

The Amphibian Foundation’s Master Herpetologist Certification Program

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Herpetology enthusiasts of all backgrounds, education levels, and geographical regions are invited to participate in the 16-week, 8-session Master Herpetologist Certification Program offered quarterly through the Amphibian Foundation in Atlanta, Georgia.

The intensive course introduces students to herpetology, along with amphibian and reptile conservation and biodiversity. The course is offered both online and in-person, although in-person classes have been suspended for the time being due to the COVID-19 pandemic. With more than 50 lectures, the course is taught by a diversity of herpetologists from around the world, some of whom are recent Chicago Herpetological Society guest speakers.

The online Master Herpetologist Certification Program costs \$300 and includes all lectures, readings, a final exam, and, of course, a certificate. Students move at their own pace and attend the pre-uploaded lectures on their own time, with optional “office hours” offered every other Wednesday at the beginning of a new course section. Students can expect to spend 4–5 hours per week, and 8–10 hours per section, on the course material.

The course is intended for adults, but students under 18 can register with special permission. Past graduates of the program have been college and graduate students, educators, field professionals, naturalists, and herp enthusiasts of all kinds, including a few of our own CHS members and board members. Students can use the course to help build their resumes and make valuable networking connections in the field. Graduates from the program may also be offered discounts for other classes, events, and

workshops through the Amphibian Foundation throughout the year, as well as opportunities for field work in research studies.

In a word, the course is awesome. I’m a “graduate” of the spring 2021 session, and now a Master Herpetologist (don’t mind if I do), along with CHS Vice President Rachel Bladow, who graduated in winter 2020. I don’t have an academic background in herpetology or science, so this has been a wonderful opportunity to access a program of this caliber, whereas I may not otherwise have the opportunity, resources, or time to go back to school for another degree program. I now feel more deeply connected with the herpetology community and have a greater understanding of the state of conservation and research in the field after taking the course.

I would recommend it to every herp enthusiast, including folks who may feel like they know a lot already, and folks who may feel intimidated or like they don’t know enough. The course is also ideal for young people who may be interested in studying herpetology and would like to get a feel for the kind of research that’s happening or still needed out there. The material is intensive, but the instructors and environment are friendly, and the assignments are achievable.

The mission of the Amphibian Foundation is “connecting individuals, communities, and organizations in order to create and implement lasting solutions to the global amphibian extinction crisis.” Learn more and sign up for the next session of the Master Herpetologist Certification Program at: <https://www.amphibianfoundation.org/index.php/educational/college-adult-courses/master-herper>.