

Land Hermit Crabs and the Flood Tide

In Japan, land hermit crabs are found principally in the Ogasawara and Ryukyu Islands. Unlike marine hermit crabs, the habitat of land hermit crabs ranges from the seashore to the interior. Equipped with sturdy claws, they are skilled tree-climbers.

When the summer flood tide comes, the females gather at the water's edge to release the eggs from their abdomens into the sea. As soon as they are released into the sea, the eggs hatch and the larvae hatchlings float around in the sea as plankton, gradually getting bigger. Those that live to maturity and safely make their way back to land, find a small shell and start to live a terrestrial life.

Land hermit crabs are omnivores, and eat anything from plants, fruit, and leaves to the carcasses of dead animals. Their habit of quickly consuming carcasses of fish and other debris has earned them the nickname "beach cleaner." They have been designated a national natural treasure.