

Armadillo

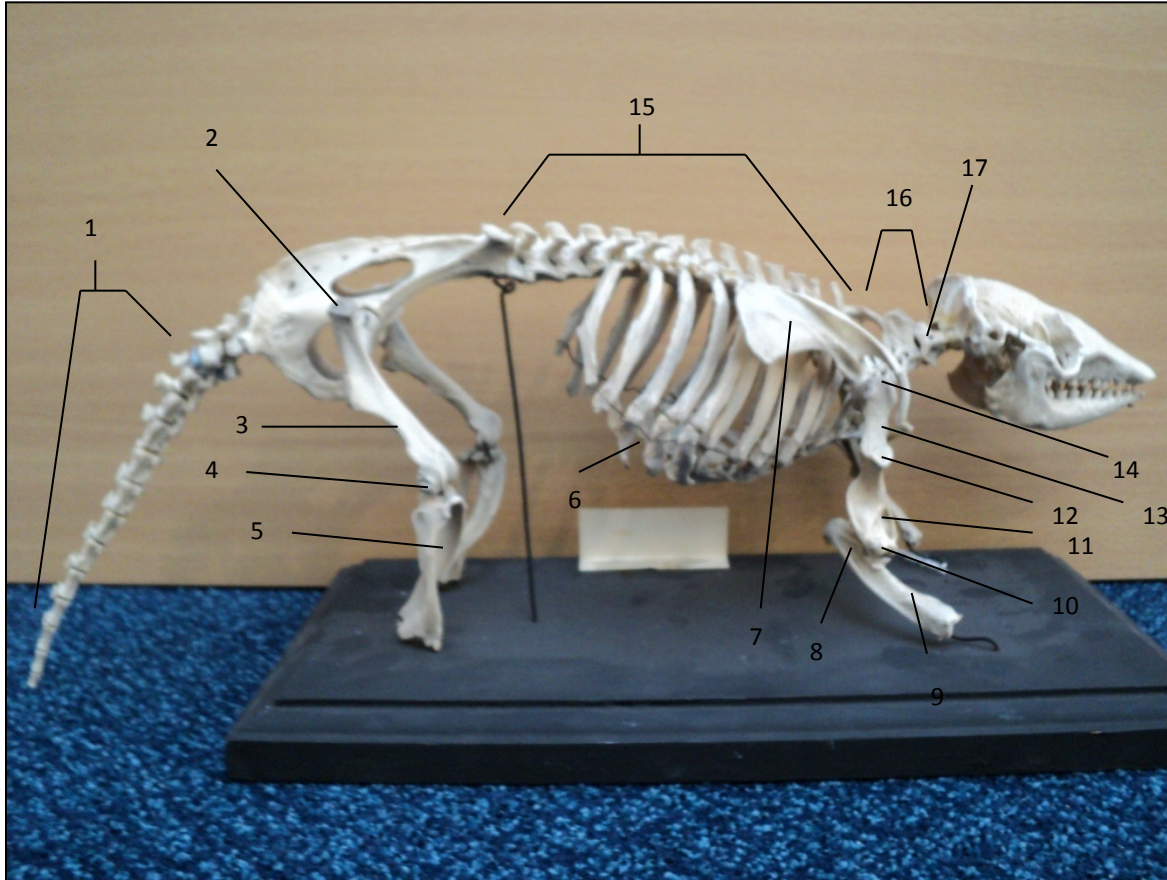
The word *armadillo* is Spanish for "little armoured one" due to their armoured shell. Dasypodidae is the only surviving family in the order Cingulata, part of the superorder Xenarthra along with the anteaters and sloths. There are approximately 10 extant genera and around 20 extant species some of which are distinguished by the number of bands on their armour. Their average length is about 75 cm, including tail; the Giant Armadillo grows up to 150 cms and weighs up to 59 kg, while the Pink Fairy Armadillos have an overall length of 12-15 cms. All species are native to the Americas. The sole resident armadillo is the Nine-banded Armadillo most common in the central southernmost states, particularly Texas. Their range is as far east as South Carolina and Florida and as far north as Nebraska; which has been consistently expanding due to a lack of natural predators and have been found as far north as southern Illinois and Indiana.



Many species use their sharp claws to dig for food, such as grubs, and to dig dens. They have 5 clawed toes on the hind feet and 3-5 toes with heavy digging claws on the forefeet. Armadillos have a large number of cheek teeth. The Nine-banded Armadillo prefers to build burrows in moist soil near the creeks, streams, and arroyos around which it lives and feeds. The diet of different armadillo species varies, but consists mainly of insects, grubs, and other invertebrates. Some species, however, feed almost entirely on ants and termites. Armadillos have poor vision, but large eyes. The armour of the armadillo is formed by plates of dermal bone covered in relatively small, overlapping epidermal scales called "scutes", composed of bone with a covering of horn. In most species, there are rigid shields over the shoulders and hips, with a number of bands separated by flexible skin covering the back and flanks. Additional armour covers the top of the head, the upper parts of the limbs, and the tail. This armour-like skin appears to be the main defense of many armadillos, although most escape predators by fleeing (often into thorny patches, from which their armor protects them) or digging to safety. The underside of the animal is simply covered with soft skin and fur. Armadillos have short legs but can move quite quickly, and have the ability to remain underwater for as long as six minutes.

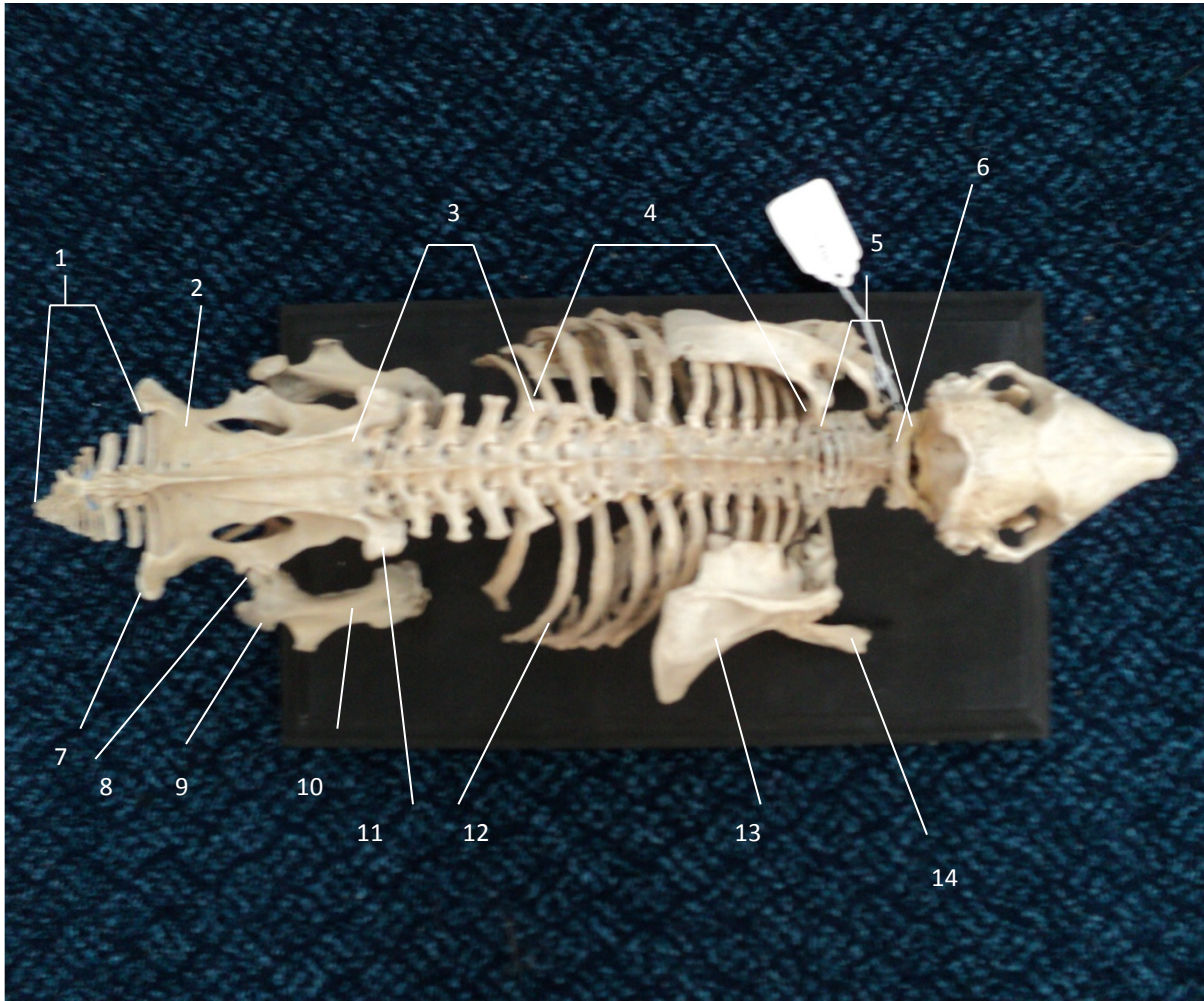
Gestation lasts anywhere from 60-120 days, depending on species, although the nine-banded armadillo also exhibits delayed implantation, so that the young are not typically born for eight months after mating. Most members of the genus *Dasypus* give birth to four young but other species may have typical litter sizes that range from one to eight. The young are born with soft leathery skin, which hardens within a few weeks, and reach sexual maturity in 3–12 months. Armadillos are solitary animals that do not share their burrows with other adults.

Armadillo Skeleton



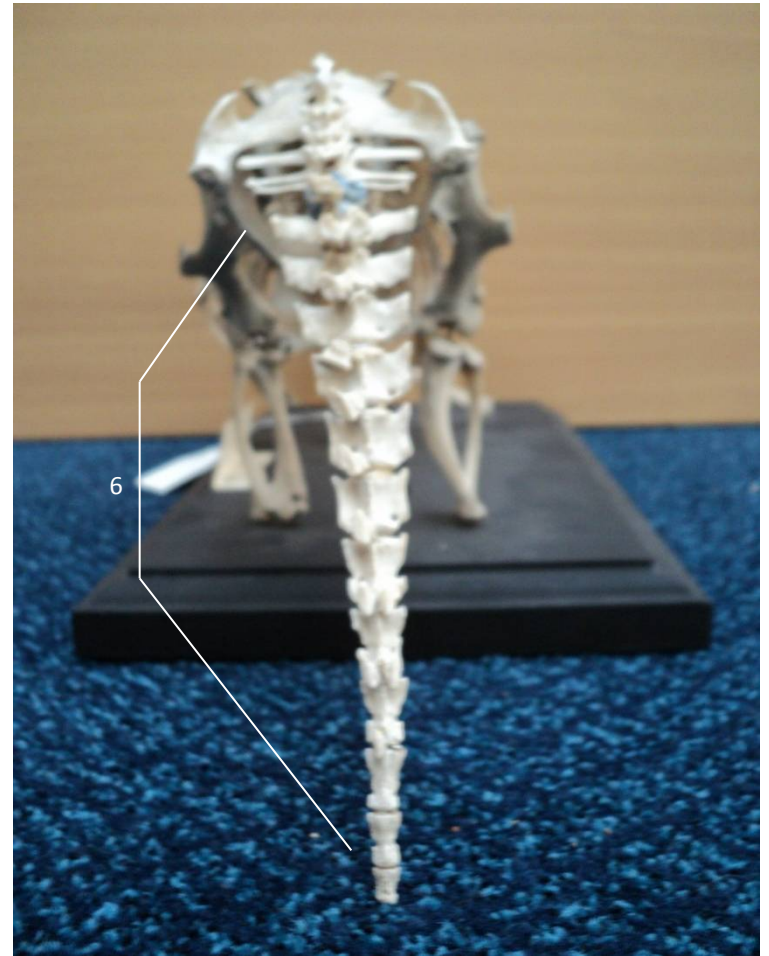
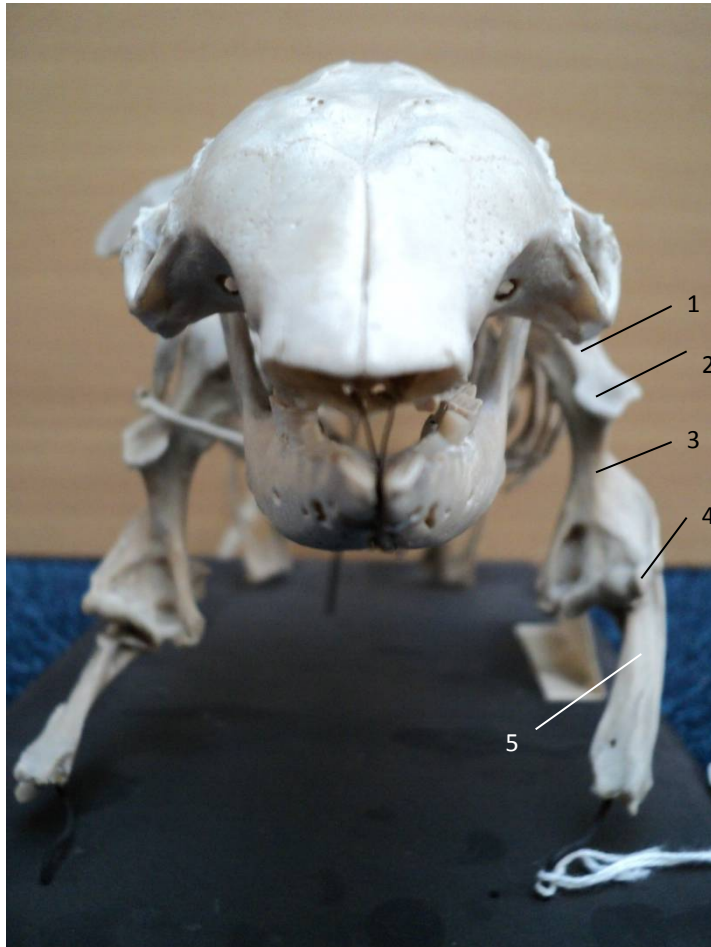
- 1) Caudal vertebrae
- 2) Greater trochanter
- 3) Femur
- 4) Lateral condyle of femur
- 5) Tibia
- 6) Ribs
- 7) Scapula
- 8) Metacarpal bones
- 9) Phalanges
- 10) Carpal bones
- 11) Radius
- 12) Condyle of humerus
- 13) Humerus
- 14) Greater tubernacle of humerus
- 15) Thoracic vertebrae
- 16) Cervical vertebrae
- 17) First cervical vertebrae

Armadillo Skeleton



- 1) Caudal vertebrae
- 2) Pelvis
- 3) Lumbar vertebrae
- 4) Thoracic vertebrae
- 5) Cervical vertebrae
- 6) First cervical vertebrae
- 7) Ischial tuber
- 8) Ischial spine
- 9) Greater trochanter
- 10) Femur
- 11) Iliac crest
- 12) Ribs
- 13) Scapula
- 14) Metacarpal bones

Skeleton of an armadillo



- 1) Scapula
- 2) Greater tubernacle of humerus
- 3) Humerus
- 4) Condyle of humerus
- 5) Radius
- 6) Caudal vertebrae



SKELETON OF ARMADILLO
(Dasypus)

Dasypus