

Adrift in a nameless river in Madagascar



By [Brian Berkman](#)

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It probably won't be pristine for very much longer as Rio Tinto, the mining company that is extracting ilmenite and zircon from Fort Dauphin on Madagascar's most South Easterly coast, exploits the earth and paves the roads in return.



The camera... prior to it's one-way trip to the riverbed.

As soon as the path to this mountainous, coastal belt famous for its now shrinking littoral forests becomes an easy one, the already busy Air Madagascar flights from the capital will bring tourists along with the mining bureaucrats. Do not put off your visit to this region if you also want the solitude of walking alone on beaches that smile and yawn at you before you must climb over the rocks over the hill into the next village. This is still the kind of place where not every corner of every waterway is mapped and having an English speaking guide from [Jenman African Safari's](#) may be the only way you will find your way.

'Beam me up, Scotty... I'm out of the box and ready to go

We took along a [Drift Ghost HD camera](#) to record our experience of kayaking in the river systems near Lokara, between Baie Mananvio and Lac Lanirano in Madagascar. The camera is unobtrusive and easily fits into the palm of your hand and, unlike its nearest competitor, comes out of the box ready for action - underwater up to 3m or in mid-air. It also has a two-way LED remote which when you wear on your wrist makes you look at Captain Kirk about to call the Enterprise.

I used the iPhone App which makes seeing what you're filming simple and allows you to set up shots from a significant distance away using the camera's Wi-Fi functionality but the Gorilla Glass LCD screen is perfect for playback so the app isn't essential.

A big plus is the Drift Flashback Video Tag/Loop where, even when not actively filming, the unit is recording and it is possible to time travel as much as five minutes into the past and grab what you find.

Not a moment missed

You can take HD video and stills for up to three hours filming time per battery charge in a variety of resolutions (ranging from 1080p, 960p, 720p to WVGA) and you can simultaneously shoot still photos without interrupting filming, so you never miss a moment.



"Hi, are you Captain Kirk?"

We tried it out for a few weeks before leaving for Madagascar. It attaches to the handlebar of a bike to give a front-wheel action point of view that is very exciting especially when coming down a mountain. We also used the chest/shoulder harness for a mountain climb but you should take care that you don't end up filming your earlobe and not much else as we did the first time.



A nice range of products - just don't lose them!

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I especially liked that irrespective of the angle at which the Drift is mounted, be it on your helmet, or just handheld unobtrusively next to your leg, as we did to record a friend's wedding; as long as the lens is positioned facing upwards the camera will record upright images.

Into the deep

We used the suction-grip attachment to fasten the Drift onto the nose of our kayak. We also had the surf board attachment but after checking that the camera was well gripped by tugging we put in at the river confident that save for an encounter with a hippo we were okay.

As the river narrowed the water pressure propelled us into a tangle of low branches and debris. Exacerbated by the recent rains and with the force of a battering ram we hit a branch that narrowly missed our heads but knocked the Drift into the river.

We pressed our paddle down to check the depth but it didn't hit ground and no-one had masks to see below the cloudy depths. People from [Manafiafy Beach and Rainforest resort](#) went back to the location to see if they could find the camera, but couldn't.

In years to come, when Captain Kirk does fly the Enterprise to Madagascar, they will find a record of our exciting life: hurtling down the mountain on a bike, attending a wedding, walking in the forest and finally, full high definition of the Drift's demise and its last hours in a watery grave.

The Drift HD Ghost is available for purchase at around R4650. Try not to lose yours. Visit www.driftcameras.co.za for more information.

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