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“Dating the Demise of the Dinosaurs”

Why did the dinosaurs go extinct, and when? And how do we know? Most of our knowledge of the history of life comes from the fossil record. But the fossil record is notoriously incomplete, and as a result, potentially misleading. How, then, can we learn anything about life on earth millions of years ago? In this talk I will discuss my research on how we can recognize mass extinctions such as the one that killed the dinosaurs – from imperfect clues in the fossil record. Along the way we will explore some seemingly unrelated topics, including how the Allies estimated the strength of enemy forces during World War II.

No background in statistics or paleontology is assumed.