



Ted Alejandro, County Superintendent

San Bernardino County

Superintendent of Schools

Transforming lives through education



Friday, April 24

2:00pm

Nature- "Hotel Armadillo" – 4th thru 8th grade

Welcome to the "Hotel Armadillo," where the elusive giant armadillo digs a daily hole deep in the Brazilian rainforest and leaves behind a suite for 25 species of jungle clientele. Join biologist Arnaud Desbiez as he "checks in" the exotic guests.

Brazil's remote Pantanal, covering more than 80,000 square miles, is the largest tropical wetland in the world. It is chiefly made up of flooded grassland with patches of dry savannah or forest and home to a large and diverse wildlife population, including one of the most ancient of living mammals, the highly secretive giant armadillo.

Hotel Armadillo follows the work of conservation biologist Arnaud Desbiez, who founded the Giant Armadillo Project, and his team. The Project is supported by more than 40 zoos and aquariums worldwide.

Not much was known about its life in the wild until recently because it is rare, nocturnal, solitary, and wary of people. It also digs a new underground burrow, up to 20 feet deep, every other night where it spends 75 percent of its life. So researchers studying these animals spend time locating their burrows, hoping to spot and track the giant armadillos. What they didn't anticipate was what happens when the elusive animal vacates its spacious temporary abode and moves on.

The filmmakers accompany Desbiez and his team as they return to check whether the newly developed camera trap by a burrow has captured any footage of its female occupant whom they've named Tracy, named after the first giant armadillo researcher Tracy Carter. The cameras begin recording when triggered by the tiniest of movements whether it is day or night. The rare footage shows a cautious Tracy emerging from her home using her acute sense of smell and hearing to examine her surroundings before heading off to spend the night feeding on termites. The team is jubilant with the results, and then begin to notice something unexpected.

The new camera gear Desbiez is using for this expedition enables capturing more continuous images from above and below ground. The footage shows how other species quickly take possession of the giant armadillo's roomy burrow, once it checks out. Not only has this ancient creature, which first appeared some 50 million years ago, left a large underground shelter for its neighbors, but the newly-excavated earth also provides food for them in the form of insects and roots.

As the team tracks four giant armadillos, each fitted with a tiny transmitter; they are learning more about the mysterious animal. It appears an individual can have a home range of up to six square miles and may excavate more than 150 burrows in a single year. So far, 80 different species have been recorded checking into one of the Giant armadillo's rooms such as its smaller cousin, the six-banded armadillo; tamanduas (small anteaters), who leave their babies there while foraging; rodents; ocelot; brocket

Continued on the next page...



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JUDY D. WHITE, Ed.D. County Superintendent of Schools

deer; and lizards. This leads Desbiez to theorize that the giant armadillo could be crucial to the survival of the entire Pantanal ecosystem.

The film states that the animal’s habitat is being impacted by an increase in ranching, which uses fire to encourage new growth. Desbiez sees flames in the distance as he locates a burrow with its entrance sealed. That’s a sign there’s a baby inside. Its mother Isabelle had an earlier offspring that was the first baby giant armadillo Desbiez studied, until killed by a puma at less than two years old. The team replays the latest camera footage to see if Isabelle has emerged with her new baby so their research can continue and the giant armadillo population gets an addition.

After watching this episode, choose from the following questions and/or tasks to extend your learning

Question Box 1

- Describe Brazil’s remote Pantanal. Why is this place called home for diverse wildlife?
- What is the “Great Armadillo Project”? Who leads it?
- Why has it been difficult to learn about the giant armadillo that called Pantanal home? How do researchers learn more about this animal?
- Explain how the new camera equipment Desbiez uses is helpful in learning about the giant armadillo.
- How do these animals survive in Pantanal?
- Describe the burrow of a giant armadillo?
- List the names of the animals found in “Hotel Armadillo”
- How is it that the giant armadillo could be crucial to the survival of the entire Pantanal ecosystem?
- What is impacting the Pantanal habitat?
- How might changes in the environment affect over time the wildlife of Pantanal over time?

Question Box 2

- Think like a biologist: How are animals codependent on each other for survival in their biosphere?
- What stood out for you as the most important information in this episode?
- What unanswered questions do you still have about the Pantanal ecosystem or other ecosystems in our environment?

Question Box 3 (Tasks)

- Research facts about the other animals that reside in “Hotel Armadillo”.

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- Draw your rendition of the “Hotel Armadillo”. If you’re feeling ambitious, create a coloring book of line drawings of the Pantanal ecosystem.
- Size Comparison Activity
Using 5 basic measurements of your body, compare your size to the size of the animal in the Nature episode. If you are watching multiple episodes this week, create a table to record all of your discoveries. Use the following measurements: height, weight, arm length, waist circumference, foot length. Some animals may not have the same features. Adjust as necessary. Extension: Using the length of the animal you are exploring; can you find something in your home, or that you are familiar with to make a comparison? *For example: A blue whale can be 80-110 feet long, that is more than two big yellow school buses.*

Question Box 4 (Enrichment)

- Make a memory card game using the list of animals that can be found in “Hotel Armadillo” and the facts that you researched in the task above. On one card include the name and drawing of each animal. On the other card include facts. You can use paper, index cards or a computer program.
 - <https://www.auntannie.com/GamesToMake/MemoryGame/>
 - <https://www.educaplay.com/types-of-activities/memory-games.html>

Question Box 5 (Extend/Real-Life)

- See a controversial issue through multiple perspectives: Write a claim/counterclaim for preserving Pantanal for the wildlife and for the right of ranchers to move in the area.
- Make a list of as many activities and tasks that needed to be completed before the show was able to be viewed.
 - For each of the activities and tasks you listed above write down a job title for the person who would be responsible for it. (If you get stuck as a family member for suggestions)
 - Did any of the job titles surprise you? If so, why?
- Select one or two jobs that you would be interested in as a career. Write a sentence or two explaining why you are interested in the ones you selected.
- Go to this website: <https://www.cacareerzone.org/occupations/list> and search for the jobs you selected.
 - Write down three skills needed for each job you chose.
 - For each of the skills you listed name one class you take in school that will help you develop or learn that skill.