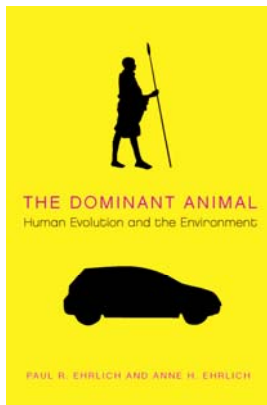




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# 40 Years Later - is Paul Ehrlich's 'Population Bomb' Finally Exploding?

*Paul Ehrlich helped ignite the modern environmental movement with *The Population Bomb* in 1968. Paul and his wife Anne are back with a new book, *The Dominant Animal*, which takes a new look at our future on the planet as evidence mounts that the population bomb may have gone off.*

**Palo Alto, CA** - Earlier this year, the World Bank issued an ominous warning - record-high food prices are pushing more than 100 million people deeper into abject poverty and malnutrition. Food riots have raged in several countries, governments have been deposed, and battles over scarce food and water are on the rise.

The year may be 2008, but this scenario sounds like it was taken straight from the pages of Paul Ehrlich's seminal book - *The Population Bomb*. In short, today's headlines sound an awful lot as though the population bomb Paul warned us of exactly 40 years ago is now exploding.

Now, four decades after he first ignited debate and action around the globe, author and scientist Paul R. Ehrlich is back with a new book, *The Dominant Animal: Human Evolution and the Environment*.

In *The Dominant Animal*, Paul joins with his wife, Anne H. Ehrlich, a prize-winning scientist herself, to examine this growing crisis - from its roots in human evolution to the failure of modern governments to respond. It is a powerful examination of how the humans today are creating the world of humans of tomorrow—and what it will take for our civilization to survive.

The 40-year anniversary of *The Population Bomb* and the publication of *The Dominant Animal* provide a great opportunity for an in-depth look at Paul Ehrlich's original warning to the world in 1968, his legacy, and his continuing work to understand and explain the crisis facing our civilization.

Just as in *The Population Bomb*, the Ehrlichs' new book ties together the many pieces that make up the environmental, social, and humanitarian crisis we face today. The Ehrlichs bring us to the startling realization that the interrelated issues of food, energy, climate, toxic chemicals, and ecosystems are more than just a passing crisis.

In compelling fashion, they explain that our domination of Earth has prompted a period of rapid evolutionary change the scope of which the planet has not seen since an asteroid hit Earth 65 million years ago.

Paul Ehrlich is one of the most accomplished - and controversial - scientists of his generation. He has counseled governments, appeared in television shows ranging from documentaries to *The Tonight Show*, won a MacArthur Genius Award, and is a member of the National Academy of Sciences. Paul and his wife Anne, both of whom are members of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, are available for extensive interviews, profiles, or brief commentary in relation to reporting on broader stories

Island Press was established in 1984 to stimulate, shape, and communicate the ideas that are essential for solving environmental problems. Publishing approximately 40 books and other information tools a year, we use a multidisciplinary, peer-reviewed approach that brings practical solutions to complex challenges like climate change, the depletion of our oceans, sustainable energy and agriculture, and species extinction. A nonprofit 501(c)3 organization, Island Press publishes for scientists, policy makers, environmental practitioners, students, journalists, and the general public. Island Press - Solutions that inspire change.

*The Dominant Animal*

By Paul R. Ehrlich and Anne H. Ehrlich

An Island Press Hardcover

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## QUESTION AND ANSWER

# The Dominant Animal: Human Evolution and the Environment

by Paul R. Ehrlich and Anne H. Ehrlich

This year marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of Paul Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb*, one of the most influential and controversial books of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The book was so powerful that leading conservative intellectuals mounted a campaign against it, branding it (along with Darwin's *The Origin of Species*) as one of the most "harmful" of the past two centuries.

Now, Paul Ehrlich and his wife Anne are back with a new book, *The Dominant Animal*, which picks up on many of the central issues of *The Population Bomb* and reveals startling new research and analysis on the fate of our planet and humanity.

This is a brief synopsis of a provocative, dynamic, and controversial interview with Paul Ehrlich.

**Q In *The Population Bomb*, you describe a rather stark future for the planet – with too many people, dwindling resources, massive starvation, and environmental calamity. You wrote that hundreds of millions might die from starvation by the mid-1970s. Looking back on that prediction and others, how do you think the book holds up after 40 years?**

**A** Frankly, the book was too optimistic. In many ways, the situation is far worse today than I could have imagined when I wrote *The Population Bomb*. We did not predict the massive loss of tropical rainforests. We thought climate change would affect us much later in the century. We had not yet dumped massive amounts of hormone disrupting toxins into the environment. The seas have been exhausted much earlier than anyone had thought. Some ten million people die from hunger and hunger-related disease every year.

**Q You have a lot of critics out there. Many point to the dire predictions in *The Population Bomb* that did not come true. What is your response?**

**A** At this point, nearly every scientist agrees that Earth's carrying capacity has been exceeded given our lifestyle. The central point of *The Population Bomb* has been confirmed by most of the best scientists in the field. The Wall Street Journal might criticize me, but I've received just about every major scientific award there is. My peers in the scientific community agree with me and they agree with the book.

**Q** **Some of the most controversial parts of the Population Bomb have to do with your policy recommendations, which included dramatic population control measures. Do you still think those measures are necessary?**

**A** No sane scientist is opposed to reducing population growth, the only debate is over how best to do it. It is really quite simple – people are living longer, which is a good thing. I'm all for it. But if people live longer and continue to have the same number of babies, population explodes. That is what we are still seeing in many parts of the world, including the United States.

**Q** **You have a new book out, *The Dominant Animal*. In it, you revisit a number of the issues you raised in *The Population Bomb*. What is the central message of *The Dominant Animal*?**

**A** It means that we, as the dominant animal, have so altered the environment and so damaged our life-support systems, that the stresses on the living world are similar to those produced by a meteor strike in many ways. We may be facing the same kind of massive extinctions and changes in climate that the Earth saw when dinosaurs were wiped out by an extra-terrestrial body.

**Q** **It is an election year. If the next president were to wake up the day after the election and call you for advice, what would you tell him or her?**

**A** Get to work now. Start the discussion immediately. We have to begin the cultural evolutionary change necessary to avoid catastrophe. You might get assassinated, but someone's got to do it.

**Q** **Much of your book is, to put it mildly, gloomy. Do we have any reason to be hopeful that we can change or avert disaster?**

**A** If there weren't hope for the future, I wouldn't be running around trying to ignite a response. We need to stop wasting time and start focusing on these issues. I am trying to move the political discussion to the survival issues humanity faces.



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## BIOGRAPHY PAUL R. EHRLICH and ANNE H. EHRLICH

**PAUL R. EHRLICH** is Bing Professor of Population Studies and Professor of Biological Sciences at Stanford University. An expert in the fields of evolution, ecology, taxonomy, and population biology, Ehrlich has conducted fieldwork from the Arctic and the Antarctic to the tropics, and from high mountains to the ocean floor. Professor Ehrlich has written more than 800 scientific papers and popular articles as well as many books, including *The Population Bomb*, *The Process of Evolution*, *The Machinery of Nature*, *The Science of Ecology*, *Human Natures*, *Betrayal of Science and Reason*, and *One With Nineveh*.

Among his many scientific honors, Ehrlich is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, an honorary member of the British Ecological Society, and a member of the United States National Academy of Sciences and the American Philosophical Society. He was awarded the first AAAS/Scientific American Prize for Science in the Service of Humanity, and he received the Crafoord Prize in Population Biology and the Conservation of Biological Diversity, an explicit substitute for the Nobel Prize in fields of science for which the latter is not given. Ehrlich has also received a MacArthur Fellowship, the Volvo Environmental Prize for Environmental Sciences, and the Blue Planet Prize, and he was the first recipient of the Roger Tory Peterson Memorial Medal.

**ANNE H. EHRLICH** is Senior Research Associate in the Department of Biological Sciences of Stanford University as well as Policy Coordinator of Stanford's Center for Conservation Biology. She is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Californian Academy of Sciences. Besides having conducted research on butterflies and reef fish, she has worked actively with a number of environmental organizations, including Friends of the Earth and the Sierra Club. She was deeply involved in issues such as the environmental impacts of nuclear war and other problems of population, resources, and the environment. She has served as a government advisor and on boards of directors of several organizations and small foundations.

Anne was co-editor of *Hidden Dangers*, and Anne and Paul together have authored a series of books, including *Ecoscience*, *Extinction*, *Earth*, *The Population Explosion*, *Healing the Planet*, *The Stork and the Plow*, *Betrayal of Science and Reason*, and *One With Nineveh*.

Anne and Paul together have jointly received the Saskawa Environment Prize of the United National Environment Programme (UNEP), the Heinz Award in the Environment, the American Humanist Association's Distinguished Service Award, the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation's Distinguished Peace Leadership Award, and the Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement. Their most recent book together is *The Dominant Animal*, which will be available from Island Press in May 2008.