

Nat Theo Club

FIELD NOTES

ISSUE 35



Hermit Crab

CRUSTACEAN

HABITAT

Hermit crabs need both saltwater and freshwater. They are found on coastal shores near the ocean, in forests, and in wetlands. They are often found in intertidal zones, which are areas below water at high tide and exposed to air during low tide. Tidal pools are in intertidal zones.

FUN FACT

Hermit crabs molt as they grow bigger, which means they shed their exoskeleton like a cicada or grasshopper. Hermit crabs have 10 legs. Three pairs of those legs can be seen sticking out of their shell. The first pair of legs has a little claw and a big claw.



DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE OUTFIT TO WEAR?

My family and I are exploring the Pacific Ocean at the Puget Sound this week. We were walking down the beach yesterday when we found a lot of hermit crabs. Each hermit crab was a different size and had a unique shell. Did you know hermit crabs do not make their own shells? All shells are made by animals in the mollusk family (listen to our upcoming podcast episode on mollusks and shells airing on October 15th!) But hermit crabs are not mollusks. They are crustaceans (pronounced crust-A-shin), so why do hermit crabs wear shells? Hermit crabs move into shells they carry around as protective armor. Their shells keep them safe from harm. As hermit crabs grow, they find new, bigger shells to move into. They don't choose shells because of how they look like we might choose a favorite outfit to wear. Instead, they choose a shell that will fit them and keep them safe.

Yesterday, we found empty shells (including the ones in the picture to the left), hermit crabs inside of shells, and live mollusk snails still living inside shells. It was very neat to see them side-by-side. We could study the animal that made a shell and the animal that moved into it afterward. Shells are very useful! They can remind us that God is very purposeful in nature. A shell protects the mollusk that makes it, and it protects another animal, a hermit crab, afterward.

Just like a hard shell protects a mollusk and a hermit crab, we also have protection and safety wherever we go. Ours doesn't look like a hard shell around our bodies. Instead, God is our protection. Psalm 91:2 says, "I will say to the Lord, 'You are my place of safety and protection. You are my God and I trust you.'" Unlike a hermit crab's shell, we never outgrow God's protection. His safety goes with us. He protects our hearts, minds, and bodies. Even when we go through hard or scary things, God ultimately protects us.

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