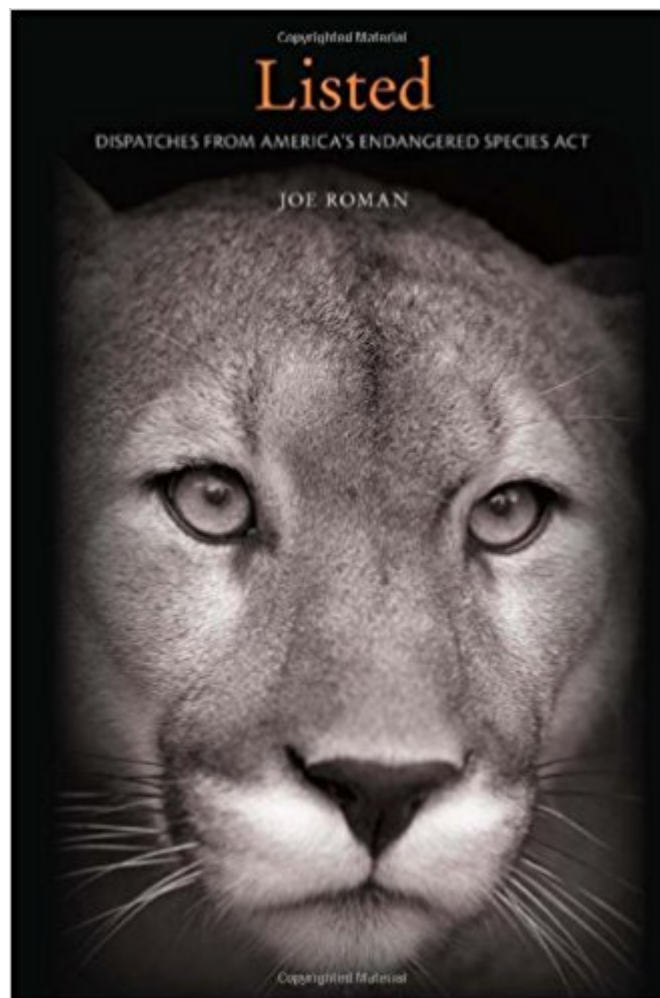




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# Listed: Dispatches From America's Endangered Species Act



## Synopsis

The first listed species to make headlines after the Endangered Species Act was passed in 1973 was the snail darter, a three-inch fish that stood in the way of a massive dam on the Little Tennessee River. When the Supreme Court sided with the darter, Congress changed the rules. The dam was built, the river stopped flowing, and the snail darter went extinct on the Little Tennessee, though it survived in other waterways. A young Al Gore voted for the dam; freshman congressman Newt Gingrich voted for the fish. A lot has changed since the 1970s, and Joe Roman helps us understand why we should all be happy that this sweeping law is alive and well today. More than a general history of endangered species protection, *Listed* is a tale of threatened species in the wild—from the whooping crane and North Atlantic right whale to the purple bankclimber, a freshwater mussel tangled up in a water war with Atlanta—and the people working to save them. Employing methods from the new field of ecological economics, Roman challenges the widely held belief that protecting biodiversity is too costly. And with engaging directness, he explains how preserving biodiversity can help economies and communities thrive. Above all, he shows why the extinction of species matters to us personally—to our health and safety, our prosperity, and our joy in nature.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A beautifully written description of what is happening to many of our only known living companions in the universe, told against the background of the much (ignorantly) maligned U.S. Endangered Species Act. It is also a plea to take steps that would help to preserve threatened organisms and us.

A fascinating read. (Paul R. Ehrlich, coauthor of *The Dominant Animal*)[Roman] provides a memorable dispatch on the fate of endangered species. (Kirkus Reviews 2011-03-15) In *Listed*, conservation biologist Joe Roman recounts the uses and abuses of a well-intentioned but all-too-human law...Roman's meandering and occasionally lyrical book is generally optimistic about the law he is chronicling, and he tends toward win-win tales. (Katherine Mangu-Ward *Wall Street Journal* 2011-05-05) The Endangered Species Act has been under attack since it was passed in 1973, when the tiny snail darter temporarily stopped the building of the Tellico Dam. The history of the act, and all of the ramifications of listing (or not listing) a species as endangered under the act, is thoroughly investigated in this wide-ranging examination of one of the most important pieces of federal legislation of the twentieth century. Roman chose a few cases to illustrate why people feel threatened by the act--it puts people out of work and it puts animals before people--and why biodiversity protection really works. Roman joined scientists as they studied such high-profile species as the Florida panther, red-cockaded woodpecker, and whooping crane, as well as researchers who look at Lyme disease, ethnobotanists studying medicinal plants, malacologists trying to save freshwater mussels, and a volunteer working on the gopher frog. As he describes the field research, Roman demonstrates why saving endangered species and protecting biodiversity makes sense economically, medicinally, and philosophically. A perfect primer on the Endangered Species Act. (Nancy Bent Booklist 2011-05-01) Roman offers revealing case studies on the effects of the Endangered Species Act, which has been under attack almost since becoming law in 1973. Complaints have focused on the burdens placed on governments and citizens. Roman counters by making the case that protecting species can benefit both the environment and business. (Christopher Schoppa *Washington Post* 2011-04-29) Read[s] like dispatches from a war reporter in the midst of battle...*Listed* takes an idiosyncratic approach to the [Endangered Species Act], using it as an entry to many issues and controversies in conservation. Roman is an engaging author, and readers will enjoy the book. They will also come away having gained a deeper understanding of the Act, along with a plethora of interesting facts about listed species. (Daniel Simberloff *American Scientist* 2011-07-01) The Endangered Species Act (ESA) was a revolutionary step toward the protection of threatened biodiversity, but it has not been an unqualified success. In *Listed*, Roman examines the history, accomplishments, and failures of the law with a series of essays, each of which focuses on one of the animals the act affects...The book is informative and enjoyable. (J. L. Hunt *Choice* 2011-09-01)

Joe Roman is a researcher at the University of Vermont, the author of *Whale*, and senior editor of

the journal Solutions.

This swift-moving history of the Endangered Species Act culminates with prescriptions for enhancing environmental law, and suggestions for infusing ecological economics and other disciplines into wildlife conservation. Roman also implies often and well that many conservation biologists are consistently practicing neither conservation biology nor ethics (307.) More a series of cogent essays re: the importance of ESA, portraits of its champions and political opponents, and brilliant species-specific commentaries on the ways in which protection of the less-storied species, helped ensure the restoration or growth of ecosystems, Roman adds character to his material with personal comments and recollections which are well-hewn, literary and deeply felt. While I thought the narrative meandered for 20 or 30 pages in its discussion of the deer tick, Roman's challenge to worn hypotheses about the etiology of Lyme disease, I was transfixed by every word. I will recommend this work to dozens of colleagues in wildlife rehab and biology -- and even more to voters, and intelligent lay readers. As one who questions my state's mandate for a wolf hunt (ongoing at this writing) soon after the Feds delisted the gray wolf in Minnesota, Roman stresses that, while ESA was crafted to ensure the SURVIVAL of threatened species, its ultimate purpose is to support, with legal durability, the restoration and support of regional ecosystems to self-sustaining levels. It is consistent with the values of ESA to study particular habitats and species-specific memes, to characterize areas of distribution as, eg. "wolf country," domains in which the wolf dominates for reasons which benefit our shared ecosystems. Roman's closing remarks are thought-provoking, too. They range from biodiversity trusts and regulated diversity in human landscapes, to firm legislation in species "management." Some of the most formidable champions and opponents of such issues are attorneys; however some law needs to be immutable. Roman knows this, and is unafraid to stress it. It is for this reason, he quietly celebrates the emergence of The Center for Biological Diversity. Please read this stirring work, infused with little-known facts about the ecological wars we faced then and now, and sealed with suggestions which merit academic, congressional, scientific and public review. I will also mention that Harvard University Press has completed a stunning book design for LISTED, one which supports what will surely become a standard text in species ecology, one which inspires human coexistence with the numberless species that make life worth living. Five stars.

The title of this review summarizes the four stars I give it and it's great on background detail....BUT, I found it's solutions offered for preventing extinction and it's critique of the law, as written and

"functioning" and suggestion for improving it either disappointing and unimaginative or completely lacking...While it gives great insight into the politically bastardizing process through which even laws with the best of intentions are strained, I really expected the author to at least try proposing amendments that might better polish the enablement process...expectation unfulfilled...And the "what to do" list was disappointingly incomplete and non-inclusive, being primarily focused on the governmental and academic and zoological refuge/zoo-exclusive repopulation approaches, and totally ignoring how to involve the interested public, lay-hobbyist and private/captive breeders who could take up the professional understaffing and funding shortfalls and fluctuations caused by political ignorance, greed, special-interest and expedient short-sightedness. This book IS good, as far as it went...it just didn't live up to all I'd hoped to see it address in terms of innovatively citizen-involving solutions...

If I didn't want us to write at least 20 words, I'd say those two about sum it up. I should say that I generally enjoy this genre of book, but this is far and away one of the best I've read, and how often does one feel inclined to wax poetic about a non-fiction book? I'm not sure what I was expecting, but I actually did not have high expectations for the book before I started. Somehow I was imagining each chapter to be the tale of a different animal, and I wondered how interesting could a chapter on mussels be? But while many different animals (including mussels) were discussed, it was in a much different context than this is an important mussel, it lives here, looks like this, does this... The book begins with an overview of the history of the endangered species act and then includes several chapters that focus on different aspects of the importance of biodiversity (examples storm surge protection, health, medicine etc). The book is never preachy nor does it try to make you miserable or scare you silly. It is intelligent and you come away feeling you learned something without being lectured at. And while the author is clearly in favor of conservation, he is open about showing multiple views - there is something to learn here whether you are pro-conservation or wary of environmentalists. He is willing to challenge both sides, for example when researching biodiversity in medicine, the discovery that most medicines with natural origins are from fungus/bacteria's rather than plants or animals. It is one of the few environmentally oriented books that seems to express a middle view - the endangered species act has gotten some things right, and some things wrong, and they might not be what you expected them to be. My only criticism, and it is relatively small, is that it sometimes jumps around (especially in the beginning). The writing is often poignant, and there were stories that both made me wince and made me feel hopeful. Ultimately I think it is a tale of hope, and an honest path to help get there. I wish there was more writing of this caliber on

environmental issues. It is a book that will linger with you long after you've finished with it.

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