

Geowissenschaftliches Kolloquium

The evolution of deep-sea ecosystems

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Hydrothermal vents and methane seeps in the deep sea are inhabited by highly specialized faunal communities that rely mostly on chemoautotrophic bacteria for nutrition. This spawned the hypothesis that their evolutionary history is independent from that of photosynthesis-based food chains and unaffected by the global mass extinction events. The fossil record provides insights into origin and evolution of these faunas and indicates that the main evolutionary patterns are driven by changes in ocean chemistry.



Dr. Steffen Kiel is senior scientist and curator at the Palaeobiology Department of the Swedish Museum of Natural History in Stockholm. He received his PhD from the University of Hamburg, and continued his research at various institutions in the USA, England, Austria, and Germany. His main interests are the drivers of evolution on geologic timescales, biogeography, and the deep ocean.

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