



Shores of South Devon
(marine life interest association)
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Clash of the Crabs

Could competition for the shells needed by hermit crabs
be increasing due to climate change?

by

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via Zoom

No admission charge, but non-members must register using either of these
links: [SoSD contact](#) or Eventbrite



Climate change is expected to cause range shifts in rocky pool creatures. Hermit crabs living along the UK's Southwest Coast offer a great case study to examine how a non-native species can impact a native species. With warming waters, the Mediterranean hermit crab, *Clibanarius erythropus* (the St. Piran's crab) is spreading into new habitats. How might this impact our native hermit crabs, such as the common hermit crab, *Pagurus bernhardus*? Part of my research this past year has been examining these two species and trying to understand how a new source of competition for shell resources might impact our native hermits. Recent results suggest the two species are in competition for shells and indicate there could be a predicted winner in competitive encounters when shells are scarce. Since these hermit crabs need the shells of dead snails to survive, this could spell trouble for our native species.