any captive breeding efforts or replenishment initiatives. Instead, it relies entirely on extracting wild animals for profit.

> This directly contradicts the efforts of dedicated breeders who spend months raising crabs from Zoea in captivity—replacing crabs that would otherwise die during wild collection.

3. Ethical and Welfare Concerns

Crabs are shipped in bulk, packed in sponge-lined hessian bags and styrofoam boxes. While the applicant claims success, mass international shipping of live animals raises serious welfare questions—especially when bound for unregulated pet markets.

> The idea of crabs being sold in foreign pet shops with no guarantee of proper care has struck a nerve in the ethical crab-keeping community.

4. Undermines Captive Breeding Advocacy

The timing of this proposal is particularly painful for breeders who have worked tirelessly to prove that captive breeding is not only possible but essential to protect wild populations and improve care standards.

> Many owners feel this move “sets us back decades” in terms of ethical progress and public perception.

5. No Community Consultation

The proposal appears to have been submitted without any input from ethical crab keepers, researchers, or conservation groups, leaving many feeling blindsided and powerless.





Crabs in Merv Coopers store, WA



Painted shells encouraged

IT TAKES A COMMUNITY!

The community was left scrambling to draft responses and public comments before the approval window closed.

The application quickly spread far and wide across Australia—and even reached international audiences. It was shared hundreds of times by outraged hermit crab owners, animal activists, and concerned animal lovers.

We were thrilled to see that the outrage extended well beyond just the hermit crab community. Messages of concern poured in online, showing that people from all walks of life were united in their opposition to the proposal.

OUTCOME

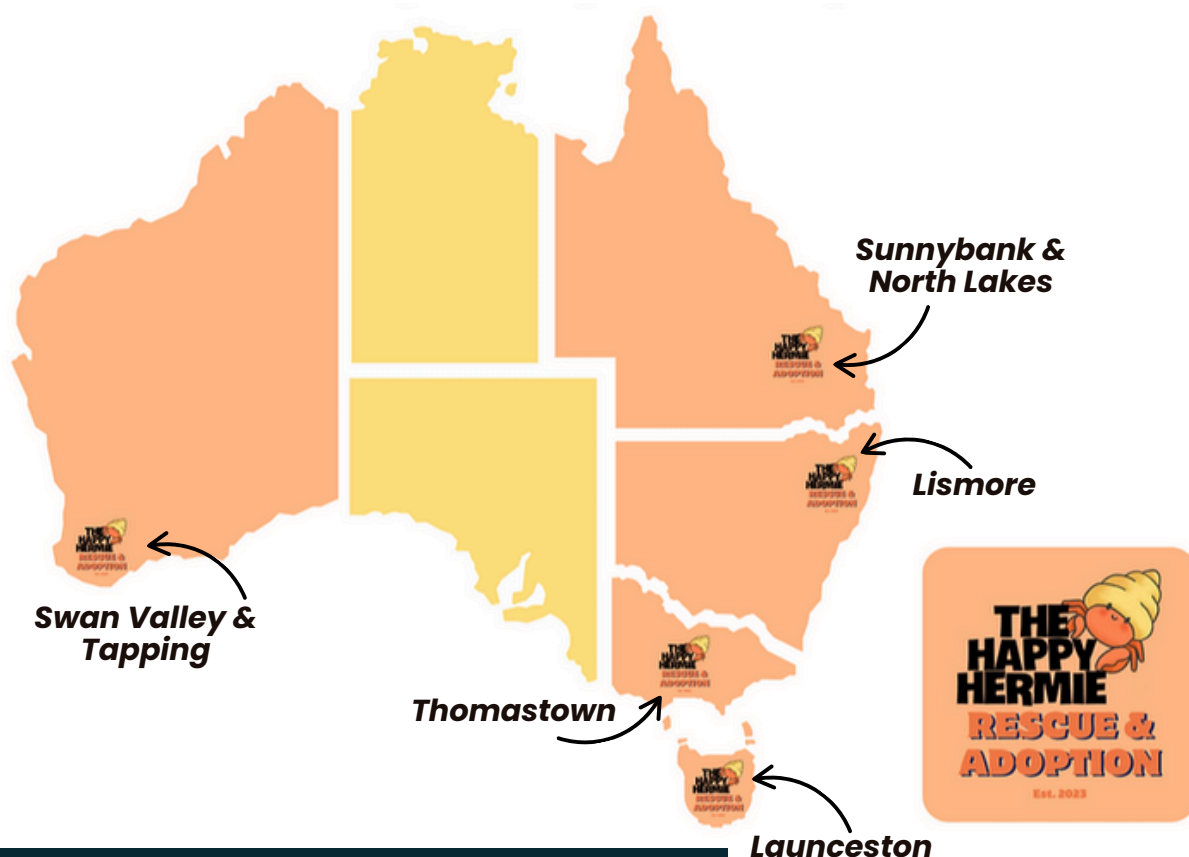
While no official outcome has been announced yet, the community remains hopeful that our collective voice has made a meaningful impact. Even the smallest shift could lead to an important change in the lives of thousands of wild-caught hermit crabs—creatures who deserve better than the conditions they currently face.



Hermit crabs awaiting shipment



VIC
WA
TAS
NSW
QLD



ADOPT A HERMIE

JOIN OUR TEAM!

7 LOCATIONS ACROSS AUS



Rescued & ready for rehab!

Rescue

We rescue unwanted, neglected or rehomed hermit crabs and offer them a second chance.

Adoption

After their first moult, they are ready for adoption! We welcome applications to adopt our rescue herxies from all 6 locations.



Ready for my new home - WA

Rehabilitation

Rehabbing in appropriate tanks, with quality diets, shells, substrate and much needed heat and humidity.



Bug - adopted in 2023

We are always looking to expand our rescue team and currently need carers in central NSW, and SA. Each carer receives a free care package from The Happy Hermie and endless support on their rescuing journey.

If you're interested in joining our team, please send an email with the subject "Carer Position" through to happyhermierescue@outlook.com.au and we will be in contact in regard to your application.

MEET OUR TRUSTED SELLERS

THE HAPPY HERMIE

Established in late 2022, The Happy Hermie offers a large variety of hand-made artisanal foods, safe and stimulating decorations and enrichment and an endless number of necessary supplies to the Australian market. An LHCOS approved store supporting the Australian hermie community with care guides.



CATHYS CREATIONS AU

Established in early 2022, Cathy's Creations has built a large menu of hand-made hermie foods that your crabs will love! As well as offering various enrichment items, Cathy's Creations paved the way for owners to feed their herxies high quality foods.

THE CRAB LAB

Established in late 2024, The Crab Lab specializes in beautifully crafted decor to suit every crabitat! Creating her masterpieces from scratch, and with custom pieces on offer, you can build the crabitat of your dreams! They also offer a variety of nutritious, hand-made foods.



WWW.HAPPYHERMIE.COM.AU
WWW.CATHYSCREATIONS AU.COM
WWW.THECRABLAB.COM.AU



MEET THE NEWEST CRAB BUSINESSES TO HIT AUSTRALIA!



**THE CREATURE
COLLECTIVE**

THE CREATURE COLLECTIVE AU

Established in early 2025, The Creature Collective creates beautifully unique handmade clay food dishes to suit every crabitat and enrich your hermites meal time! Using safe materials that have been fired in a professional kiln, creating longlasting food bowls.

DEEBEES HERMIES

Established in mid 2025, Deebees Hermies specialises in gourmet hermit crab food made from locally caught seafood. Also creating handmade tank decor to match your crabitat colour and theme, created from safe and sturdy materials and lots of love!



DEEBEES HERMIES
HANDMADE CRAFTED

**WWW.ETSY.COM/AU/SHOP/CREATURE
COLLECTIVEAU
WWW.DEEBEESHERMIES.COM**

FUN FACTS

HERMIT CRAB HIERARCHY

In every crabitat there is a hermit crab hierarchy. Each hermit crab has their own place within this hierarchy, with the largest male often being the Alpha. However, the hierarchy is often built on personality, rather than size.

2 AUSSIE SPECIES

Australia has 2 land species - *C. variabilis* & *C. perlatus* (Strawberry hermit crab). However they're no longer legal to purchase in Australia.

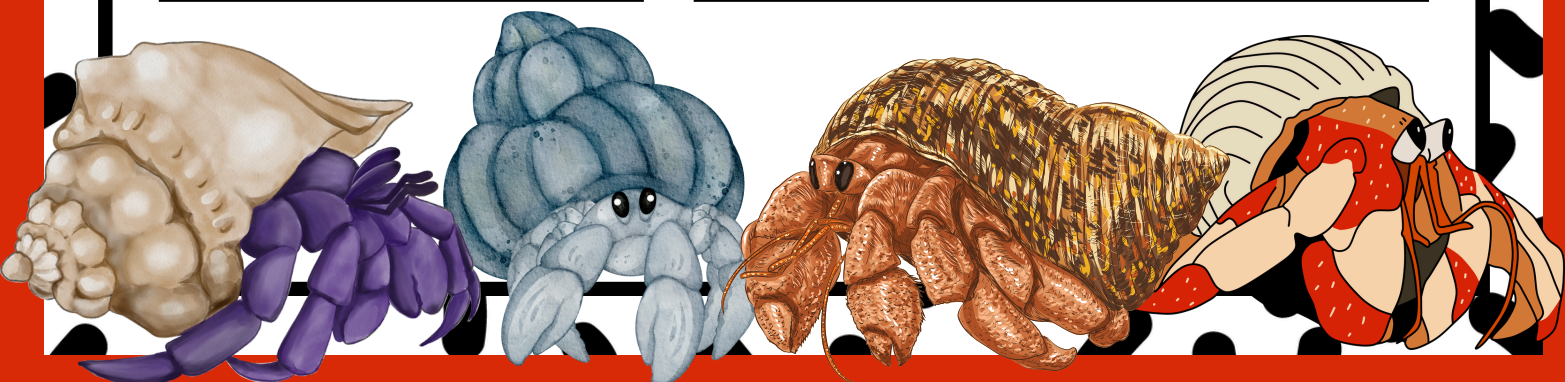
NO EARS!!

No, they do not have ears. They "hear" by sensing vibrations through their antennae, legs, and sensory hairs.



SELF GROOMING

They self groom by using their tiny 4th & 5th pair of legs to clean their shells, and gills.





Join Our Online Community ...



"Aussie Hermit Crabs Association"
Facebook Group

Aussie Hermit Crabs Association >

🔒 Private group · 3.7K members

Passionate owners across Australia

Join our online community and bond, share, and develop your knowledge with a community of passionate owners across Australia! With 3700+ members, our community is filled with owners new and old. A safe and welcoming space for Australian hermit crab keepers.



What Do We Offer?

Care guides, information sharing, guidance from experienced owners, hermit crab stores, recommendations, Q&A's, blogs, mini competitions, sharing and respect!



CRABBY COMMUNITY MEMBER SHOUTOUT



ALISON CARR

Alison has been a valued member of our Aussie Hermit Crabs Facebook Group for the past 6 months and has been more than helpful in guiding new owners, sharing her passion for hermit crabs and offering kind, respectful advice.

Alison lives in SA and owns two hermit crabs - Cookie and Marble.



My dream is to own a 450L tank and turn it into a hermit crab mansion!



-Hermie Lover-

I love watching them choose a new shell and watching them explore every corner of the tank. My tank is set up behind my couch so I can sit comfortably and just watch them all night, and I do.. quite often too long into the night!

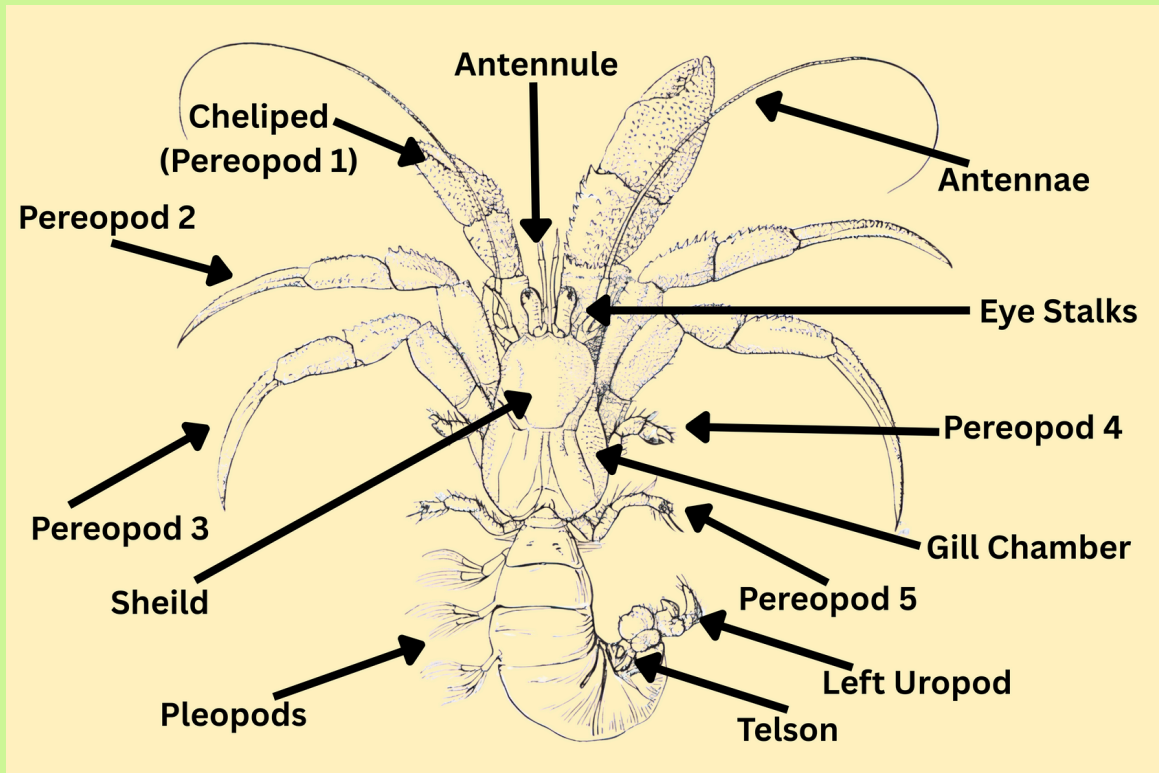


-We value your-

- Helpful advice
- Caring attitude
- Respect for other members
- Kindness
- Love for hermit crabs
- Passion for community

TOPIC OF THE MONTH

- ANATOMY -



HERMIT CRAB ANATOMY

Hermit crabs are decapod crustaceans of the superfamily Paguridae that have adapted to occupy empty mollusc shells to protect their soft and fragile abdomens. Land hermit crabs have soft, asymmetrical abdomens that must be covered by a shell for protection, or risk injury and death. While many sea creatures can grow their own shells, hermit crabs cannot. They must scavenge along the beaches for empty shells to call their home.

Legs – Pereopods on land hermit crabs consist of five sets of legs, three outside the shell and two hidden within the shell. The 4th and 5th pair of legs are much smaller in comparison to their first, second and third set of walking legs. These legs are also known as pereopods.

Chelipeds the two-front set of walking legs that hold the claw (left hand side) and large, main claw (right hand side) are known as chelipeds and sometimes referred to as pincers, pinchers or claws. These are primarily used for scavenging for foods, breaking foods apart, fighting, defending themselves, climbing, and grasping items.

Antennae and Antennules located at the front of the body, between the two chelipeds, positioned below the eye stalks are two antennae and two antennules. These are vital sensory organs for a hermit crab and are used to locate water, food, and explore their surroundings.

Hermit crabs rely on high humidity to smell and locate various scents using their antennae, as they do not have a nose like mammals. To capture odours, hermit crabs will flick their antennules and antennae back and forth to pick up smells.

Eye Stalks house the eyes which are located at the end of two moveable stalks. With incredible eyesight during daylight and darkness, they can pick up even minor movements. This is essential for survival in a world where they are prey animals and sit low on the food chain.

Maxillipeds are used during consumption of food, a crab will use their chelipeds (claws) to break apart food and bring it up to their maxillipeds, which will then bring the food to their mouth. Maxillipeds are two small arm looking appendages used for eating and grooming. Crabs can often be seen grooming their eyes and eyestalks using their maxillipeds. Unlike mammals, hermit crabs do not have teeth, therefore they must use their claws to break apart their food into small pieces to consume. Once broken apart, they use their maxillipeds to bring the food to their mouth to swallow.

Cephalic Sheild covers the cephalothorax. This part of the exoskeleton is hard in order to protect their vital organs.

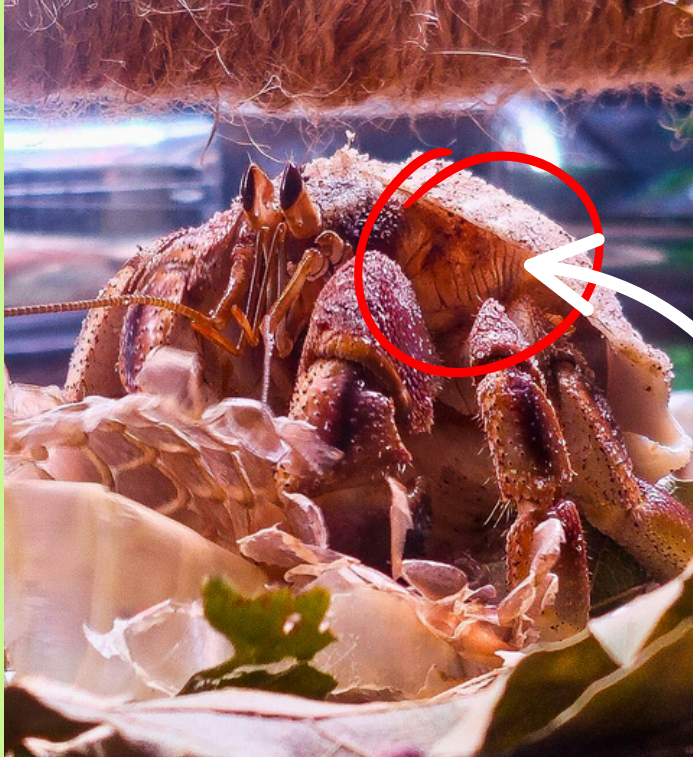
Modified Gills unlike other types of crabs, hermit crabs have modified gills located in the brachial chamber located between the 4th and 5th pair of legs. These must be kept moist to prevent them drying out and obtaining permanent damage. Hermit crabs do not have lungs and must absorb oxygen through high humidity using their modified gills, this is how land hermit crabs can survive on land, unlike their counterparts the marine crab.

Abdomen on a hermit crab has a soft exoskeleton over it, this is why they must house their abdomens in empty shells to protect themselves. A soft squishy like appearance that holds several appendages such as the 4th and 5th pair of legs, the females pleopods, the uropods and telson.

Pleopods are only present on females, they have a set of pleopods located on the left side of the abdomen, they appear as feathery appendages and are used to hold the female's eggs safely inside her shell.

4th and 5th pair of legs appear much smaller in appearance to the main legs located outside of the shell. Also known as the thoracic appendages, these are used for cleaning their gills, gripping their shell and gripping onto a mate during copulation.

Uropod and telson are located at the very end of the abdomen on the tail fan, this is also where the anus is situated. They work together to for steering and moving, especially while swimming. They also play a vital role in shell attachment.

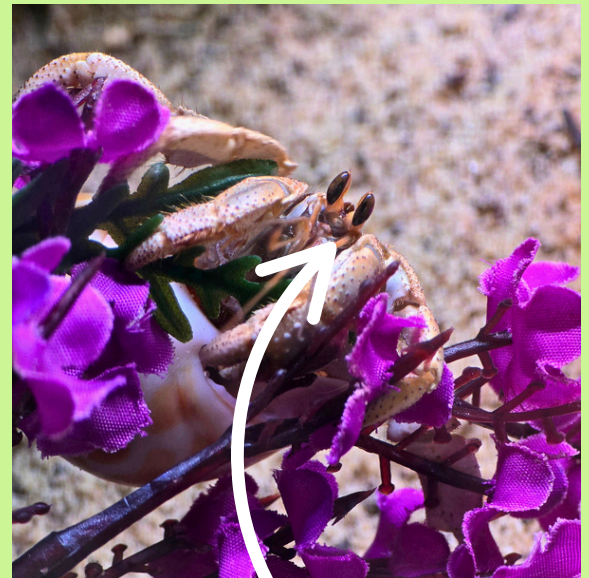


Pleopods holding eggs

Gill chamber



Antennae



Eye stalks

Antennule

LEARN MORE ABOUT CAPTIVE BREEDING



AUSTRALIAN HERMIT CRAB BREEDERS (AHCB)

Australian Hermit Crab Breeders is an Australian Facebook page run by experienced Aussie breeders working towards educating up and coming breeders and owners who are interested in the captive breeding process. Check them out on Facebook!

HERMIT HOUSE (HH)

Hermit House is a US based non-profit organization guiding and supporting new and potential breeders across the world. Helping to put an end to the wild caught pet store hermit crab trade. Check them out on Facebook!



BREEDING SEASON 2025-2026 BEGINS!

A U S T R A L I A N H E R M I T C R A B B R E E D E R S

BREEDING SEASON IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER! ARE YOU READY?



WHAT WILL YOU NEED?

- Spare Tank
- Glass Jars
- Bubblers
- Marine Salt
- Water Test Kits
- Seachem Prime
- Pipettes
- Water Thermometer
- Water Heater
- Plastic Tweezers
- Shell Grit
- Frozen Bloodworms
- Refractometer
- Bottom Feeder Pellets

The 2024-2025 Australian captive breeding season was a huge success! We welcomed many first time breeders to our team, and many brand new land babies! Most breeders never planned on breeding to begin with and only start their journeys when discovering a spawn of zoea in their salt water pool. While there is no guarantee that your hermit crabs will breed for you, its always great to be prepared! Especially if you have had previous seasons of mating behaviour.

Our dedicated Australian breeding team of experts are always available to help guide owners on their breeding journey, we also have an Australian breeders group for learning and support!

If you find yourself with zoea this breeding season, reach out to one of our experienced breeders to receive expert advice or join our dedicated breeding group.

YOU CAN READ AN IN-DEPTH BREEDING GUIDE HERE -
WWW.HAPPYHERMIE.COM.AU/POST/CAPTIVE-
BREEDING-HERMIT-CRABS

JOIN OUR BREEDERS COMMUNITY GROUP!



Join the Captive Breeding Movement – A Community for All Hermit Crab Breeders

Are you curious about hermit crab breeding? Already have experience under your belt? Or maybe you're just beginning to explore the idea of captive breeding and don't know where to start?

Welcome to Australian Hermit Crab Breeders – Learning & Support – the go-to group for anyone interested in the world of hermit crab breeding, from total beginners to seasoned breeders.

- Why Captive Breeding Matters

Captive breeding isn't just a passion—it's a movement with purpose. By successfully breeding hermit crabs in captivity, we reduce the demand for wild-caught crabs, promote ethical crab keeping, and contribute to the long-term survival of these fascinating creatures.

- A Supportive Space for All Levels

Whether you're taking your first steps or you're a confident breeder looking to connect with others, our group is designed to support you. We provide a welcoming, educational environment for:

- **Curious hermit crab owners wondering if breeding is right for them**
- **Aspiring breeders preparing for their first attempt**
- **Active breeders seeking to refine their process**
- **Long-time breeders willing to share their knowledge**

What We Offer

- ✓ **Step-by-step guidance on preparing for and managing a breeding season**
- ✓ **Experienced breeders available to answer your questions**
- ✓ **Free downloadable resources and checklists**
- ✓ **Real-time advice and support throughout your journey**
- ✓ **A respectful, drama-free space to learn and grow**

Start Your Journey with Confidence

Breeding hermit crabs can be one of the most rewarding aspects of crab keeping—but it's also complex and time-consuming. That's why being part of a knowledgeable and encouraging community can make all the difference.

Whether you're "just looking into it" or already preparing your breeding setup, you don't have to do it alone.

🔗 Ready to join us?

Find us on Facebook at "[Australian Hermit Crab Breeders – Learning & Support](#)" and become part of the captive breeding solution today. Let's build a better future for hermit crabs—together!!

PRINT ME OUT - CONNECT THE DOTS!

