

YZC Animal of the Month, April 2010
Pink Fairy Armadillo
Chlamyphorus truncatus



Can you see the armadillo's large front claws? These are used in digging. They can dig very quickly, which is a surprise as they are generally rather quite slow animals! Pink fairy armadillos

Search in the case at the bottom of the stairs in the lower gallery for this small mammal from South America. The pink fairy armadillo is the smallest species of armadillo, measuring just 9-15cm long. They are found only in Argentina, and are so elusive that no one knows how many pink fairy armadillos are alive today.

Like other species of armadillo, this armadillo has a shell called a carapace on its back. In the pink fairy armadillo the shell is pale pink and attached on the head and along the spine. Silky white fur covers the body, and can be seen poking out from under the carapace.

spend much of their time in burrows underground. They eat mostly insects, but also some worms, snails and plants.

Armadillos belong to a group of mammals called the Xenarthra, along with anteaters and sloths. You can see a difference between these and other mammals in the number of vertebrae (bones of the backbone) they have in their neck. In the museum, count the number of vertebrae in the neck of the giraffe, rhino, lion or other mammal. Now count the number in the necks of the xenarthran mammals. Most mammals have 7 bones in their neck, while the xenarthrans have between 6 and 9.