

## Turtles, Big and Small

The smaller of these two skulls comes from an adult Cagle's map turtle. This individual weighed less than a pound and had a shell less than six inches long. The larger skull comes from an adult green sea turtle. This individual weighed over 200 pounds and had a shell close to five feet long. Sea turtles, with their weight buoyed by salty ocean waters, can grow to be quite massive.

TNHC 56280 Green sea turtle, *Chelonia mydas* (skull)  
TNHC 62672 Cagle's Map Turtle, *Graptemys caglei* (skull)

## Bobcat, Bat, & Porcupine

The shape and size of mammal teeth provide clues about diet. Bobcats have teeth specialized for piercing and slicing meat. The teeth of a free-tailed bat are used to puncture and crush insect prey. The large and ever-growing incisors of the porcupine are perfect for gnawing woody plants. The tips become chisel-edged as they wear, for the orange layer is harder than the rest of the tooth.

TMM M-4759 Bobcat, *Lynx rufus* (skull, mandible)  
TMM M-3080 Brazilian free-tailed bat, *Tadarida brasiliensis* (skull, mandible)  
TMM M-4353 North American porcupine, *Erethizon dorsatum* (skull, mandible)

## Monkfish

The strange-looking skull of the monkfish is made up of a complex set of bones. These bones are quite moveable, allowing the mouth to open very wide when swallowing a meal. Monkfish prey on other bottom-dwelling fish. They attract these prey by dangling a fleshy “lure” from a specialized spine on top of their heads.

TNHC 29638 Monkfish, *Lophius gastrophysus* (skeleton)

## Armadillo and Turtle Armor

The armor of the armadillo is made up of small bone plates formed in the skin. This jointed armor provides protection but is still somewhat flexible. The snapping turtle has a different kind of armor. The turtle’s bony shell is immobile and covered with thin scutes made of keratin. How might these different kinds of armor affect the way each animal defends itself?

TMM M-4315 Nine-banded armadillo, *Dasypus novemcinctus* (skull, mandible)

TMM M-7417 Nine-banded armadillo, *Dasypus novemcinctus* (shell)

TNHC 62533, Common snapping turtle, *Chelydra serpentina* (shell)