

HERPETOLOGY FIELD COURSE

1-6 June 2017, Cocobolo Nature Reserve, Panama



The logo for 'crea' features a green leaf icon above the lowercase letters 'crea'.

conservation through research education and action



THE HERPETOLOGY COURSE



Herpetologists, beginners or experienced, from around the world are invited to take part in this course that will take place at CREA's Cocobolo Nature Reserve biological field station, a breathtaking campus located in the heart of Panama's lush rainforest. Instructors will include local and international experts with detailed knowledge of the amphibians and reptiles of the region. Participants will learn about the life history of amphibians and reptiles as well as field techniques for their study and the conservation challenges facing this amazing group of vertebrates.

This course builds a foundation for the study of reptiles and amphibians in a field setting. Participants will not only learn about the biology of this diverse taxa but how to design and implement research projects. Now more than ever there is a need for well prepared conservationists and researchers, particularly for under-appreciated and imperiled groups like amphibians and reptiles.

THE SETTING

Panama is exceptionally rich in biodiversity, thanks in large part to its tropical climate and location. This small Central American nation bridges the gap between two great continents whose flora and fauna evolved on different trajectories until geological forces pulled them together about 3 million years ago. The result is a lush landscape slightly smaller than the state of South Carolina, harboring as many species of bird as the US and Canada combined, ten times as many tree species, and multitudes of reptiles, amphibians, fish, insects and flowering plants, many of which remain to be discovered.



Cocobolo Nature Reserve is located at the narrowest stretch of Central America with only 40 miles separating the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea, representing a vital yet fragile piece of the Mesoamerican Biological Corridor. It covers over 1,100 acres of primary and secondary lowland rainforest and cloud forest and harbors endangered wildlife such as jaguars, ocelots, margays, great curassows and harlequin toads to name but a few. The field station includes sleeping huts, a kitchen, bathrooms with showers and toilets, and a large indigenous "open style" communal room for meetings and research. Solar panels, composting toilets, triple filtered river water showcase CREA's commitment to sustainable living. Wireless internet and 110V electricity outlets are available for research purposes.



COURSE OBJECTIVES

It is anticipated that by the end of the program students will learn:

- Their taxonomy and behavior
- Bioacoustics and biogeography
- Field techniques and data analysis
- Conservation concerns
- Photography



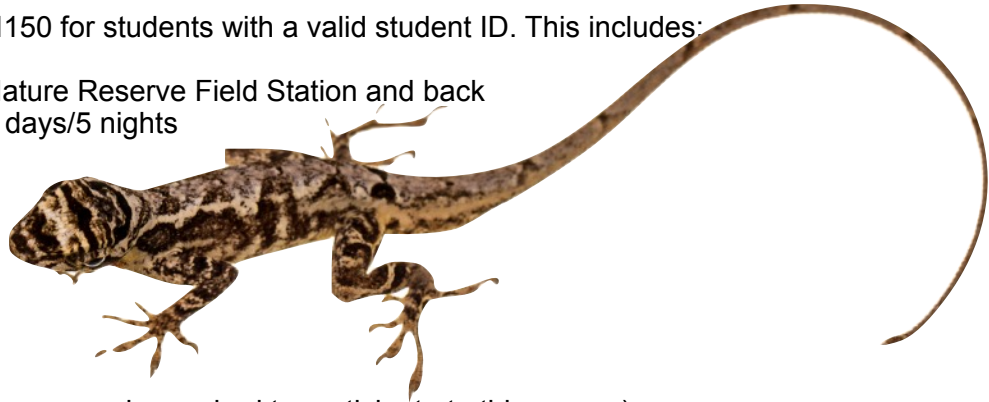
This course includes

- Five full-day stay and tuition at the Cocobolo Nature Reserve's biological field station in central Panama
- Day and night hikes to discover and document over 112 species of Amphibians and Reptiles
- Daily lectures and discussions with experienced American and Panamanian herpetologists
- Small, student-led group projects

COURSE FEES

The cost of this course is USD 1300 or USD 1150 for students with a valid student ID. This includes:

- Transport from Panama City to Cocobolo Nature Reserve Field Station and back
- Lodging at the Cocobolo Field Station for 6 days/5 nights
- Meals and snacks at the Field Station
- Tuition fees, course material
- Electricity and Internet



This cost does not include:

- Airfare to and from Panama City
- Accommodation and food in Panama City
- Individual insurance costs (proof of health insurance is required to participate to this course)
- Sleeping bag, bedsheets, pillow, towel, toiletries

TO JOIN THIS COURSE

- Book early! There are only 12 places available for this course.
- Secure your place by contacting info@crea-panama.org as soon as possible and paying a deposit of USD 250
- The remainder of the payment for the course is to be paid on 15 April 2017 at the latest

Participants will be picked up at 8am on 1 June in Panama City and returned to the same location in the afternoon of 6 June. It is expected that participants make their own travel and accommodation arrangements prior and post course.

CANCELLATION POLICY

- The deposit of USD 250 is non-refundable
- If you cancel before 1 May 2017, a refund of 50% of the total amount will be made (minus deposit)
- If you cancel after 1 May 2017, no refund will be made
- If the course is cancelled by us (i.e. not enough participants), you will be fully refunded (incl. deposit)

ESSENTIALS

You'll need to bring the following to fully enjoy the herpetology course:

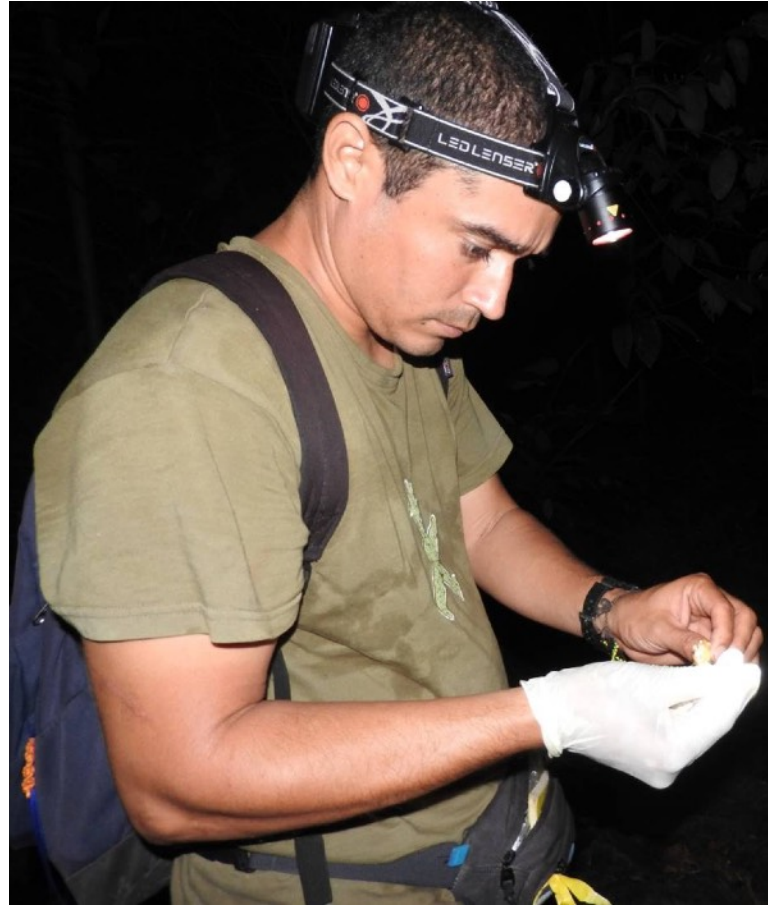
- Rubber boots (lots of streams to cross)
- Field clothes (long trousers, long-sleeve shirts, gloves, hat/cap)
- Bedsheets, pillow, sleeping bag, towel
- Mosquito repellent, sunscreen, toiletries
- Binoculars, headlamp and/or flashlight



INSTRUCTORS

Alex Shepack is a doctoral candidate at Southern Illinois University where he studies the conservation and genetics of imperiled amphibian species. He has a history of herpetological research in the Neotropics having worked in Panama, Costa Rica and Peru over the last 10 years. In addition to conducting field and lab work for his personal research, Alex has participated in field expeditions in the Andes mountains documenting herpetological diversity and searching for new species. Alex is also heavily involved in outreach and education in the US and Central America where he works with students from elementary school to university. Learn more at alexshepack.weebly.com.

Abel Batista Ph.D. A biologist by profession and nature lover. With 15 years of field experience in Panama, Costa Rica and Colombia, he has conducted several studies of wildlife rescue, monitoring and research. He completed his undergraduate studies at the Universidad Autónoma de Chiriqui, Panama, graduate studies at the University of Bogota, Colombia Andes and PhD at the Senckenberg Institute (in association with the Goethe University), Frankfurt, Germany, all focused on the study of amphibians and reptiles. His main interest is bioacoustics, interaction between anuran communities, biogeography and taxonomy of amphibians and reptiles of Panama.



ABOUT CREA

CREA (Conservation through Research, Education, Action) is an IRS designated 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that supports world class ecological research at Cocobolo Nature Reserve in central Panama. CREA regularly organises courses, workshops and international study group visits to promote conservation, education and research on neotropical ecosystems. For more information about CREA, visit www.crea-panama.org and fb.com/Cocobolonature

