**Rachel Carson**

Marine Biologist, Zoologist, Environmentalist

Author

Graduated magna cum laude from Pennsylvania College for Women

Master’s degree in Zoology 1932, John Hopkins University

**Biography**:

Rachel Carson was born May 27, 1907. She was originally motivated by the outdoors and writing through her mother. She began college as an English major and switched to biology, continuing to work on the college newspaper. After her father died, she went home to care for her mother. Satisfying her passions for zoology and writing, she began writing for the US Bureau of Fisheries.

Rachel worked full time writing pamphlets and studying fish populations before writing her first book *Under the Sea-Wind* in 1941. She became Chief Editor of Publications for the Fish and wildlife Service in 1949 and wrote her second book *The Sea Around Us* in 1950. Both books were on the bestseller list.

While suffering from terminal cancer, Carson shaped environmentalism as we know it today with the release *Silent Spring* in 1962. Because of her work, the use of DDT was banned in 1972. Among other things, this made a huge difference in the lives of bald eagles. Due to DDT in the food chain, their eggs were too fragile and would crack before chicks were old enough to hatch. Their number increased from 500 in the 1950s to about 100,000.

Carson died April 14, 1964.

**Research Description**:

In her work *Under the Sea-Wind*, Carson focused on the life of three creatures and how their lives were interconnected. For *The Sea Around Us*, Carson collected research from submarine warfare of WWII. It is a survey of our knowledge of the sea, mixed with the excitement of discovery. Explanations of how islands are formed and altered, as well as explanations of how the water on Earth works through rain, currents, and tides and included.

The book *Silent Spring* described human’s influence on the environment through the use of pesticides. Over six years of research went into this book. Her work focused on the concern that large-scale usage of chemicals were being used without enough research on their environmental effects. A fictitious town is described in which animals are dying, people are falling ill and the vegetation is useless.

**Awards and Honors**

National Book Award for nonfiction in 1952 for *The Sea Around Us*

John Burroughs Award in 1952 for *The Sea Around Us*