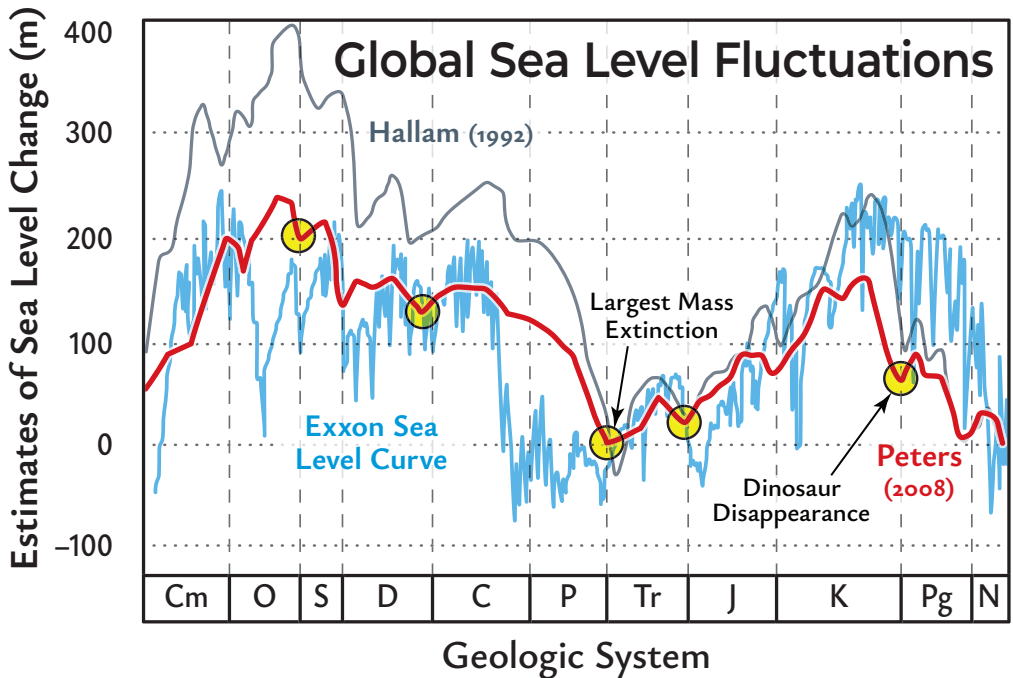


Correlation with Falling Global Sea Level



Modified from work by Robert A. Rohde,
GNU 1.2, or CC by SA 3.0

Several estimates of global sea level change have been prepared for the intervals of the geologic column. The graph above shows three estimates of how much sea level changed while the fossil record was being deposited. Although the three curves differ in places, all estimates show a large drop in sea level in the upper Cretaceous layers. When sea level decreases, there is less water over the continents, and fewer fossils would be formed. This may contribute to an abrupt decline in fossil diversity known as a mass extinction. Note that this pattern also applies to the other mass extinctions labeled on the graph.

Graph Key

- N = Neogene
- Pg = Paleogene
- K = Cretaceous
- J = Jurassic
- Tr = Triassic
- P = Permian
- C = Carboniferous
- D = Devonian
- S = Silurian
- O = Ordovician
- Cm = Cambrian
- = Mass extinction