

## Hermit Crabs Mistaken for Disposable Pets

You can find them almost anywhere near the seashore boardwalks. All you have to do is walk into a cramped little gift shop on the beach and you can find them, stuck in a 6"X 3" carrying cage and nothing else. If you havent looked there, all you have to do is look in the nearest wannabe pet shop. They are stashed on the darkest bottom shelf with tons of others, cramped in a small aquarium with a little water and food. Some of them wont even venture out of their shells. Some of them are even missing limbs and claws. Thats right, Im talking about hermit crabs. Before they even have a chance to be chosen by people from a caring home, they are already being mistreated wherever they are being sold. The cards are already stacked against them. Many pet stores treat hermit crabs as if they are simply stock. They take good care of their birds that are worth hundreds of dollars. Same goes for their expensive puppies and kittens. But where are the pet stores that care about pets down to the smallest and most inexpensive. Just because they dont cost an arm and a leg to buy and care for doesnt mean they dont deserve to be cared for in the same way. As you know, temperature and humidity are key components to keeping a hermit crab healthy. Shoving a small aquarium on the darkest bottom shelf in the store, leaving the lid open with no humidity or temperature gauge, and not even caring to regulate temperature and humidity is total, undeniable hermit crab abuse. Unfortunately, there isnt a big organization to make pet stores treat these small creatures humanely. The SPCA wont come barging indignantly into a pet store treating hermit crabs horribly. This isnt something that is important to very many people. If you are interested enough to purchase a hermit crab from a pet store, most of the time you wont get an information or fact sheet about your pet. If you question the store clerk about tank conditions or ask the pros and cons of certain types of diets, you are dismissed because the clerk doesnt know anything about the pets they are selling or just flat out do not care to learn. They see hermit crabs as a "disposable" pet. You know... the kind people buy and just in case they dont take care of it and it dies, its ok; they are cheap and they can simply replace it. The pet store associates themselves even say that hermit crabs do not last as pets. Not only do some people believe this way, some pet stores having a return policy for defective animals, are used when the crab is mistreated, dies within the 30 days, then is taken back and another victim is chosen. This should never be the case. Hermit crabs can live 15 to 20 years or more, if taken care of properly. It is unfair to treat any creature this way. These animals are living, breathing creatures and deserve to be treated fairly. They didnt ask to be plucked from their tropical climates. They didnt ask to be bread in captivity for eventual sale. They are simply creatures that exist and deserve to be treated with care. Please dont think that if you purchased a crab and it died and you replaced it that you are necessarily in the same category as these impatient, uncaring pet owners. Many times, the hermit crabs are so stressed out from the horrible treatment they receive while they are waiting to be sold that they just cant handle being moved to a new location. Besides the fact that most pet store clerks dont handle or feed or house them correctly, they dont monitor the patrons who handle them, either. For example, the pet store Ive been referencing about keeping the hermit crabs in a dark, hardly suitable atmosphere is the same place I found one of my hermit crabs, who was already missing a limb from stress. Instead of the crabs being in a place where they and the people handling them can be seen, these hermit crabs were on the last row so that no one could see who was picking up the hermit crabs. Unruly and unsupervised children, and uncaring, ignorant people are both fully capable of accessing these creatures without supervision from a pet store associate. This means that they are fully able to roughly handle, terrify, and drop the hermit crabs that are for sale. If you researched hermit crab care, purchased a hermit crab, took it directly home, and began caring for it, and it still died, chances are, that it wasnt you who contributed to the tragic demise of your hermit crab. If any of this has happened to you, dont blame yourself. The best thing you can do is find a reputable pet store and do research about it before you make a decision to purchase any pet from it. Take the time to look at the way the crabs are displayed to sell. Ask associates if they are sitting in temperature and humidity controlled climates. If not, strongly consider not purchasing from this store. Do research on hermit crab care, and question store associates to see if they know what they are talking about. Do your homework. In the end, you will be a much more satisfied pet owner. If you have that tendency to attract strays, you might consider going to that awful pet store, and saving some of those poor hermit crabs. An idea to help you with this is to put the crabs from that store in their own cage. Leave them separate from your healthy hermit crabs. As you observe, remove the crabs that are healthy and place them in with your current crab habitat. You can try to nurse the unhealthy ones back to health. It is a brave endeavor, but might not always turn out the way we would like. But if you are willing to try to save these animals, they are much better off with you than a person who wont care for them. Whatever you decide, just remember that these are living beings. They deserve to be treated as such.

## About the Author

Kelly Church is a hermit crab enthusiast and offers [hermit crab information](#) such as providing the right [hermit crab environment](#).

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