



# Cat Wars: The Devastating Consequences of a Cuddly Killer

*Peter P. Marra, Chris Santella*

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In 1894, a lighthouse keeper named David Lyall arrived on Stephens Island off New Zealand with a cat named Tibbles. In just over a year, the Stephens Island Wren, a rare bird endemic to the island, was rendered extinct. Mounting scientific evidence confirms what many conservationists have suspected for some time--that in the United States alone, free-ranging cats are killing birds and other animals by the billions. Equally alarming are the little-known but potentially devastating public health consequences of rabies and parasitic *Toxoplasma* passing from cats to humans at rising rates. *Cat Wars* tells the story of the threats free-ranging cats pose to biodiversity and public health throughout the world, and sheds new light on the controversies surrounding the management of the explosion of these cat populations.

This compelling book traces the historical and cultural ties between humans and cats from early domestication to the current boom in pet ownership, along the way accessibly explaining the science of extinction, population modeling, and feline diseases. It charts the developments that have led to our present impasse--from Stan Temple's breakthrough studies on cat predation in Wisconsin to cat-eradication programs underway in Australia today. It describes how a small but vocal minority of cat advocates has campaigned successfully for no action in much the same way that special interest groups have stymied attempts to curtail smoking and climate change.

*Cat Wars* paints a revealing picture of a complex global problem--and proposes solutions that foresee a time when wildlife and humans are no longer vulnerable to the impacts of free-ranging cats.

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