

Living with Armadillos



General information

This native mammal of southwestern North America has expanded its range into the southeastern states including Florida. Armadillos now occur throughout most of the state and are considered naturalized, meaning they arrived in Florida as part of natural range expansion.



Karen Parker, FWC

Mature armadillos are 15 to 17 inches in length (excluding the tail) and weigh 8 to 17 pounds. Armadillos dig burrows to reside in, and can dig smaller holes to assist with finding food. Within a one-acre home range, a single armadillo can have multiple burrows with various entrances. Armadillos have poor eyesight, but their well-developed sense of smell is used to detect insects and other invertebrates under the soil surface at night. They use their powerful claws and long tongues to dig holes to retrieve prey. Holes vary in size, ranging from very small to one foot in diameter.

Armadillos help control populations of invertebrates by consuming large numbers of grubs, spiders, cockroaches and other insects. This natural pest control can be beneficial for you and your garden.



© Sophia C. Julian/Shutterstock.com

Prevent problems with armadillos

If an armadillo or its burrow is causing a nuisance, there are methods you can use to cause them to relocate on their own without additional intensive and sometimes expensive efforts.

- Moist topsoil and lush vegetation above ground attract earthworms and insect larvae to the soil's surface, in turn attracting armadillos. Reduce damage from armadillos by minimizing watering and fertilization. Irrigate gardens in the morning to allow soil to dry out.
- Fence small areas to prevent armadillo damage. Install fencing at least two feet high and bury 18 inches deep.
- Armadillos are particularly attracted to fermenting fruit. Remove fallen fruit to avoid attracting armadillos and other wildlife.
- Illuminate burrows with a bright spotlight or flashlight and/or put a radio in or near the hole, without blocking the animal from exiting.
- Lethal control should be considered a last resort.

Regulatory status

The armadillo is considered a native species with a year-round hunting and trapping season in Florida. Hunting and trapping regulations can be found at MyFWC.com/hunting. An armadillo can be taken as a nuisance if it causes or is about to cause property damage, presents a threat to public safety, or causes an annoyance in, under, or upon a building, per Florida Rule 68A-9.010.



Anni Mitchell, FWC

Legal options to take nuisance armadillo

Armadillos are beneficial because they help control populations of insects and larvae. It is best to reduce conflicts with armadillos by discouraging them from becoming comfortable around residences. Removing one or more armadillos does not prevent others from using the same areas in the future. However, if an armadillo is a nuisance the animal can be captured or killed using legal and humane methods.

- Nuisance armadillos can be shot on private property during daylight hours with landowner permission. Please check with the local police department and sheriff's office before discharging a firearm. A *Gun and Light at Night Permit* is not required to take armadillo.
- Nuisance wildlife, as defined in **Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.) 68A-9.010**, may be taken using live traps or snares, or, where allowed, firearms during daylight hours.



© Christopher Biggs/Shutterstock.com

Please Note: All traps must be checked at least once every 24 hours. Captured non-target species are required to be released on site. All live-captured nuisance armadillos must be euthanized, released on-site, or released on a property within the same county of capture that is 40 contiguous acres or larger with written landowner permission.

If you have further questions or need more help, call your regional Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission office:

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Regional Offices

Regional Offices

Northwest Region

3911 Highway 2321
Panama City, FL 32409-1659
850-265-3676

North Central Region

3377 East U.S. Highway 90
Lake City, FL 32055-8795
386-758-0525

Northeast Region

1239 S.W. 10th Street
Ocala, FL 3441-0323
352-732-1225

Southwest Region

3900 Drane Field Road
Lakeland, FL 33811-1299
863-648-3200

South Region

8535 Northlake Boulevard
West Palm Beach, FL 33412
561-625-5122

