



Image by Eric Matson

ERIC MATSON

Eric's love affair with Madagascar began in the most romantic way imaginable, he was cruise director on the square rigged sailing vessel "Eye of the Wind" when she slipped quietly into Nosy Be in late 1998 after crossing the Indian ocean on the way to Africa. So much so that he chose to leave the ship in Capetown and return to Madagascar rather than sail on to England. Since then Eric has travelled widely across the Rainbow Island, including in 2000 and 2005 as Adventure Associates (Australia) tour leader.

The tropics had always been so strongly attractive to me, especially the natural coastal ecosystems with their astounding diversity and the often mountainous and misty interiors which provide such compelling contrasts in texture and life. And then came Madagascar; nowhere on the planet is there so much rare and delightful life that's so easy to see, nowhere are there more diverse and beautiful people, and nowhere are there more compelling issues for both.' E.M.

Eric currently works with the Climate Change team at the Australian Institute of Marine Science looking specifically at historical climate records frozen in the skeletons of very old and very massive corals living on the Great Barrier Reef.

Apart from extended sailing voyages with eco-tourist groups throughout the Pacific and Indian Oceans, Eric has worked at the University of Adelaide, the University of South Australia and the University of the South Pacific (Fiji) in various scientific, training and counselling roles. He lives in Townsville with his wife and son and in spare moments crafts furniture from old wood found at demolition sites.

Chameleons (*Furcifer minor*). Image by Eric Matson