



Extinct Madagascar: Picturing the Island's Past

Steven M. Goodman, William L. Jungers

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The landscapes of Madagascar have long delighted zoologists, who have discovered, in and among the island's baobab trees and thickets, a dizzying array of animals, including something approaching one hundred species of lemur. Madagascar's mammal fauna, for example, is far more diverse, and more endemic, than early explorers and naturalists ever dreamed of. But in the past 2,500 or so years—a period associated with natural climatic shifts and ecological change, as well as partially coinciding with the arrival of the island's first human settlers—a considerable proportion of Madagascar's forests have disappeared; and in the wake of this loss, a number of species unique to Madagascar have vanished forever into extinction.

In *Extinct Madagascar*, noted scientists Steven M. Goodman and William L. Jungers explore the recent past of these land animal extinctions. Beginning with an introduction to the geologic and ecological history of Madagascar that provides context for the evolution, diversification, and, in some cases, rapid decline of the Malagasy fauna, Goodman and Jungers then seek to recapture these extinct mammals in their environs. Aided in their quest by artist Velizar Simeonovski's beautiful and haunting digital paintings—images of both individual species and ecosystem assemblages reproduced here in full color—Goodman and Jungers reconstruct the lives of these lost animals and trace their relationships to those still living.

Published in conjunction with an exhibition of Simeonovski's artwork set to open at the Field Museum, Chicago, in the fall of 2014, Goodman and Jungers's awe-inspiring book will serve not only as a sobering reminder of the very real threat of extinction, but also as a stunning tribute to Madagascar's biodiversity and a catalyst for further research and conservation.

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