

Southern Three-Banded Armadillo

Scientific Name: *Tolypeutes matacus*

Class: Mammalia

Order: Cingulata

Family: Chlamyphoridae



The Southern Three-Banded Armadillo is 8.5 to 11 inches long not including the tail which adds another 2-3 inches. The rough, thick and heavily armored shell or carapace accounts for only 16% of the body weight. The animal has two large shells, front and back, with two to four moveable bands in between. The Southern Three-Banded Armadillo is one of two species that can curl into a ball and completely enclose their bodies into protective shells about the size of a large grapefruit. While predators cannot open them, man can easily pick them up. Apparently this species does not dig holes, but utilizes the abandoned burrows of anteaters.

They run rapidly, with a peculiar gait with only the tips of their foreclaws touching the ground. They are diurnal and run through the grass with their backs arched, sniffing and scraping as they go. They are rather noisy, making hissing and breathing sounds.

Range

Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina.

Habitat

They live in open, grassy areas in open forests and marshes. They do not dig burrows but use abandoned burrows of anteaters and other animals.

Gestation

Approximately 120 Days

Litter

1

Behavior

Southern Three-Banded Armadillos can curl themselves into a ball for protection. They do not dig but instead will use abandoned burrows. They run rapidly, with a peculiar gait, only the tips of their foreclaws touching the ground. They are diurnal and run through the grass sniffing and scraping as they go. They are rather noisy, making hissing and breathing sounds. Although primarily a solitary animal, groups of up to 12 can be found in a shallow nest during the cold season.

Reproduction

Southern Three-Banded Armadillos usually mate between March and June and often give birth in November. Newborns have claws that are fully developed and hardened. Their eyes and ear pinnae are closed, but open in the third or fourth week of life. The birth weight is about four ounces. They are weaned in about 72 days. They are sexually mature in 9 to 12 months. Armadillos usually live 15 to 20 years.

Wild Diet

Insects (Ants and Termites)