

Madagascar for Real



Madagascar Tree Boa, *Sanzinia madagascariensis*, at the Ankarana Reserve. (David Parks photo)

Over 90% of Madagascar's 350 reptile species are found nowhere else. There are more than 60 species of snakes, none of them dangerous. This adds greatly to the comfort of both snake watching and nighttime bush walking. I almost tripped on this Madagascar Tree Boa while hiking at night in the Ankarana Reserve.

The boas of the subfamily Boinae have a particularly interesting geographical distribution. They are found today only in the New World and in Madagascar.



Stenophis arcifasciatus from Sainte Luce near Ft. Dauphin/Tolagnaro. (David Parks photo)

"Never eat anything bigger than your head" is generally good advice, but snakes do it all the time. The large bulge in this snake's body represents a relatively huge chameleon recently swallowed whole by the snake..