

***'Dillos: Roadkill on Extinction Highway?***

W. R. Klemm

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Reviewed by Irene Watson for Reader Views (4/08)

Being a Texas resident, often experiencing armadillos as road kill, I wanted to know more. The "more" I got in Klemm's book "'Dillos" was definitely more than I expected!

One aspect I was interested in was what good armadillos were in nature, because my experience was a dug-up flower bed. I was pleased to find they eat the ever-growing population of locusts (known here as cicada) as well as other insects and grubs. Klemm also explains "These creatures not only look prehistoric, they are prehistoric. Direct ancestors of armadillos appear in the fossil record in South America and these are dated to have lived 55 to 60 million years ago." Interestingly enough, armadillos have evolved over time in order to survive the changing environment.

Klemm shows sketches of 8 living species of armadillos. They certainly have similar characteristics but definitely have the distinct differences. Living in underground burrows they are able to survive the Texas summers, but at the same time keep warm in colder winters of Louisiana. Like any other animal, their daily survival tasks are to find food. They sleep during the day, but forage during the early morning and late evening.

There is much more to this book than one could cover in a review. However, I do need to ask a question. Interested in tasting armadillo but don't know how to cook it? Klemm even gives recipes! How does Mu Shu Armadillos sound to you? Or Armadillo chili? I'm not quite ready to venture out and get myself an armadillo, but, if they keep digging up my garden as profusely as they have been lately, eating armadillo may be closer than one thinks!

Combining history, science, research, and his own experience with armadillos, Klemm gives a concise perspective of the animal. Reading "'Dillos: Roadkill on Extinction Highway?" gives the usually unlikeable mammal a place in our society and appreciation of its existence.