

BOOK REVIEWS

Roam: Wild Animals and the Race to Repair Our Fractured World.

Hillary Rosner. Published by Patagonia Books 2025

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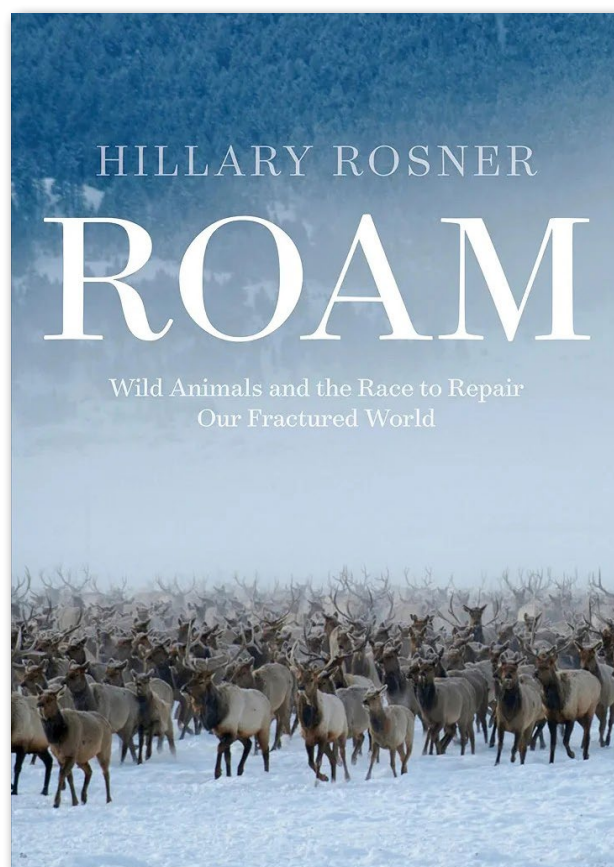


Hillary Rosner is an award-winning science journalist who works on environmental issues. Her work includes articles in *National Geographic Magazine*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Scientific American*, *Wired* and *The Atlantic*. Her awards include two Kavli Awards from the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). Raised in New York City, she has migrated to the Flatiron landscape of Boulder Colorado.

Roam is a personal journey across six nations examining animal and plant movement ecology and the ecological processes that sustain life on Earth. Author Rosner weaves together compelling stories and stunning photography to create a beautiful portrait of nature on the move. Published by Patagonia Books, the volume reflects the high-quality design sensibility of the Patagonia brand, setting a new standard for nature books. One notable gap is the lack of maps, which would have powerfully illustrated the wonders of migration.

Though the book addresses global connectivity, *Roam* is predominantly an American tale with a North American focus. Rosner structures the narrative around ecological connectivity conservation – wildlife corridors, crossing structures, large landscape efforts, great migrations, rewilding, and the need for greater human–wildlife coexistence – inviting readers to see the world through the eyes of wild species, from majestic elephants to Monarch Butterflies.

The book opens with Lucky Pierre, a coyote – possibly carrying hybrid wolf and dog genes – that stealthily colonised Central Park in the 1990s. This western canid's eastward expansion, against the tide of European settlement, exemplifies the life history imperative to disperse, migrate and adapt in the face of



unprecedented habitat loss. Rosner uses this story to introduce the emerging field of movement ecology, now spanning nearly all taxa and fuelled by advances in camera traps, satellite collars and microchips.

Roam then examines the Great Acceleration of habitat fragmentation and its cascading impacts – from disrupted hydrology in the Everglades to disproportionate effects on disadvantaged communities. Drawing on the history of redlining in American cities, Rosner describes an 'ecological apartheid' that separates mobile

populations of people, domestic animals and wildlife, ultimately severing human connections to nature.

Rosner also challenges readers to abandon assumptions about species movement. The California Wrentit, a small songbird, refuses to cross a stretch of Ventura Highway – dispelling the notion that birds can simply flit between disconnected habitat patches. Similarly, bats dependent on flowering agaves face growing barriers along their transboundary US–Mexico migration routes. Since agaves flower only once in their lifetime, sustainable tequila and mezcal production – harvesting after flowering – could support bat-friendly habitat along this corridor.

Ultimately, *Roam* is a call to action. Animals are running out of room and have no rights to roam. The pace of environmental change is outstripping the capacity for adaptation, particularly under climate change. Rosner argues that “hope is itself an act of connectivity” – connecting people in order to reconnect nature. After reading *Roam*, one thing becomes clear: in too many places, fences make bad neighbours.