



Online Ethics Center
FOR ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE

Rachel Carson - Silent Spring

Description

During the seventeen years she worked in the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Rachel Carson learned about the problems of pesticides. Undaunted by the chemical companies' hostility and by the public's high enthusiasm for pesticides, she wrote a book called *Silent Spring*, which caused a major shift in public consciousness about the environment. Told in 7 sections and includes supplementary materials and pictures.

Body

During the seventeen years she worked in the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Rachel Carson learned about the problems of pesticides. Undaunted by the chemical companies' hostility and by the public's high enthusiasm for pesticides, she wrote a book called *Silent Spring*, which caused a major shift in public consciousness about the environment.

Rachel Carson's Successful Campaign to Bring the Pesticide Problem to Public Attention:

[I. Rachel Carson's Background](#)

[II. Uses of DDT](#)

[III. Taking Action](#)

[IV: Decision to Write a Book](#)

[V. Anticipating Hostile Reaction from the Chemical Industry](#)

[VI. Coping with Health Problems and Family Crises](#)

[VII. The Appearance of *Silent Spring*](#)

Supporting Material:

- This essay by Gary Kroll discusses the role of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* in briefly articulating ecology as a "subversive subject" by taking aim at the overly mechanical and reductive sciences and by critiquing the cultural authority of science and technology to control nature.
- This essay by Philip Cafaro discusses Carson's environmental philosophy and asks the question, what are the "foundations" of Rachel Carson's environmental ethics? Cafaro examines how Carson justified her three main evaluative premises (or her two controversial ones, concern for human health presumably needing no justification). The essay also discusses several respects in which Rachel Carson's life and work might point the way forward for environmental ethics. First, Carson's frequent criticisms of human attempts to dominate nature suggest important parallels with contemporary ecofeminism. Second, Carson's philosophy of "reverence for life" seems to support the whole spectrum of environmental activism.

[Chronology of Events Leading to the Writing of *Silent Spring*](#)

[Summary of *Silent Spring*](#)

[Silent Spring Revisited: A Discussion of *Silent Spring*](#)

[Excerpt from Letter to *Reader's Digest* from Carson](#)

[Excerpt from Letter to Carson from Huckins](#)

[Excerpt from Letter That Prevented *Reader's Digest* from Publishing Pesticide Article](#)
[Pesticides](#)

[List of Environmental Legislation and Agencies](#)

[Bibliography](#)

[Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*: A Brief History of Ecology as a Subversive Subject](#)

[Rachel Carson's Environmental Ethics](#)

Rights

Use of Materials on the OEC

Resource Type

Case Study / Scenario

Parent Collection

Engineers and Scientists Behaving Well

Topics

Environmental Justice

Communicating Science and Engineering

Sustainability

Discipline(s)

Environmental Health

Life and Environmental Sciences

Animal Science