Evolution and systematics

Fossil armadillos found in South America are considered the oldest members of this order. During the Tertiary Period, they diversified in South America when it was isolated from the north. After the land bridge formed, armadillos invaded North America but became extinct there only 10,000-15,000 years ago. These invaders included giant herbivorous armadillos (pampatheres) and those resembling armadillos living today. Also present were rhinoceros-sized glyptodonts with solidly sutured carapaces without movable banding that may have had limited locomotion. Spines or club-like structures on the end of their tails were used for deterring predators or fighting other glyptodonts. These clubs could exert a force that could have caused fractures observed on fossil carapaces. Since the mid-nineteenth century, the nine-banded armadillo (*Dasypus novemcinctus*) has reinvaded North America, expanding its range into the southeastern United States. Similarities observed between living armadillos and their ancestors led Charles Darwin to develop the law of the succession (i.e., the same types of organisms replace one another within the same area), an adjunct to descent with modification.
Some phylogenies based on molecular data have used armadillos to place xenarthrans as a sister taxon to ferungulates (carnivores and hoofed mammals), whereas others place them with Afrotheria (elephants, hyraxes, and aardvarks). The armadillo suborder, Cingulata, split from anteaters and sloths around the Cretaceous/Tertiary boundary. Cingulata has only one living family, Dasypodidae, which has three main clades represented by the subfamilies: Dasypodinae, the long-nosed genus that arose first, Tolypeutinae (giant, naked-tailed, and three-banded armadillos), and the closely related Euphractininae (hairy, yellow, and pichi armadillos). Phylogeny within the subfamilies remains unclear. The genus, Chlamyphorus, does not appear in the analysis because populations were rare and not sampled.

Physical characteristics
The Spanish word armadillo means “little armored one.” Armadillos are quite unique in that they are the last mammals to have a shell, that is, an ossification of the corium interrupted by several folds of the skin. The surface of the skin is gray or brown, quite soft and feels like leather. Thanks to the skin folds, the animal is very agile. Surprisingly stocky and low to the ground, armadillos are medium-sized mammals with extra articulating structures in the vertebral column that presumably improve digging. Armadillos are named for the tough bony carapace that covers the pelvic and pectoral girdles as well as areas on the head, limbs, and portions of the tail. Made of ossified dermal tissue covered with a horny epidermis, the carapace, ranging in color from dark to yellow-white, provides protection from thorny vegetation, conspecifics and predators. When harassed, armadillos will tuck their eyes under the shoulder shield and coil slightly to minimize the amount of exposed flesh. Three-banded armadillos (Tolypeutes) take this to the extreme and bend completely into a ball, exposing only thick carapace. Girdle-like armor banding (3–13) separated by folds of skin provides flexibility and agility in locomotion. Black to white-colored hairs may be interspersed on the carapace and cover their soft underbellies.

The head varies from shovel-shaped to elongated and narrow. The ears vary in length as well and can be pointed or rounded. Powerful limbs bear formidable claws for digging burrows and gathering food. Hind limbs always have five digits while the number of forelimb digits varies (three to five) depending on the species. Naked-tailed (Cabassous) and giant armadillos (Priodontes maximus) possess an enlarged claw on the forelimb used to tear into termite and ant mounds. Wielding this large claw and rotating their carapaces back and forth enable these armadillos to escape predators by burying themselves within minutes.

Distribution
Most armadillos are restricted to South America, specifically east of the Andes to the Atlantic coast and south to the

A nine-banded armadillo (Dasypus novemcinctus) drinks from a shallow stream in Texas, USA. (Photo by A. Blank. Bruce Coleman, Inc. Reproduced by permission.)
Strait of Magellan. Exceptions include the northern naked-tailed \((C.\ centralis)\) and the nine-banded armadillos that have expanded their ranges into southern Mexico and the southeastern United States, respectively.

**Habitat**

Armadillos are terrestrial to fossorial, exploiting habitats ranging from rainforests to desert, including deciduous and cloud forests, grasslands, llanos, savanna, and thorny scrub. In tropical rainforests armadillos are second only to sloths in mammalian biomass. Adult armadillos are prey to jaguars, pumas, jaguarundis, wild dogs, maned wolves, black bears, and alligators. Probably due to their smaller size, nine-banded armadillo juveniles have twice the mortality of adults, falling prey to these and other animals including raptors.

Burrows, built for sleeping, nesting, escaping predators, or creating an insect reservoir, are dug in well-drained soils or into ant and termite mounds. Naked-tailed armadillos dig a fresh burrow nightly while nine-banded armadillos may reuse 20 burrows per year. In some species, adults and juveniles build nests in burrows by gathering and tucking grass or dead leaves between body and forelimbs, hopping backwards to the burrow, and depositing material by kicking their back feet. Female larger hairy \((Chactophractus villosus)\), nine-banded and Brazilian seven-banded \((D.\ septemcinctus)\) armadillos construct above ground grass shelters prior to parturition.

**Behavior**

Armadillos are primarily solitary though young siblings and consorting pairs forage together. Llanos long-nosed armadillos \((D.\ sabanicola)\) have been seen feeding in groups in elevated areas in floodplains. Social organization for most species is unknown with the exception of nine-banded armadillos. In this species, males and females have overlapping...
home ranges. Females may or may not share an area with each-other depending on density. Although males do overlap in home range, breeding males may use more exclusive areas. These breeding "territories" are maintained by aggression directed at non-breeding males. Female aggression in nine-banded, yellow (*Euphractus sexicinctus*), and larger hairy armadillos is associated with lactation. Defense of space was also seen in northern long-nosed armadillos during the breeding season.

These animals communicate through scent and sound. Secretions from glands in the anal region, on the feet, ears, and pelvic shield function for marking of habitat, identifying individuals, and advertising sexual receptivity. Chemical composition of anal sac glands changes during estrus in nine-banded armadillos and paired females conspicuously wag their tails after male solicitation. The position of large smelly glands on the yellow armadillos pelvic shield suggests a burrow-marking function. Armadillos give off a snuffling sound while foraging and some make a growling sound or a scream when captured. Both sexes in nine-banded armadillos softly chuck during courtship. A buzzing sound may be heard between mother and young. Strangely, armadillos seem unaffected by human voice. Eyesight is so poor that they may run into objects in their path.

Activity is mostly crepuscular and/or nocturnal although yellow, three-banded, northern long-nosed, and pichi (*Zaedyus pichiy*) armadillos forage during the day. Many species shift activity periods seasonally, becoming more diurnal as temperatures drop. Only Andean hairy (*C. natio*) and pichi armadillos hibernate. Young nine-banded armadillos have a morning and an evening peak of activity. When active, armadillos mostly forage. When disturbed, many balance on back feet and tail and sniff to monitor for predators or conspecifics. If suddenly surprised, nine-banded armadillos will leap into the air and land running, startling a predator. This escape strategy is used unsuccessfully with automobiles, resulting in road kills. Armadillos are champion sleepers, spending upwards of 16 hours snoozing per day.

Feeding ecology and diet

Armadillos are primarily insectivores, feeding on adult and larval forms of beetles, ants, and termites. Some species are myrmecophagic while others opportunistically forage on invertebrates, small vertebrates, carrion, and plant material. Some ingest fruit seasonally. Armadillos ingest large amounts of dirt for mammals. It is unknown whether dirt is required for proper digestion or trace minerals or enters the gut incidentally with food.

Armadillos root around in leaf litter and pause periodically perhaps to sense soil-dwelling prey. Once prey is detected, armadillos use their formidable claws to dig rapidly, excavating small conical pits or tearing into ant and termite mounds. Their sticky tongues effectively lap up the scurrying insects. One stomach had more than 40,000 ants present. Armadillos have a very low metabolic rate, which means that they do not waste a lot of energy producing heat. This also means that they are not good at living in cold areas, because they are not efficient at keeping warm. They do not have any fat reserves, so they must forage for food on a daily basis. A few consecutive cold days can be deadly to the animals.
Reproductive biology

Mating for most species appears to be polygynous and occurs in the summer but some species breed year round in captivity. During courtship, a male follows the female and, for nine-banded armadillos, they forage together for several days. The male checks receptivity by soliciting the female to lift her tail by lightly touching her back. Fertilization occurs but implantation of the embryo is delayed for four months in some species. Most species have a litter of one to three young per year. Unique to mammals, *Dasypus* females exhibit obligate polyembryony, thereby giving birth to genetically identical young (two to 12 depending on the species). Parental care is solely the job of the female. Mating systems are unknown for most species except nine-banded armadillos. Gestation is 140 days, newborn are blind and naked with soft leathery skin, that hardens into armor within a few days. The young are nursed for 2–2.5 months, and start to walk around after a week and open their eyes after 3–4 weeks.

Conservation status

Of the 20 species of armadillos, 12 are listed as Vulnerable, Endangered, Near Threatened, or Data Deficient. Exploitation for food and loss of habitat are the main reasons for decline. Many populations are fossorial and have not been studied thoroughly and so their current status is unclear. The hairy long-nosed armadillo (*Dasypus novemcinctus*) is known only from a few skins from mountains in Peru.

Significance to humans

Armadillos are exploited throughout Latin America for food. They are considered so tasty that one Mexican society circumvented food taboos by calling them turkeys. In the United States during the Great Depression in the thirties, armadillos were readily consumed and given the names Texas turkey and Hoover hog. Souvenir purses and baskets with tail handles are formed from hollowed-out carapaces. Stuffed specimens on tip toes still line shop shelves in Mexican border towns. Armadillos are unwanted guests in suburban settings and agricultural fields. Ranchers have also targeted armadillos for extermination because their burrows reportedly lead to broken limbs of livestock and horses. Many change their minds upon hearing that armadillos are the only known predator of fire ants in the United States. Armadillos also are used as research models in the study of leprosy and development of a vaccine, because they are the only animals that can transmit leprosy.
Species accounts

**Nine-banded armadillo**  
*Dasypus novemcinctus*

**SUBFAMILY**  
Dasypodinae

**TAXONOMY**  
*Dasypus novemcinctus* Linnaeus, 1758, Brazil.

**OTHER COMMON NAMES**  
English: Common long-nosed armadillo; French: Tatou à neuf bandes; German: Neunbinden-Gürteltier; Spanish: Mulita.

**PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS**  
Length 25.4 in (64.6 cm); weight 9.9 lb (4.5 kg). Dentition: 7–9/7–9. Has 7–9 bands, a long banded tail, an elongated face, and large ears held close together.

**DISTRIBUTION**  
Latin America, southern North America.

**HABITAT**  
Forested areas preferred.

**BEHAVIOR**  
Crepuscular and nocturnal but more diurnal during the winter. Solitary. Prescribed home ranges maintained. Male breeding territories suggested. Polygynous. Can go without oxygen for short periods while foraging in soil. Walks across the bottom of small streams but gulps air and dogpaddles across larger bodies of water. Armadillos are fond of water; under arid, dry climatic conditions, they concentrate in the vicinity of streams and water holes. Tracks in the mud around small ponds give evidence that the armadillos visit them not only for purposes of drinking and feeding, but also to take mud baths. Armadillos are timid animals. They are almost constantly active when foraging and probing into crevices and under litter for food. They continuously grunt while foraging and do not seem to be particularly attentive to their surroundings. They communicate with each other by low-volume sounds.

**FEEDING ECOLOGY AND DIET**  
Eats beetles, beetle larvae, ant larvae, other insects and invertebrates, small vertebrates, and fruit seasonally. Moves noisily through leaf litter stopping periodically to probe the soil.

**REPRODUCTIVE BIOLOGY**  
Polygynous mating occurs in summer months, June through August in the United States. Courtship may last several days. Implantation of embryo is delayed for four months or as long as two years. Gestation lasts four months with births occurring about 65 days after implantation. Females exhibit polyembryony, giving birth to four genetically identical young. Not all individuals breed in a given year. In one population, genetic studies showed only one third of adults were parents over a four-year period. Ovulation is inhibited during drought conditions.

**CONSERVATION STATUS**  
Not threatened.

**SIGNIFICANCE TO HUMANS**  
Used as food and as an animal model for penile erection and leprosy studies.

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**Small hairy armadillo**  
*Chaetophractus vellerosus*

**SUBFAMILY**  
Euphractinae

**TAXONOMY**  
*Dasypus vellerosus* (Gray, 1865), Bolivia.

**OTHER COMMON NAMES**  
English: Small screaming armadillo; French: Petit tatou vela; German: Weisshaar-Gürteltier; Spanish: Quirquincho chico.

**PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS**  
Length 14.6 in (37 cm); weight 1.9 lb (850 g). Dentition: 9/10. Smallest of the hairy armadillos, it has a broad head shield with widely spaced ears and 18 bands. Silky hairs sparsely cover the body. Kidneys concentrate fluids and are thus adapted to arid climates.

**DISTRIBUTION**  
Bolivia, Paraguay, and Argentina.

**HABITAT**  
Sandy desert habitat that is not rocky.
Family: Armadillos

BEHAVIOR
Fossorial and nocturnal to avoid the day's heat but become more diurnal in the winter. Spend most of their time foraging near vegetation in prescribed home ranges (4.7 ha on average). In captivity, forages systematically, spiraling inwardly in a patch. Multiple burrows, found in sand dunes or near vegetation, are used for resting, shelter and foraging. Gives off an eerie scream when handled.

FEEDING ECOLOGY AND DIET
Omnivorous diet consists of invertebrates, vertebrates and plant material. Summer diet includes rodents (20%). Diet adapted to desert life where insects are scarce.

REPRODUCTIVE BIOLOGY
Captive animals give birth to one to two young and have a gestation period of 65 days. Probably polygynous.

CONSERVATION STATUS
Not threatened.

SIGNIFICANCE TO HUMANS
None known.

OTHER COMMON NAMES
English: Six-banded armadillo; French: Tatou à six bandes; German: Sechsbinden-Gürteltier; Spanish: Gualacate.

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS
Length 24.3 in (61.6 cm); weight 9.9 lb (4.5 kg). Dentition: 9/10 or 8/9. Has a yellowish carapace with long light hairs, a broad face shield with small separated ears, and a pelvic shield with 2-4 holes secreting scent.

DISTRIBUTION
Suriname, Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay, and parts of Argentina.

HABITAT
Inhabits savanna, steppe and forest edge.

BEHAVIOR
Diurnal. Reuses burrows probably marking them with pelvic-shield glands. Unusual in that they bite when handled.

FEEDING ECOLOGY AND DIET
Omnivorous, feeding on plant material, invertebrates and vertebrates including carrion. Four rodents were found in stomach of one road kill.

REPRODUCTIVE BIOLOGY
 Females give birth to one to three young of mixed sex per litter. Does not exhibit polyembryony. In captivity gestation length is 60–65 days. May be polygynous.

CONSERVATION STATUS
Not threatened.

SIGNIFICANCE TO HUMANS
Used as food.

Southern three-banded armadillo
Tolypeutes matacus

SUBFAMILY
Tolypeutinae

TAXONOMY
Loricatus matacus (Desmarest, 1804), Argentina.

OTHER COMMON NAMES
French: Tatou à trois bandes du Sud; German: Kugel Gürteltier; Spanish: Bolita.

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS
Length 12.4 in (31.4 cm); weight 2.4 lb (1.1 kg). Dentition: 9/9. Three bands. Thick carapace. Short tail. Walks on tips of claws on forelimb.

DISTRIBUTION
Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, and Paraguay.

HABITAT
Grassland and open plains.

BEHAVIOR
When threatened, rolls up into a ball, exposing only its carapace and tail and head shields. Diurnal. Does not dig burrows but uses those built by other species. Individuals found sleeping together in winter (also the breeding season).

FEEDING ECOLOGY AND DIET
Feeds on ants and termites obtained by digging shallow pits.
**Greater naked-tailed armadillo**  
*Cabassous tatouay*

**SUBFAMILY**  
Tolypeutinae

**TAXONOMY**  
*Loricatus tatouay* (Desmarest, 1804), Paraguay.

**OTHER COMMON NAMES**  
French: Grand tatou à queue nue; German: Grosses Nacktschwanz-Gürteltier; Spanish: Tatu-ai mayor.

**PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS**  
Length 25 in (63.7 cm); weight 11.8 lb (5.35 kg). Dentition: 9/8. They resemble small versions of giant armadillos except no armor on their tails.

**DISTRIBUTION**  
Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Argentina.

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**HABITAT**  
Found along rivers but also reported in grassland communities.

**BEHAVIOR**  
Nocturnal forager but may continue to feed near its burrow shortly after sunrise. When harassed they quickly bury themselves within minutes. When handled they vocalize like a grunting pig.

**FEEDING ECOLOGY AND DIET**  
Primarily myrmecophagous but also feeds on incidental invertebrates present in the mounds. Holes are dug directly into the mounds or where insects are foraging.

**REPRODUCTIVE BIOLOGY**  
Females give birth to one offspring per year. No information available on seasonality or mating behavior.

**CONSERVATION STATUS**  
Not threatened.

**SIGNIFICANCE TO HUMANS**  
None known.

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**Giant armadillo**  
*Priodontes maximus*

**SUBFAMILY**  
Tolypeutinae

**TAXONOMY**  
*Dasypus maximus* (Kerr, 1792), French Guiana.
**Family: Armadillos**

**OTHER COMMON NAMES**
French: Tatou géant; German: Riesengürteltier; Spanish: Tamacarrera.

**PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS**
Length 4.9 ft (1.5 m); weight 66 lb (30 kg). Dentition 18/19. Largest of the living armadillos. Colored darkly with many narrow bands and an armored tail.

**DISTRIBUTION**
Venezuela, Colombia, Brazil, and Argentina.

**HABITAT**
Tropical forest and open savanna.

**BEHAVIOR**
Fossorial and nocturnal. Digs its burrows in open fields and termite mounds, destroying the mound in the process.

**FEEDING ECOLOGY AND DIET**
Myrmecophagous (feeds on ants).

**REPRODUCTIVE BIOLOGY**
Females give birth to one to two young per litter per year. Polygynous.

**CONSERVATION STATUS**
Listed as Endangered because of overexploitation and loss of habitat.

**SIGNIFICANCE TO HUMANS**
Hunted for food within its range.

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**Pink fairy armadillo**
*Chlamyphorus truncatus*

**SUBFAMILY**
Chlamyphorinae

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**TAXONOMY**
*Chlamyphorus truncatus* Harlan, 1825, Argentina.

**OTHER COMMON NAMES**
English: Lesser pink fairy armadillo; French: Petit pichiciego; German: Kleiner Gürteltier; Spanish: Pichiciego menor.

**PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS**
Length 5.9 in (15 cm); weight 4.2 oz (120 g). Has reduced eyes and ears. Carapace is attached along backbone. Long silky hair found ventrally, extending up under the carapace. Face and rear shields are flexible.

**DISTRIBUTION**
Argentina.

**HABITAT**
Sandy to mixed soil types with limited thorny, scrubby vegetation.

**BEHAVIOR**
Fossorial and nocturnal. Captive animals are active periodically throughout the day. They burrow under obstacles rather than going around.

**FEEDING ECOLOGY AND DIET**
Omnivorous diet of insects, other invertebrates, plant material, and occasionally carrion.

**REPRODUCTIVE BIOLOGY**
Gives birth to one young per litter per year. Probably polygynous.

**CONSERVATION STATUS**
Listed as Endangered.

**SIGNIFICANCE TO HUMANS**
None known.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common name / Scientific name/ Other common names</th>
<th>Physical characteristics</th>
<th>Habitat and behavior</th>
<th>Distribution</th>
<th>Diet</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Armadillo hairy armadillo</td>
<td>Varies from yellowish to light brown. Eighteen dorsal bands, 8 are moveable. Has hair between scales and a head shield 2.3 in long by 2.3 in wide (6 by 6 cm), head and body length 8.6-15.7 in (22-40 cm), tail length 3.3-6.5 in (8-17 cm).</td>
<td>Burrows in steep slopes. Nocturnal and solitary. Body temperature is regulated ectothermically.</td>
<td>Cochabamba, Oruro, and La Paz, Bolivia.</td>
<td>Some small vertebrates, many insects, and some vegetation.</td>
<td>Vulnerable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaetophractus nationi</td>
<td>Skin is brown to pinkish and hair is grayish brown to white. Double layer of hem and bone covers majority of dorsal side. Small shield on head. Carapace consists of 18 bands, 7 to 8 of which are moveable. Ventral area covered by soft skin. Head and body length 8.6-15.7 in (22-40 cm), tail length 3.3-6.5 in (8-17 cm).</td>
<td>Open, semi-desert environments. Diurnal, year-round breeding, maximum life span is 30 years.</td>
<td>Gran Chaco of Bolivia, Paraguay, and Argentina.</td>
<td>Insects, invertebrates, small vertebrates, plants, and carrion.</td>
<td>Not threatened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dasypus hybridus</td>
<td>Very little hair on upper part of body, sparsely scattered and pale yellow on undersides. Carapace ranges from mottled brown to yellow in coloration. Long, pointed nose, short legs. Hand and body length 9.4-22.5 in (24.0-57.3 cm), tail length 5-19 in (12.5-48.3 cm), weight 2.2-22 lb (1-10 kg).</td>
<td>Dense, shady cover and limestone formation from sea level to 9,840 ft (3,000 m). Build large nests of grass or leaves, share burrows with other armadillos. Primarily nocturnal.</td>
<td>Argentina, Paraguay, and Bolivia.</td>
<td>Insects, spiders, and small amphibians.</td>
<td>Not threatened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dasypus kappleri</td>
<td>Sparse, pale yellow hair scattered on underparts. Carapace coloration varies from brown to yellowish white in color. Long, pointed nose, and short legs. Head and body length 9.4-22.5 in (24.0-57.3 cm), tail length 5-19 in (12.5-48.3 cm), weight 2.2-22 lb (1-10 kg).</td>
<td>Dense, shady cover and limestone formation from sea level to 9,840 ft (3,000 m). Build large nests of grass or leaves, share burrows with other armadillos. Primarily nocturnal.</td>
<td>Colombia (east of the Andes), Venezuela (south of the Orinoco), Guyana, Suriname, and south through the Amazon Basin of Brazil, Ecuador, and Peru.</td>
<td>Insects, spiders, and small amphibians.</td>
<td>Not threatened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dasypus pilosus</td>
<td>Almost no hair on head. Long white and pale yellow hair on shell and underparts, giving furry appearance. Carapace coloration varies from mottled brown to yellowish white. Long, pointed nose and short legs. Eleven movable bands on shell. Head and body length 9.4-22.5 in (24.0-57.3 cm), tail length 5-19 in (12.5-48.3 cm), weight 2.2-22 lb (1-10 kg).</td>
<td>Dense, shady cover and limestone formations from sea level to 9,840 ft (3,000 m) in elevation. Dig deep burrows and share them with other armadillos. Primarily nocturnal.</td>
<td>Only from the Peruvian Andes in San Martin, La Libertad, Huancayo, and Junin.</td>
<td>Mostly insects, spiders, and small amphibians.</td>
<td>Vulnerable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dasypus sabanicola</td>
<td>Almost no hair on head. Carapace coloration varies from mottled brown to yellowish white. Sparse, white, long hair on underparts. Head and body length 9.4-22.5 in (24.0-57.3 cm), tail length 5-19 in (12.5-48.3 cm), weight 2.2-22 lb (1-10 kg).</td>
<td>Dense, shady cover and limestone formations from sea level to 9,840 ft (3,000 m) in elevation. Dig deep burrows and share them with other armadillos. Primarily nocturnal.</td>
<td>Llanos of Venezuela and Colombia.</td>
<td>Mainly insects, spiders, and small amphibians.</td>
<td>Data Deficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dasypus septemcinctus</td>
<td>Coloration of carapace varies from mottled brown to yellowish white. Sparse, white, long hair on underparts. Head and body length 9.4-22.5 in (24.0-57.3 cm), tail length 5-19 in (12.5-48.3 cm), weight 2.2-22 lb (1-10 kg).</td>
<td>Dense, shady cover and limestone formations from sea level to 9,840 ft (3,000 m) in elevation. Dig deep burrows and share them with other armadillos. Primarily nocturnal.</td>
<td>Lower Amazon Basin of Brazil to the Gran Chaco of Bolivia, Paraguay, and northern Argentina.</td>
<td>Mainly insects, spiders, and small amphibians.</td>
<td>Not threatened</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Family: Armadillos

<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brazilian three-banded armadillo</td>
<td>Coloration is blackish brown. Most have moveable bands. Can completely enclose themselves in their own shell by rolling into a ball. Tail is short and thick. Head and body length 8.5–10.7 in (21.8–27.3 cm), tail length 2.3–3.2 in (6.0–8.0 cm), weight 2.2–3.5 lbs (1–1.6 kg).</td>
<td>Tropical deciduous forest on elevated portions of the Brazilian plateau. Forages with powerful claws.</td>
<td>Brazilian states of Bahia, Ceará, and Pernambuco.</td>
<td>Termites, invertebrates, and fruit.</td>
<td>Vulnerable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zaedyus pichiy</td>
<td>Small ears, developed claws, and dark brown armor. Armor has white to yellow edges and hairs sticking up between them. Hair coloration ranges from yellow to white. Head and body length 10–13.2 in (26.0–33.5 cm), tail length 3.9–5.5 in (10.0–14.0 cm).</td>
<td>Grasslands and arid regions of southern South America. Usually resides in areas with sandy soils. Primarily nocturnal.</td>
<td>Mendoza, San Luis, and Buenos Aires, Argentina, south through Argentina and eastern Chile to the Straits of Magellan.</td>
<td>Insects, worms, some plant matter (like tubers), carrion, and other animal matter.</td>
<td>Data Deficient</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Resources

Books


Periodicals


Colleen M. McDonough, PhD
W. J. Loughry, PhD