

nine-banded armadillo *Dasyus novemcinctus*

Kingdom: Animalia

Division/Phylum: Chordata

Class: Mammalia

Order: Cingulata

Family: Dasypodidae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, nonnative

FEATURES

The nine-banded armadillo is covered with bony plates of armor under a leathery skin. There is a bony shield on top of the head. This mammal has a long, pointed snout. Its ears are large, and its tail is long and encased in bony rings. The feet have long, stout claws. There are four toes on the front feet and five toes on the hind feet. The body is about 23.5 – 31.5 inches long plus a tail of 9.5 to 15.0 inches in length. The teeth are peg-shaped. There are no incisors or canines.

BEHAVIORS

Not a lot is known about the life history of the armadillo in Illinois since it has recently expanded its range and moved into the state, so its life history information in this account is based on its activities in states further south and southwest. In Illinois, it has been found throughout the state, but it probably cannot survive the winter conditions in the northern half of the state. It digs burrows in the ground in stream banks, under stumps and logs, under shrubs and under buildings. Some burrows will contain a nest of plant materials. Armadillos are usually active at night, dusk and dawn, although they are more likely to be active during the day in winter. They do not hibernate. They can swim, and they can also walk on the bottom of small streams and ponds for several minutes. They have poor vision but good senses of smell and hearing. They can dig extremely fast. Insects are the main component of their diet, but they also eat other small invertebrates, fruits, fungi, dead animals and other items. Mating occurs in summer. The implantation of the embryos is delayed until November or December with the young born in spring. A litter is typically formed of four, identical individuals that developed from a single egg.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; coniferous forests; upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

edge

© Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 2020. Biodiversity of Illinois.