

Rachel Carson

https://www.ducksters.com/biography/scientists/rachel_carson.php



biographyrachelcarson.mp3

- **Occupation:** Marine biologist, author, and environmentalist
- **Born:** May 27, 1907 in Springdale, Pennsylvania
- **Died:** April 14, 1964 in Silver Spring, Maryland
- **Best known for:** Founder of environmental science

Biography:

Early Life

Rachel Louise Carson was born in Springdale, [Pennsylvania](#) on May 27, 1907. She grew up on a large farm where she learned about nature and animals. Rachel loved to read and write stories as a child. She even had a story published when she was only eleven years old. One of Rachel's favorite subjects was the [ocean](#).

Rachel attended college at the Pennsylvania College for Women where she majored in biology. She later got her masters degree in zoology from Johns Hopkins University.



Rachel Carson

Source: US Fish and Wildlife Service

Career

After graduation, Rachel taught for a while and then got a job with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. At first she wrote for a weekly radio program that educated people on marine biology. Later, she became a full-time marine biologist and was chief editor of publications for the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Writing

In addition to her work at the Fish and Wildlife Service, Rachel wrote articles for magazines about the ocean. In 1941, she published her first book called *Under the Sea Wind*. However, it was her second book, *The Sea Around Us*, which made her famous. *The Sea Around Us* was published in 1951 and was on the New York Times Best Seller List for over 80 weeks. With the success of the book, Rachel quit her job at the Fish and Wildlife Service and began to write full time.

Rachel Carson

https://www.ducksters.com/biography/scientists/rachel_carson.php

Dangers of Pesticides

During World War II, government research had developed synthetic pesticides. Pesticides are used to kill pests such as [insects](#), weeds, and small animals that can destroy crops. After the war, farmers began to use pesticides on their crops. One of the main pesticides used was called DDT.

Rachel was concerned about the effects that large scale spraying of DDT may have on the health of people as well as the [environment](#). DDT was being sprayed onto crops in huge quantities from the air. Carson began to gather research on pesticides. She found that certain pesticides could adversely affect the environment and make people sick. She began to write a book about the subject.

Silent Spring

Carson spent four years gathering research and writing the book. She named it *Silent Spring* referring to [birds](#) dying due to pesticides and the spring being silent without their song. The book was published in 1962. The book became very popular and brought the environmental issues of pesticides to the general public.

Death

In 1960, Rachel was diagnosed with breast cancer. She fought the disease for the last four years of her life while she was finishing *Silent Spring* and defending her research. On April 14, 1964 she finally succumbed to the disease in her home in Maryland.

Interesting Facts about Rachel Carson

- Carson didn't call for a ban on all pesticides. She advocated more research into the dangers of some pesticides and a lower volume of spraying.
- The book *Silent Spring* came under attack by the chemical industry. However, Rachel defended her facts and even testified before the U.S. Senate.
- In 1973, DDT was banned in the United States. It is still used in some countries to kill mosquitoes, but many mosquitoes have now built up immunity to DDT, likely from too much spraying.
- She was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1980.
- You can visit the home where Rachel grew up at the Rachel Carson Homestead in Springdale, Pennsylvania just outside of Pittsburgh.

Activities

Take a ten question [quiz](#) about this page.

Rachel Carson

https://www.ducksters.com/biography/scientists/rachel_carson.php



Test Quiz

Questions on this quiz are based on information from [Rachel Carson](#).

1. Where was Rachel Carson born?
 - a. New York
 - b. Pennsylvania
 - c. Ohio
 - d. Illinois
 - e. North Carolina
2. What type of scientist was Rachel Carson?
 - a. Nuclear physicist
 - b. Astronomer
 - c. Chemist
 - d. Marine biologist
 - e. Geologist
3. What Rachel Carson book made her famous and spent over 80 weeks on the New York Times Best Seller list?
 - a. The Ocean Below
 - b. The Land of Time
 - c. The Sea Around Us
 - d. The Pacific Rim
 - e. Marine Animals of the World
4. What pesticide did Rachel Carson believe made people sick and hurt the environment?
 - a. DDT
 - b. Acephate
 - c. Paraquat
 - d. Bentazone
 - e. HCH

Rachel Carson

https://www.ducksters.com/biography/scientists/rachel_carson.php

5. What book by Rachel Carson exposed the dangers of pesticides to the public?

- a. The Ocean Below
- b. The Sea Around Us
- c. Crops
- d. Deadly Farming
- e. Silent Spring

6. Where did Rachel Carson grow up?

- a. On an island
- b. On a farm
- c. In an orphanage
- d. In a big city
- e. None of the above

7. Rachel Carson is often considered the founder of what branch of science?

- a. Physics
- b. Chemistry
- c. Geology
- d. Environmental
- e. Biology

8. True or False: Rachel Carson called for the banning of all pesticides in the United States.

- a. TRUE
- b. FALSE

9. What government agency did Rachel Carson work for as the chief editor of publications?

- a. U.S. State Department
- b. Department of Agriculture
- c. Rural Development
- d. Food Safety
- e. Fish and Wildlife Service

10. True or False: The pesticide DDT is now banned in the United States.

- a. TRUE
- b. FALSE