

RECOVERY FROM THE CRETACEOUS-TERTIARY MASS EXTINCTION

Dr. Steven D'Hondt, University of Rhode Island

Sixty-five million years ago, a large asteroid slammed into what is now Chicxulub, Mexico, and caused one of the largest biological catastrophes of all time — the Cretaceous-Tertiary mass extinction. Isotopic and sedimentologic studies of ODP cores show that global biogeochemical cycles and open-ocean ecological structure did not fully recover from the impact for at least four million years. Post-impact recovery may have required the evolution of new species at key trophic levels to replace those lost during the mass extinction. Dr. D'Hondt sailed as a paleontologist on ODP Leg 165 (Caribbean Sea).