

PAHERP.com

Pennsylvania Herp Education and Resource Program

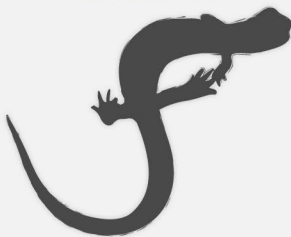
ID - SUBMIT - CONSERVE



VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

ID

PA HERP ID



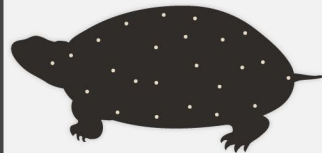
SUBMIT

PAHERP



CONSERVE

PA HERP ATLAS



Introduction:

Welcome to the PA HERP volunteer handbook. Thank you for your interest in learning more about the amphibians and reptiles of Pennsylvania and ways to help preserve these animals by aiding in conservation efforts and research.

The guide is set up to give you a brief overview of tips to help you observe, collect, and submit information on amphibian and reptile species in the state.

FAQ about PAHERP:

What is the Pennsylvania Herpetological Education and Resource Project?

PA HERP is an online resource center for the conservation of the amphibians and reptiles of Pennsylvania. Our slogan “ID-Submit-Conserve” goes along with all three steps of PA HERP.

ID- The PA HERP ID site is an educational portal for individuals to learn about the amphibian and reptiles found in Pennsylvania. Each species has detailed photos, habitat information, a range map, and information on color and characteristics.

Submit - The PA HERP database is an important step to involve the public in data collection and online submission for all 76 amphibian and reptile species found in Pennsylvania. This data will be used in research, conservation and educational outreach throughout the state.

Conserve – Data submitted on all amphibian and reptile species of conservation concern will be organized on the PA Herpetological Atlas website. This information will be forwarded to the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) and Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program (PNHP) for entry into their databases. Thus, critical information on the location of these species will be available for conservation planning and decision making.

What is the purpose of the Database?

While a professional biologist can only survey one location at a time, countless people involved in outdoor recreation across the state regularly come in contact with native amphibian and reptile species. The PAHERP database gives the public a chance to help with conservation and research on the amphibians and reptiles of Pennsylvania. The information that we collect will aid in determining the present range and status of many species within the state.

Where does the data go?

Data submitted on all tracked reptile and amphibian species will be organized on the PA Herpetological Atlas website and forwarded to the PFBC and PNHP for entry into their databases.

Who sees the data?

General and county level location information on all species will be presented in maps on the webpage. Sensitive information, such as exact location of species of conservation concern, will be hidden from public view and will only be made available to the PFBC and PNHP.

Who can volunteer?

Anyone. The PAHERP site is available to the public. We welcome your participation.

Who do I contact for more information?

For information regarding the database or the PAHERP site please send an email to: info@paherp.com

How you can Volunteer:

For some of us, looking for amphibians and reptiles is a daily obsession. For others, observing an animal in the wild is a unique and memorable experience. Whether finding amphibians and reptiles is your passion or you just happen to come across one on a hike in the woods, a few guidelines should be followed when encountering any reptile or amphibian in the field.

The goal of PAHERP is to gather public data for conservation and scientific use. Everyone is invited to join and add information. We realize that you may not be able to provide a detailed data submission, but ask that you provide as much information as possible. If possible, please submit a photo and information on the general location where you found the animal. If you are unsure of a species and do not have a photo voucher, please do not submit the information. If you need help with identification we can assist you, especially if you have a good photo of the animal.

Tools that will help when collecting data:

Data sheets or pen and paper - You can download our data sheet.

Camera and/or tape recorder, maps, field guide, GPS unit, flashlight, rubber boots and/or hip waders, dip net, binoculars.

Warning!

Venomous snakes:

Pennsylvania is home to three venomous species of snakes. Please do not handle them. Observe and take photos from a safe distance and be cautious when moving debris or cover objects where these species may live.

Laws:

Please obey all state and fish and game laws. We do not condone trespassing on private property without landowner permission. Collecting many amphibian and reptile species is illegal without a scientific collector's permit. If you must catch an individual to photograph it, take the picture as quickly as possible and release it immediately where you caught it. Unless you have a scientific collector's permit, do not take the animal to another location to photograph it. If you do have a scientific collector's permit and move the animal, return it as soon as possible to the location where you caught it. Rough handling can injure an animal, resulting in death later on. This is particularly likely with snakes, as they can be injured if they are grasped tightly around the neck or allowed to thrash around. The regulations on collecting amphibians and reptiles in Pennsylvania can be found at <http://www.fish.state.pa.us/fishpub/summary/repamp.html>.

How to Submit Data:

Before submitting we ask that you register on the database website and provide us with some basic contact information. This information will be used to contact you in case more information is needed on your submissions, and will NOT be shared with anyone.

After signing up and logging in to the database you can edit your profile preferences on how your data will be used, use the Add Record link to direct you to the submission form. You will first need to select the type of species by selecting the Group, Genus, then Species and Subspecies. A guide is available to select the proper fields if you are unsure of the scientific names. Next you will enter any additional information that you have on the species (date, time, age, location, weatherconditions), and also upload your photos.

View our Video Tutorial to walk you through the database: <http://www.paherp.com/db/tutorial>

Vouchers (documentation):

In the old days, scientists provided proof of a species by collecting a voucher specimen that was placed in a museum. That way, if anyone ever doubted the identity of the specimen, they could go look at the museum specimen. Although voucher specimens are often no longer practical (or desirable if a species is rare), it is still important to be able to provide proof of proper identification. You can submit photos or sound recordings (for frog calls) for a voucher. For more information on photos, see the photography tips section.

Documentation Tips:

Observing amphibians and reptiles in the wild can be an exciting experience. If you have a camera available, take a few photos and keep notes or remember as much as you can about the species and the encounter. Taking a photo will not always be possible. In these cases, take notes that describe the identifying characteristics of the specimen(s). Note the date, time, weather conditions, surrounding habitat type and where the species was seen and/or the type of cover object it was found under. Remember the location and/or take a reading with a GPS unit. Take notes of the shape, size and length of the individual, as well as any distinct markings and coloration. Keep track of the number of individuals seen within the area. Keep in mind individuals that have been killed on the road are also useful data. If you are unsure of an ID and need help you may use the PAHERP ID site at <http://www.paherps.com/> or send us an e-mail with a photo or description.

Search Tips:

Any reptile and amphibian is best enjoyed where it is found. Take photos and leave the animals where they are. If the animal is positively identified as one of our three venomous snakes, enjoy it from a distance and let it be. All of our venomous snakes are imperiled within the commonwealth and should be left alone. If you want to actively seek out and find one of our 74 species of reptiles and amphibians, there are some dos and don'ts to keep in mind.

- Do your homework. Familiarize yourself with herps and their identifying characteristics. Study where these species live and their habitats.
- Do learn to recognize venomous snakes.
- Do replace cover objects just as you found them. The animals have chosen their homes because of their environmental needs and security. The least we can do is put things back the way we found them. This includes covering the edges of the cover object in order to retain moisture. Most importantly, if you moved the animal, gently return it to its home, taking care not to injure it. Note: see the laws section above for more information on moving animals.
- Do take photographs and report what you find, especially if the animal is rarely seen.
- Do not handle venomous snakes or snakes you are unsure of.
- Don't leave habitat in disarray. As stated above, the animals need this habitat for their survival. Return rocks and other objects to their original state to the best of your ability.
- Don't tear apart rotting logs or remove bark that is not already about to fall. These microhabitats not only provide shelter for a number of reptiles and amphibians, but are also home to other organisms that require the same environmental conditions.
- Don't take any animals home. No matter how cute that little turtle is, no matter how cuddly the salamander may appear, they are better off left in the wild to live out their lives. In addition, for many of these species, collecting is against the law.
- Lastly, do what you can to become a steward of Pennsylvania's reptiles and amphibians. You can do this by becoming more educated about them, sharing your knowledge with others and becoming environmentally friendly.
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How to search for herps:

Herps live in many different habitats and areas throughout Pennsylvania. Finding a specific species Amphibians and reptiles live in many different habitats and areas throughout Pennsylvania. Finding a specific species may require some research into its habitat preference. Chances are you may pass right by them when doing everyday outdoor activities. When encountering an amphibian or reptile, it is always best to try to get a positive ID without startling the animal. First try to take a photo from the spot you are at before moving in closer, as the animal may get away before you have another chance to photograph or ID it.

Photography Tips:

Salamanders:

A dorsolateral view (showing both the back and side) is sufficient. A ventral (bottom) shot will also come in handy for a few species.

Frogs and Toads:

A dorsal (back) view, showing the pattern of stripes, spots or blotches on the back and head.

Turtles:

A dorsal view of the carapace is usually sufficient. A lateral view of the extended head is also useful.

Lizards:

A dorsolateral view of the head and body, and skinks like the Broadhead and Five-lined require a close up lateral view of the head to show scales counts.

Snakes:

A dorsal or dorsolateral view of the head and body showing enough detail to discern whether scales are smooth or keeled. An additional ventral (belly) view is often useful.

Timber Rattlesnake, Massasauga Rattlesnake, and Copperhead – these snakes are distinct enough that a close up view is not usually required. It is not worth getting bit in order to get a close up photograph.

Getting Started with the Database:

Create an Account: After signing up check your email for confirmation.

Create a New Account

Account Information	
Username:	<input type="text"/>
Password:	<input type="password"/>
Confirm Password:	<input type="password"/>

Contact Information	
First Name:	<input type="text"/>
Last Name:	<input type="text"/>
Address:	<input type="text"/>
City:	<input type="text"/>
State:	<input type="text"/>
Country:	<input type="text"/>
Zip Code:	<input type="text"/>
Phone Number:	<input type="text"/>
E-mail Address:	<input type="text"/>

You Can
Register Now
Help Conservation Efforts.

- [Database Home](#)
- [Handbook](#)
- [Printable Datasheet](#)
- [Species List](#)
- [New Records](#)
- [Search Records](#)
- [Create an Account](#)

Username:

Password:

Edit your profile: After you have logged in to the site, select your “profile” link on the right hand side, add or change your profile settings and also your preferences for records.

Edit Profile

Contact Information

First Name:

Last Name:

Address:

City:

State:

Country:

Zip Code:

Phone Number:

E-mail Address:

Security

Default security level for new records:

What to do with my data:

Preferences

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- [Add Record](#)
- [Add Record \(short\)](#)
- [Add Record \(bulk\)](#)
- [View My Records](#)
- [My Records in Google Earth](#)
- [Profile](#)
- [Logout](#)

Adding a Record: Selecting “Add a Record”, Add a Record (short) or (bulk) will allow you to add your species data. The short record can be used if you do not have information such as GPS, tempature, or weather conditions (you may go back and edit the record if you need to make changes). Bulk Records can be used to add many species at once with limited information or photos (photos and other information can be added by using the edit button for individual records). Other options allow you to duplicate, edit or delete any record by selecting the “**View My Records**” link.

New Record

All fields marked with a * are required.

Animal

* Group: Genus:

Species: Subspecies:

Age: Sex: Quantity: Body Temperature:

Time and Location

* Security Level: Date: Time:

County: Locale:

Method: Elevation (feet): Habitat Type:

Latitude: Longitude: Coord Method: Datum:

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Vouchers can be image (JPG) or MP3 (frog audio recordings)

Vouchers (Image File = JPG | Audio File = MP3)

Upload from files

<input type="text"/>	Choose...
<input type="text"/>	Choose...
<input type="text"/>	Choose...
<input type="text"/>	Choose...
<input type="text"/>	Choose...

Upload from URLs

<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>

* Data (including photos) will be designated by the submitting member as either Sensitive (S) or Non-Sensitive (NS). Sensitive data are those records which require the submitting member's permission to be released to parties or persons outside of the PAHERP Partnership. Non-Sensitive data are those records which do not require the submitting member's permission to be released to parties outside the PAHERP Partnership. Notwithstanding the foregoing, each member agrees and acknowledges that neither the PAHERP, nor any other member shall be liable for the release of any data that is inconsistent with the terms set forth above. By submitting data, each member specifically acknowledges that it does so at its own risk. PAHERP Partnership consist of the PA HERP ATLAS and the Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Project & the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission.

- Make this record anonymous. Your name will not be displayed when others view this record, nor be displayed on associated photographs.
- Restrict public access to this record.
- Data already submitted to the Atlas project.

View My Records: You can view, edit, delete or duplicate any record you have submitted.

Search Records

Recorded By: County: Group:

Genus: Species: Subspecies:

Show only records that have vouchers.

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Search Results

Taxon	Date	County
1. <i>Pseudacris crucifer</i>	2009-04-04	Allegheny County
2. <i>Plethodon electromorphus</i>	2009-04-02	Allegheny County
3. <i>Thamnophis sirtalis sirtalis</i>	2009-03-15	Westmoreland County
4. <i>Gyrnophilus porphyriticus</i>	2009-03-15	Westmoreland County
5. <i>Thamnophis sirtalis sirtalis</i>	2009-03-15	Westmoreland County

Species List: If you would like to view submitted records of a specific species or if you are having trouble finding the right scientific name for adding a new record the list will give you the common name along with the scientific name.

Frogs and Toads

Acris

Acris crepitans

Anaxyrus

Anaxyrus americanus

Anaxyrus fowleri

Hyla

Hyla chrysoscelis

Hyla versicolor

Pseudacris

Pseudacris brachyphona

Pseudacris crucifer

Pseudacris feriarum

P. f. kalmi

Pseudacris triseriata

Rana

Rana catesbeiana

Rana clamitans

Rana palustris

Rana pipiens

Rana sphenoccephala

Rana sylvatica

Scaphiopus

Scaphiopus holbrookii

Cricket Frogs

Northern Cricket Frog

True Toads

American Toad

Fowler's Toad

Treefrogs

Cope's Gray Treefrog

Gray Treefrog

Chorus Frogs

Mountain Chorus Frog

Spring Peeper

Upland Chorus Frog

New Jersey Chorus Frog

Western Chorus Frog

True Frogs

American Bullfrog

Green Frog

Pickereel Frog

Northern Leopard Frog

Southern Leopard Frog

Wood Frog

Spadefoots

Eastern Spadefoot

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My Records in Google Earth: If you would like to export your records in to Google Earth, you can download your KML file here and import it in to Google earth.

Need Help?

If you need help with the database or adding your species to the right list feel free to contact us using our contact page or send us an email to info@paherp.com. For additional ID help you may use the Herp I.D Help link on the right sidebar and go to the PA HERP ID website for additional information, range maps, and photos of reptiles and amphibians in Pennsylvania.