

A NEW METHOD FOR FINDING SMALL VERTEBRATE FOSSILS:  
ULTRAVIOLET LIGHT AT NIGHT

*by* DARIN A. CROFT, TOM KAYE, *and* LAURA PANKO

ABSTRACT. Vertebrate fossils from many different formations fluoresce when exposed to ultraviolet (UV) light. In this paper field observations and controlled experiments in the Chadron Formation (White River Group, late Eocene) of Wyoming are used to assess the utility of searching for fossils at night using ultraviolet light. The results indicate that, especially for very small teeth and egg shell fragments, searching with ultraviolet light at night can result in significantly more specimens than searching during daylight hours. This method has the potential to increase sample sizes for small vertebrate specimens that are often overlooked when using standard collecting techniques.

KEY WORDS: microvertebrate, ultraviolet light, black light, White River Group, egg shell

Palaeontology 47(4):795-800