

Name _____

Do Armadillos Form Relationships with Other Species?



Armadillos are solitary animals for most of their lives. They do not often form close relationships with other species. However, they do interact with other creatures in specific ways, some of which can be described as symbiotic relationships.

Symbiotic relationships can be mutualism, parasitism, or commensalism. Mutualism happens when both species benefit. For example, armadillos help control insect populations by eating ants and termites. This benefits farmers and gardeners by keeping harmful pests away from crops.

Parasitism occurs when one species benefits while the other is harmed. Armadillos can be hosts for parasites such as ticks and fleas, which feed on their blood. This relationship benefits the parasites but harms the armadillo by causing discomfort and potential disease.

Commensalism is when one species benefits while the other is not affected. Some birds may follow armadillos while they dig for insects. The birds eat insects that get stirred up but do not harm the armadillo or help it.

Although armadillos do not form long-term bonds with other species, their interactions play a role in the balance of the ecosystem. They help control insect populations, provide food for predators, and influence other species' behavior through their digging habits.