Mass Extinctions in Geologic Time and What We Learn from Them

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During the past 400 million years of the cycling of life on this planet, life mass extinction has emerged as a game-changer and major force in evolution. Detected from the fossil record, these events caused worldwide destruction leading to ecosystem collapse. The resulting changes in Earth's history had profound effects on the evolution of life. Mass extinctions thus constitute one of the grand unifying themes on our planet. Study of the strata, rocks and fossils related to these episodes of dying are revealing much insight, not only in the history of our planet but also in understanding of the current mass extinction already underway and how to slow and possibly reverse it.

Biography: George Stanley is Professor Emeritus and former Director of the University of Montana Paleontology Center. In the Department of Geosciences at Montana, he taught and conducted research in paleontology and geology for 35 years. He is a Fulbright Fellow and former geologist and Research Associate at the Smithsonian Institution, Museum of Natural history. His research has helped clarify mass extinctions, the evolution of reef structures and modern and ancient coral lineages. Stanley is a Fellow of the Geological Society of America, Organization for Tropical Studies and Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He's author of over 300 professional publications and several books. He has done research in western Canada, northern Mexico, the Peruvian Andes, Germany, Austria, New Zealand, Japan and China. Currently he lives in Port Townsend where he enjoys hiking, nature and playing guitar.