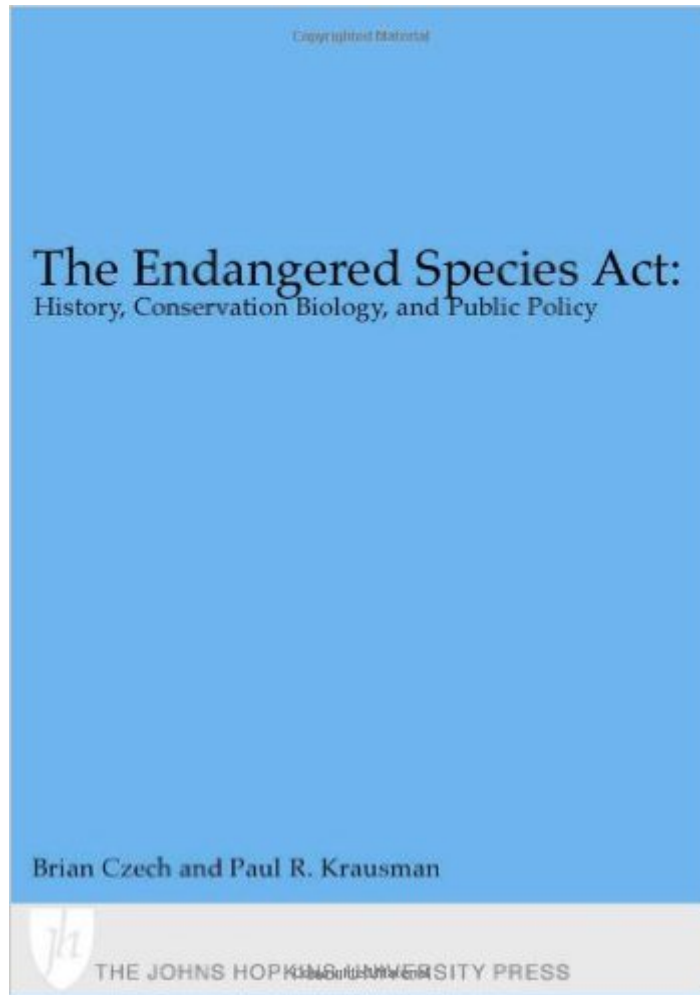


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The Endangered Species Act: : History, Conservation, Biology, And Public Policy



Synopsis

Since the 1970s, the Endangered Species Act (ESA), by virtue of its regulatory impact, has been a frequent subject of policy analysis. In this comprehensive history and critique of the ESA, Brian Czech and Paul R. Krausman incorporate the new model of policy design theory to frame a larger discussion about conservation biology and American democracy. Czech and Krausman provide a historical background of endangered species policy that integrates natural history, socioeconomic trends, political movements, and professional developments. Outlining the controversies surrounding the ESA, they find a connection between challenges to species conservation and challenges to democracy. After an assessment of ESA analyses that have been performed from traditional perspectives, they engage policy design theory to review the structural logic of the ESA, analyzing each clause of the legislation for its application of the fundamental elements of democracy. To address the technical legitimacy of ESA, they propose two new genetic considerations—functional genome size and molecular clock speed—to supplement phylogenetic distinctiveness as criteria with which to prioritize species for conservation. Next, they systematically describe the socioeconomic context of ESA by assessing and classifying the causes of species endangerment. A hybrid of policy analysis and ecological assessment, *The Endangered Species Act: History, Conservation Biology, and Public Policy* will appeal to scholars and students in the fields of natural resource policy and law, conservation biology, political science, wildlife ecology, and environmental history, and to professionals at agencies involved in wildlife conservation.

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Customer Reviews

I bought this slim, solidly-produced paperback because of its subject - one of the most important U.S. environmental laws, and authoritative subtitle: "History, Conservation Biology, and Public Policy". The preface by senior author, Czech, lets us know that this book started life as his PhD dissertation at the University of Arizona in 1997: "The Endangered Species Act, American Democracy, and an Omnibus Role for Public Policy". Coauthor Paul Krausman, a senior professor at the University of Arizona School of Natural Resources, was his major advisor. A policy dissertation on such a complex and controversial law (300 or more pages long) would have surely been impossible had Czech not already been an experienced conservation biologist and manager for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Arizona - when he got intrigued with wildlife policy. Czech mentions that "Paul and I decided to convert my dissertation into something more reader friendly". I suggest that while Czech and Krausman are clearly experts regarding this law and its subject area, the book is not likely to be considered user friendly by persons other than academic policy specialists. The authors write clearly and even colorfully at times. At other times they forget and drop in unexplained scientific or political science terminology (e.g. "haploid set of chromosomes"). Much of the book concerns policy design analysis. This can become especially abstruse when it launches into complex, social-science laden academese like the below example: "Pluralism, policy sciences, public choice theory, and critical theory have produced analyses characterized by a lack of normative content, preoccupation with reductionist methods, illogical optimism in a free market, and little practical application, respectively.

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