

IMLS Silurian Reef Digitization Project

**Imaging workflows,
equipment configuration,
and challenges for 3D objects
in drawers and trays**

By Paul Mayer

Interns:

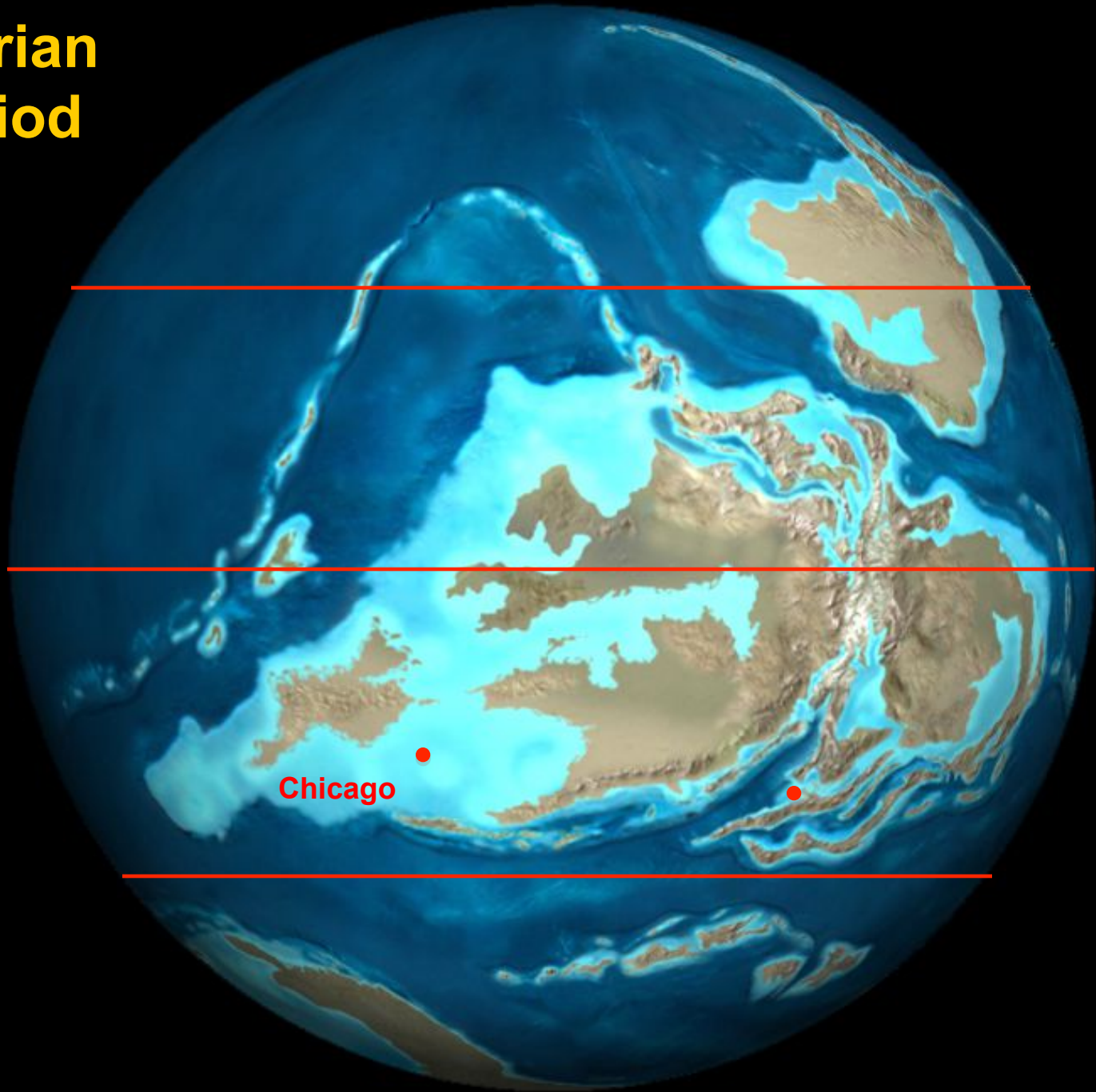
Liza Connolly, Nicole Karpus,
Alex Layng, Sam Albright
& Ryan Manzuk

The **Field**
Museum

 INSTITUTE of
Museum and Library
SERVICES



Silurian Period



Silurian Reefs

Flank beds dipping off of 100 meter tall Silurian reef core at
Thornton Quarry, Illinois, USA





Silurian

Favositid Tabulate Coral

“Honeycomb Coral”

Chicago, Illinois





CSGEO8771 Copyright The Field Museum



These collections represent a tremendous resource.

The question is how do we make better use of these remarkable, but often underused resources and preserve them for the future?

The Virtual Silurian Reef

INTRODUCTION

During the Silurian Period in earth history, 425 million years ago, when much of North America was covered by a shallow, tropical sea, reefs flourished in the area now occupied by Wisconsin and Illinois. This site uses these reefs as a vehicle for students to learn general principles, local details, and environmental significance of the study of the ancient past.



The Silurian reef diorama at the Milwaukee Public Museum, which serves as the focus for the pages that follow.

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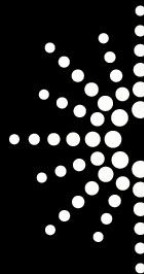
- [Basic concepts](#)
- [Distribution of Silurian reefs](#)
- [Reef organisms](#)
- [Biodiversity](#)
- [Silurian reefs in the field](#)
- [Environmental relations](#)
- [Inside the Museum](#)
- [The history and future of reefs](#)
- [References](#)



Send comments to: reef@mpm.edu

Our answer is to:

- 1) Make information available through an online database for researchers
- 2) Tell their story through an educational outreach website aimed at middle school students and teachers.



Workflow and Design

IMLS Silurian
Reef Project

Goal to digitize 15,000 Silurian specimens in three summers, with three interns per summer and share data with MPM thru online database.

Intern
Workflow

Interns select fossil group, pull 6 drawers from collection, photograph labels, enter label data in KE EMu catalog module, then photograph fossils. Interns record their times for each task

My Workflow

Edit images, batch upload images to KE EMu Multimedia module, then batch connect each Multimedia record to correct KE EMu catalog record.

Data Inspection
&
Error Detection

Connecting multimedia records to catalog records is perfect time to check for errors. EMu generates error report for unconnected records, and I visual inspect catalog records in a tabular format, and multimedia records one at a time

IMLS Silurian Reef Digitization Project

Each intern has a set of fossils that they cycle through the three work stations.

Goal: to digitize 31,000 Silurian reef fossil invertebrates from the FMNH and MPM collections.



2. Fossil Photography Station

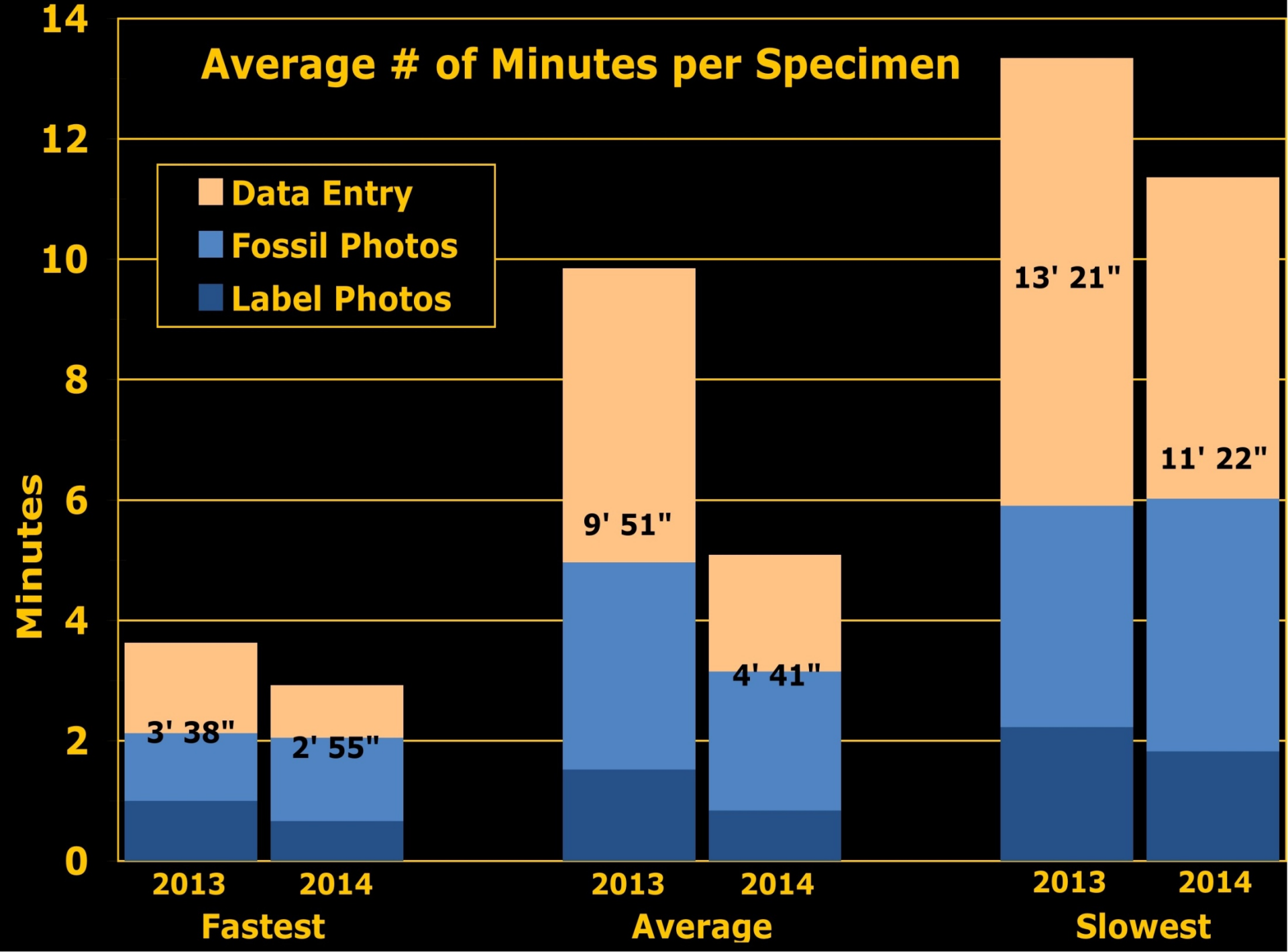
3. KE EMu Data Entry Station

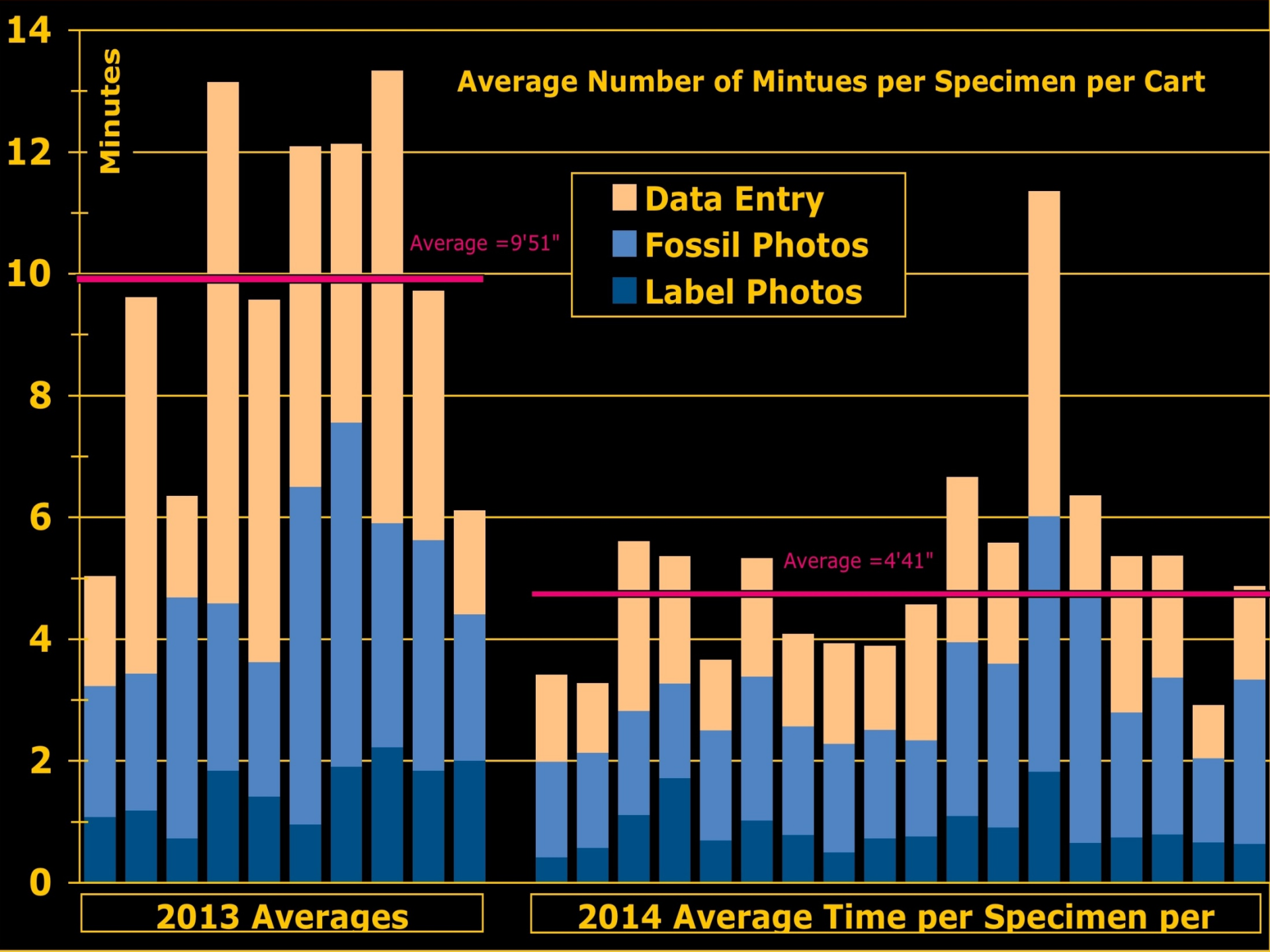
1. Label Photography Station

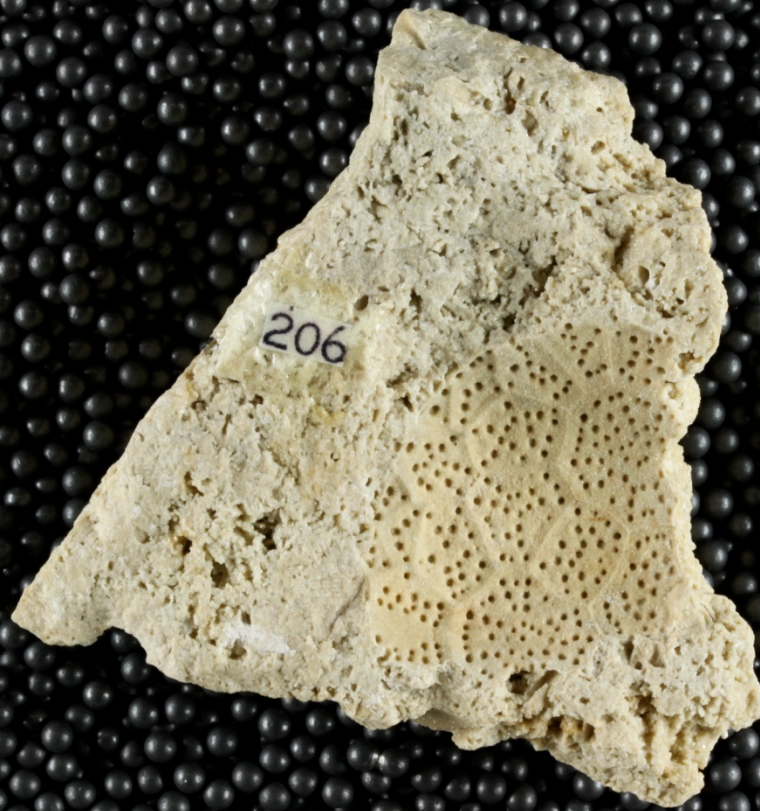


Average # of Minutes per Specimen

- Data Entry
- Fossil Photos
- Label Photos

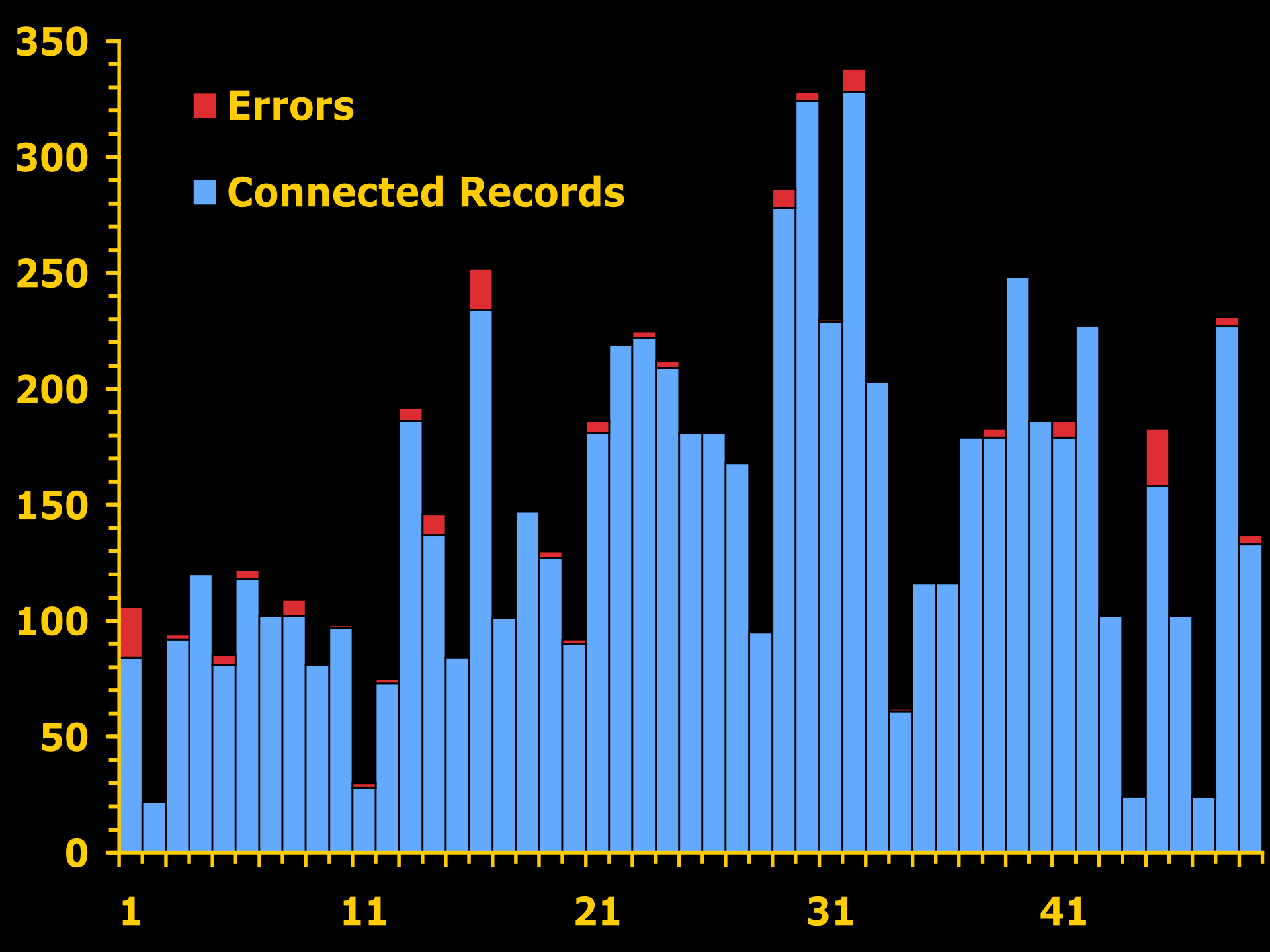






My Work Flow:
Inserting images into the database





Macrofossil Photography Techniques Designed to Enhance Contrast and Emphasize Detail

- Low-Angled (Textural) Lighting
- Polarized Lighting
- Ultraviolet Lighting
- Color Filters
- Immersion in Water (or Alcohol)

(Lund, 1980)



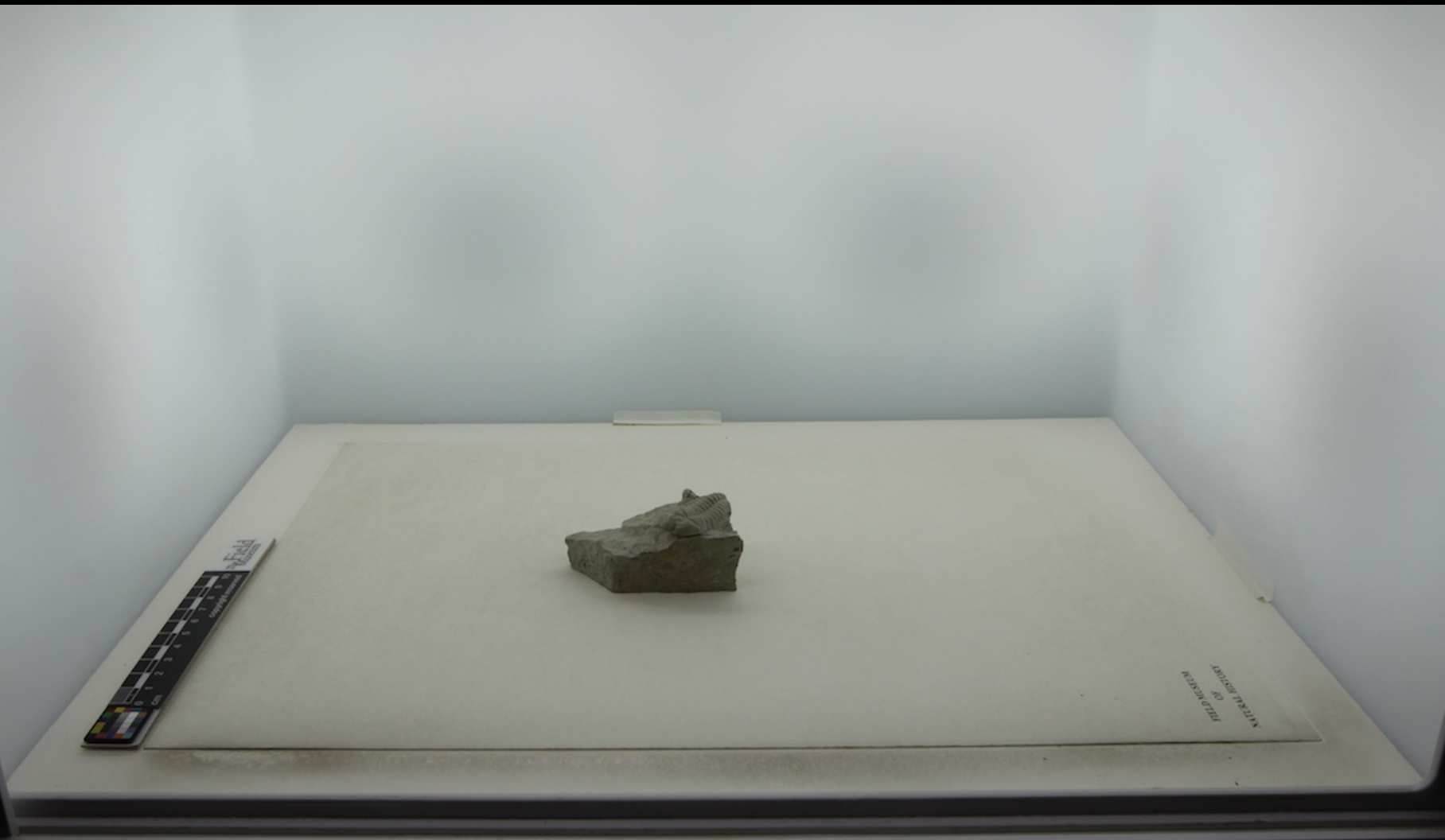




Light Box



Inside the Light Box



Light Box Image of Trilobite



PE 6110
***Calymene celebra* Raymond**
Wenlock, Silurian
Chicago, Illinois

Low-Angle Lighting Setup



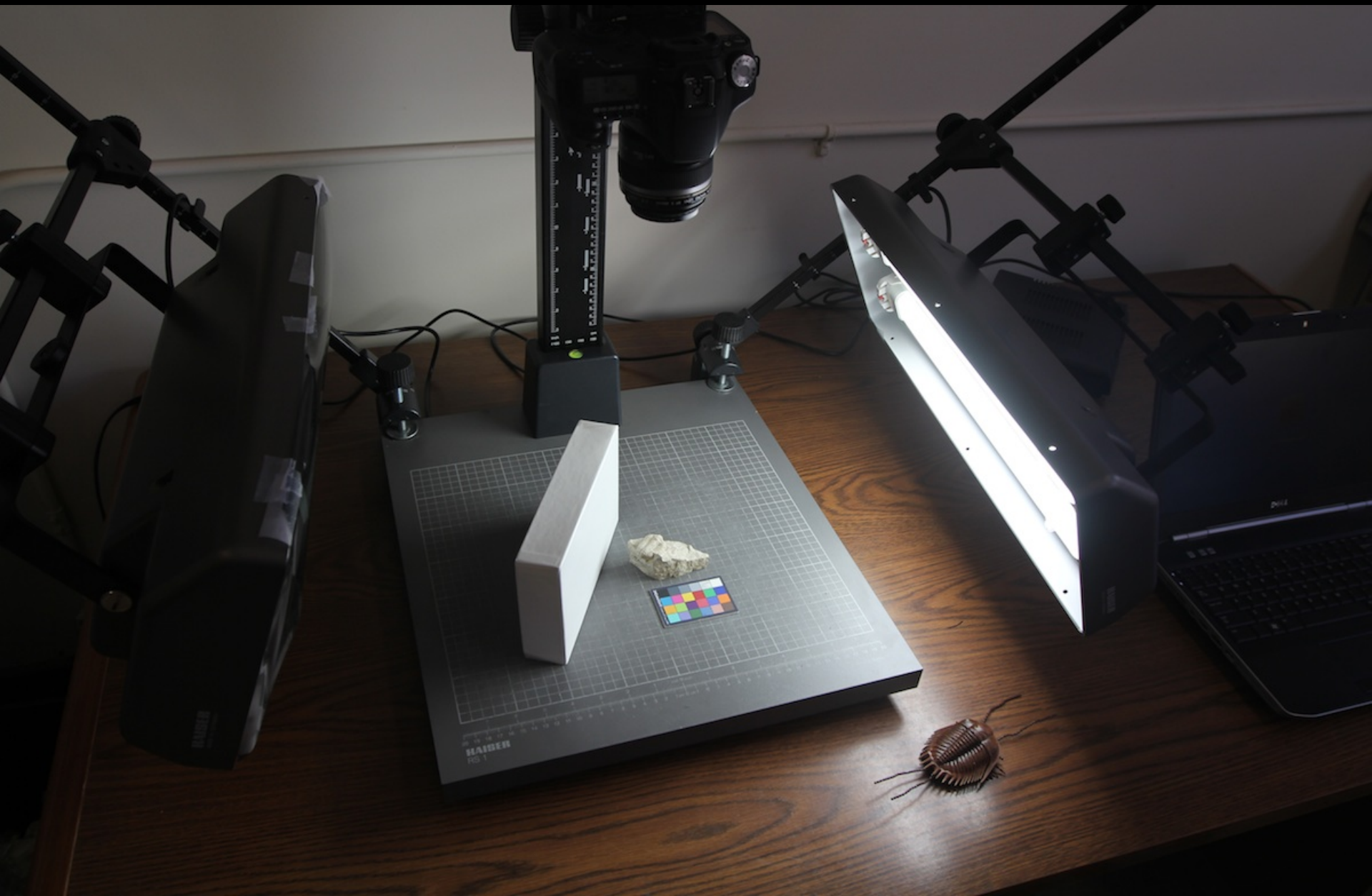
Low-Angle Lighting



PE 6110
***Calymene celebra* Raymond**
Wenlock, Silurian
Chicago, Illinois

190 200 210 220 230 240 250 260 270 280 290 300 310 320

One-Directional, Low-Angle Lighting Setup

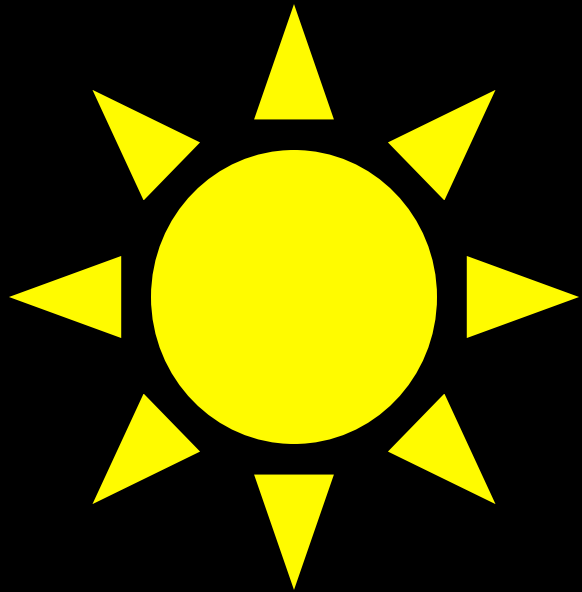


Low-Angle, One-Directional Lighting

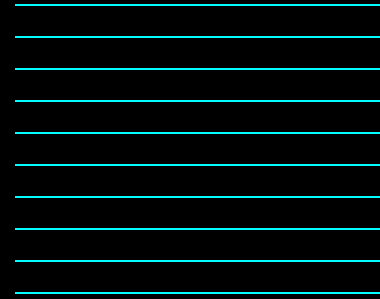


PE 6110
***Calymene celebra* Raymond**
Wenlock, Silurian
Chicago, Illinois

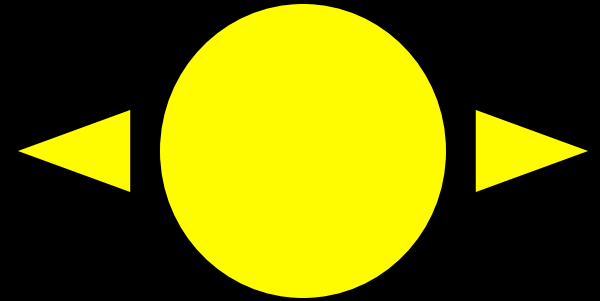
**Normal
Light**



**Polarizing
Filter**



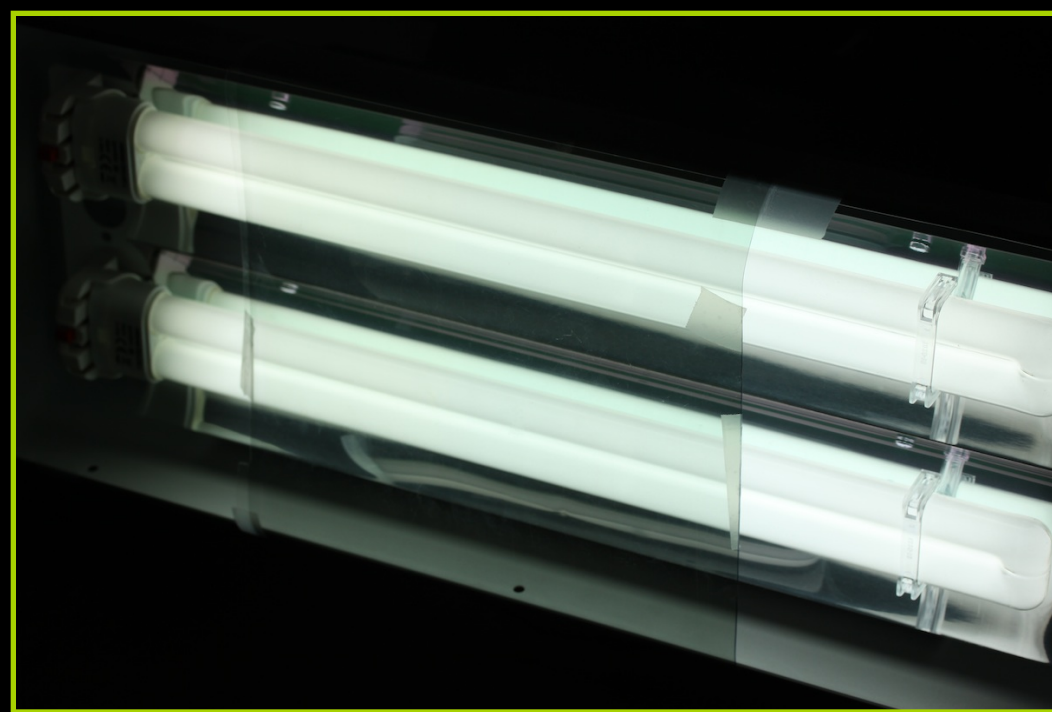
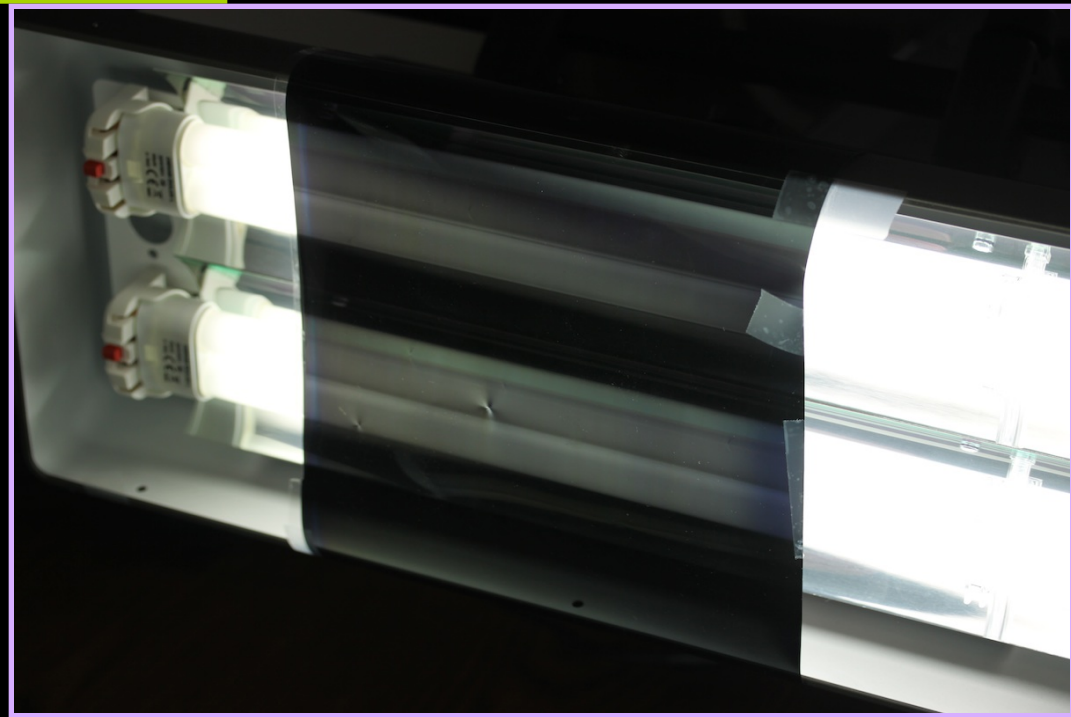
**Polarized
Light**



Light from the sun or a light bulb is unpolarized. This means that the waves of light vibrate in all directions perpendicular to the axis of its path. Light is partly polarized when reflected off objects. Light can be completely polarized when it passes through an optical filter, The polarizing filter only allows light waves vibrating in one plane to pass through it.

Close up of lights with
uncrossed polarizer filter

Close up of lights with
crossed polarizer filter



Low-Angle Lighting



PE 22816
Polychaete worm
Rhaphidiophorus hystrix

Pennsylvanian
Mazon Creek

Carbondale Formation
Francis Creek Shale

Polarized Lighting

- High Contrast
- Increase saturation
- Reduced reflection
- Flat light

PE 22816
Polychaete worm
Rhaphidiophorus hystrix

Pennsylvanian
Mazon Creek

Carbondale Formation
Francis Creek Shale





PE 57188
Eubleptus maculosus
Mazon Creek, Pennsylvanian
Carbondale Formation, Francis Creek Shale

How/Why Does Polarized Lighting Work?

“Polarized light is reflected back directly by the fossil material while the matrix reflects a more chaotic form of light, enabling the second polarizing filter to increase the contrast between the fossil and the matrix.”

THE USE OF POLARISED LIGHT IN PHOTOGRAPHY OF
MACROFOSSILS

by PHILIP CRABB, 2001,
Palaeontology Volume 44 issue 4

Non-Polarized Light



Dictyonema
flabelliforme
Matane
23586

UC 23586

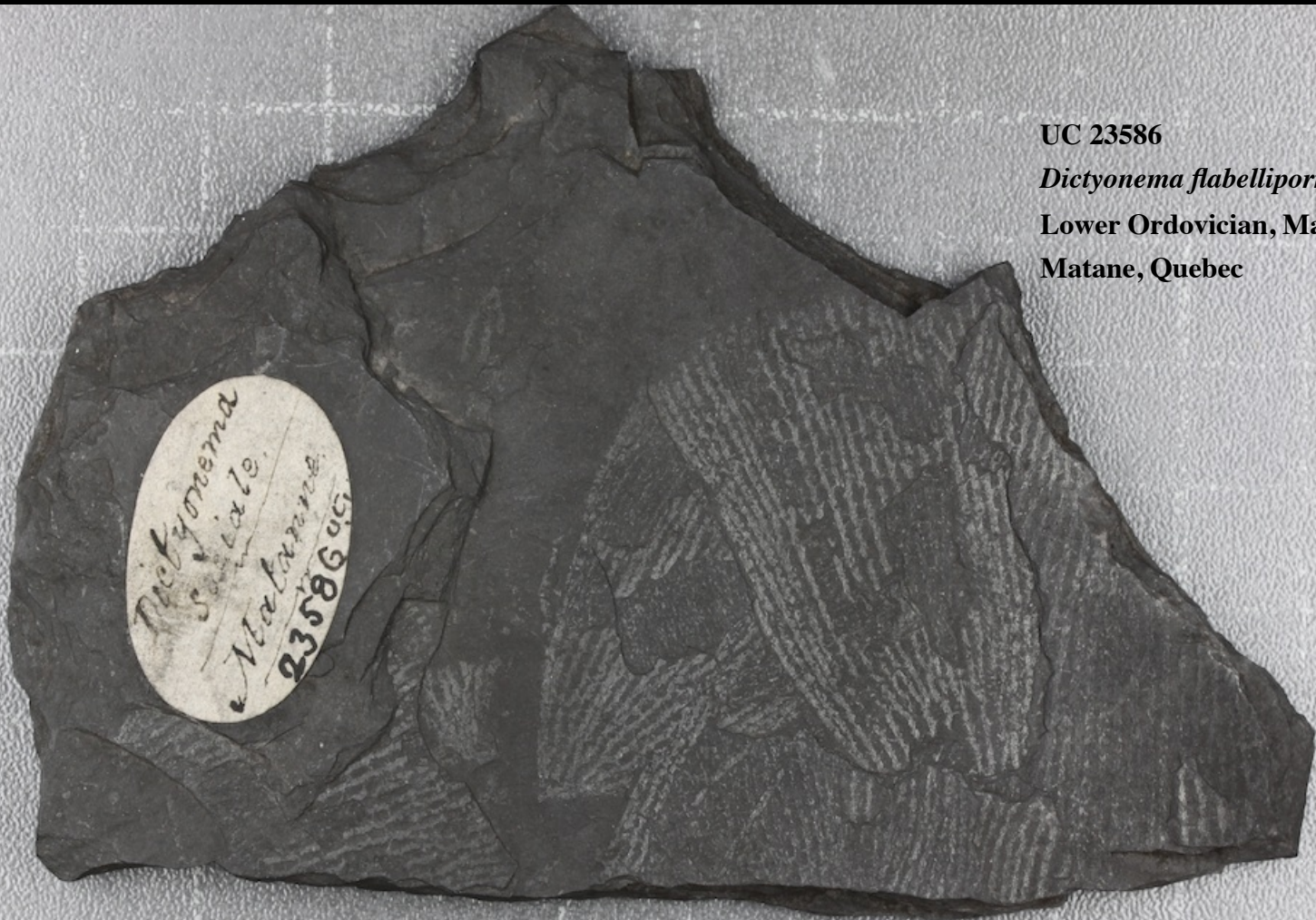
Dictyonema flabelliforme

Lower Ordovician, Matane Shale

Matane, Quebec

190 200 210 220 230 240 250 260 270 280 290 300 310 320

Polarized Light

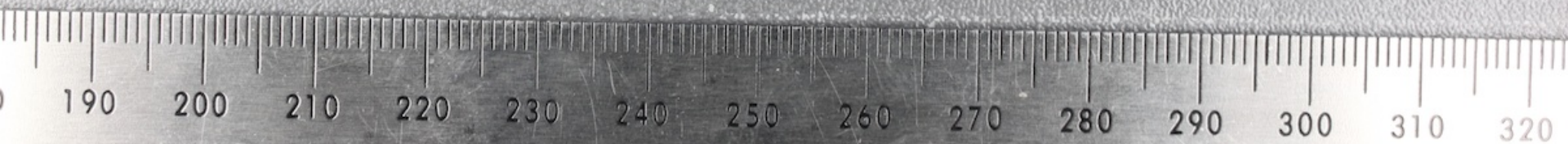


UC 23586

Dictyonema flabelliporme

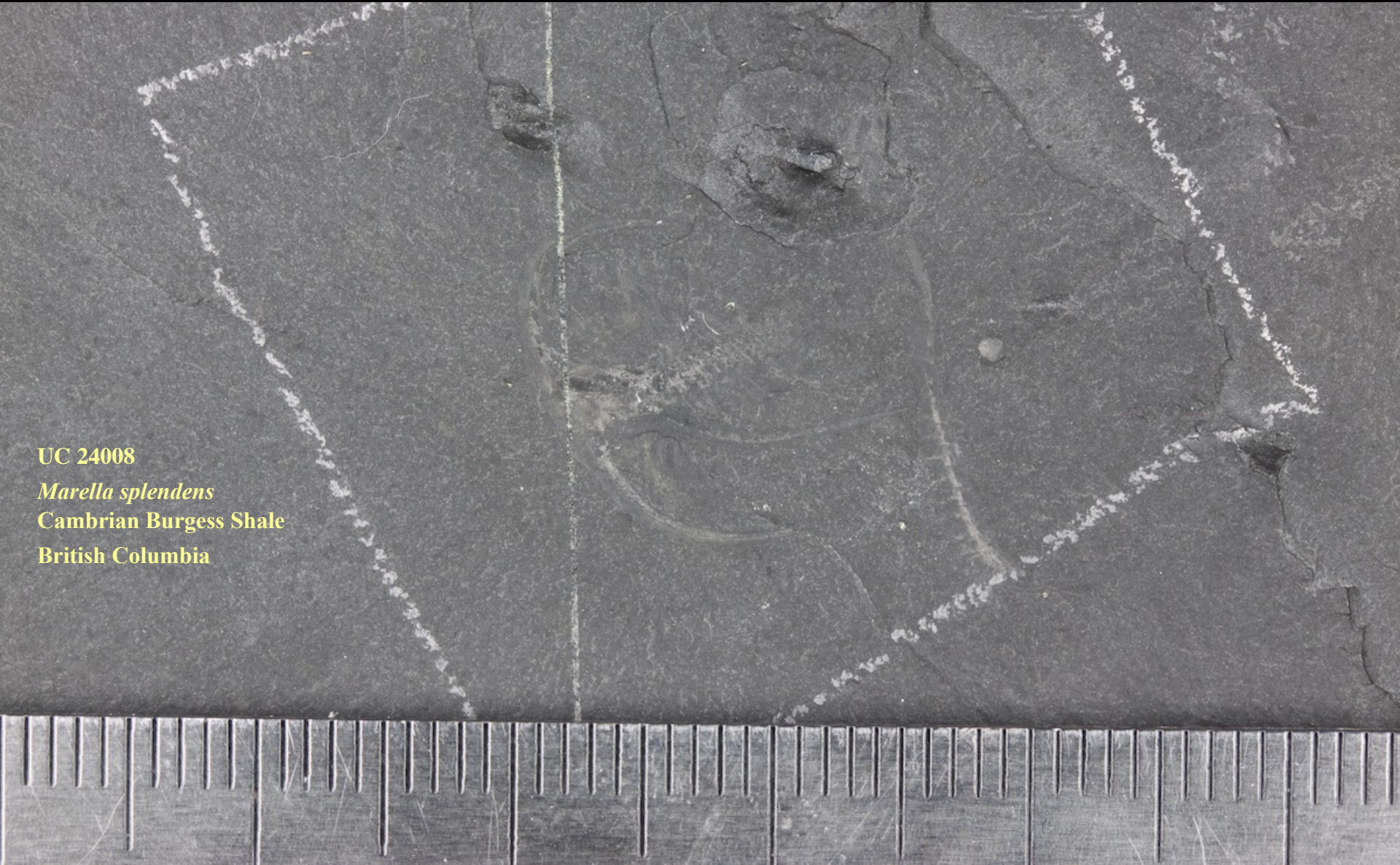
Lower Ordovician, Matane Shale

Matane, Quebec



Non-Polarized Light

UC 24008
Marella splendens
Cambrian Burgess Shale
British Columbia



Polarized Light

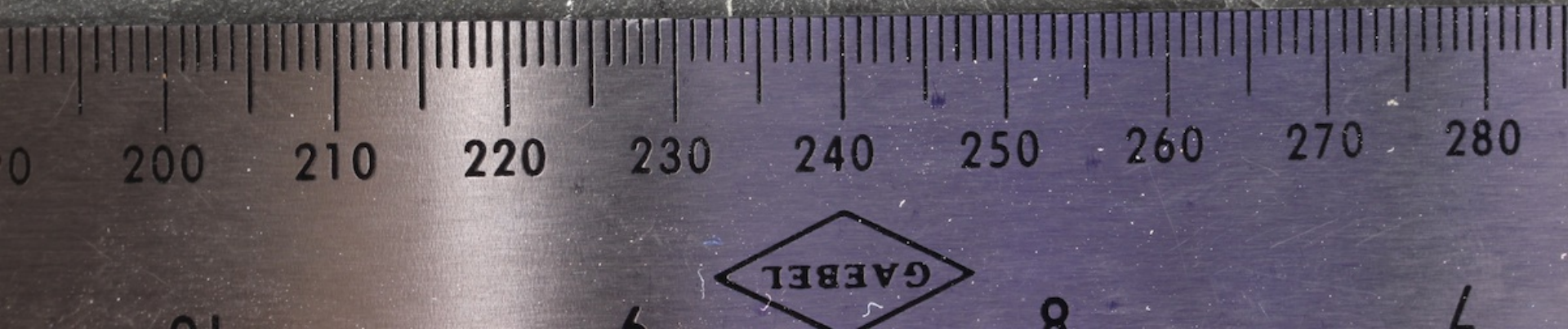


UC 24008

Marella splendens

Cambrian Burgess Shale

British Columbia



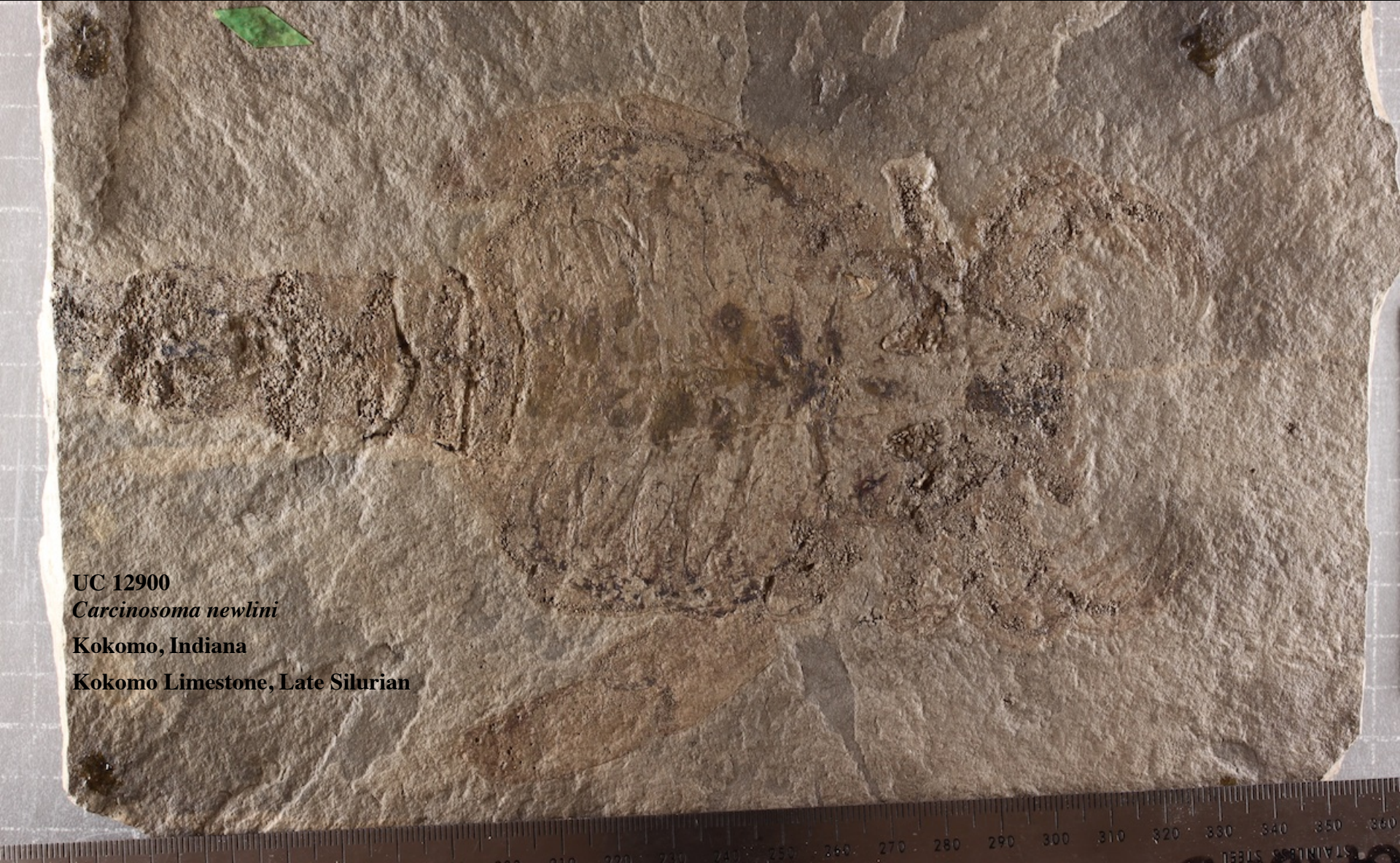
Low-Angle, Non-Polarized Light

UC 12900

Carcinosoma newlini

Kokomo, Indiana

Kokomo Limestone, Late Silurian



High-Angle, Polarized Light

UC 12900

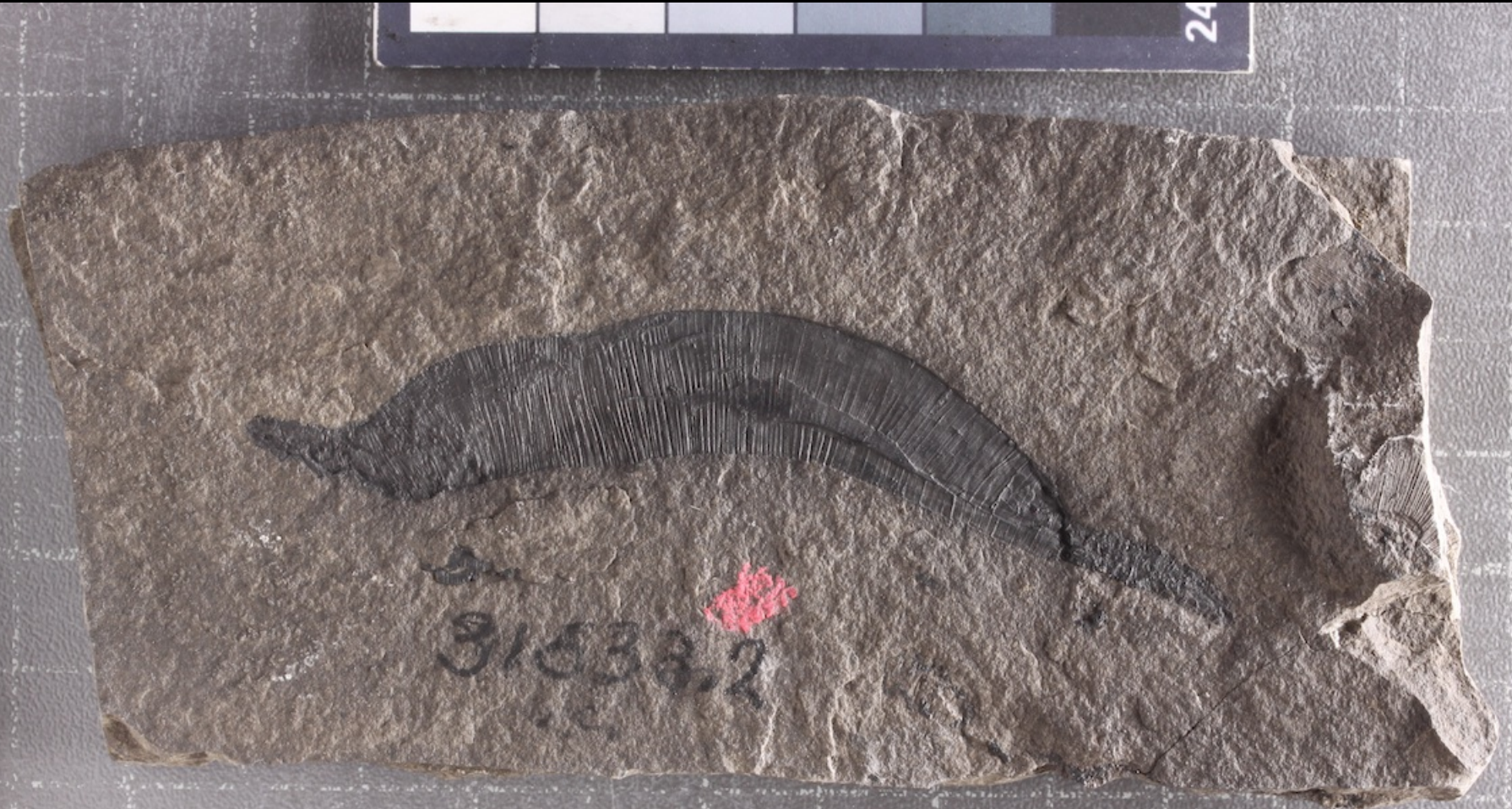
Carcinosoma newlini

Kokomo, Indiana

Kokomo Limestone, Late Silurian



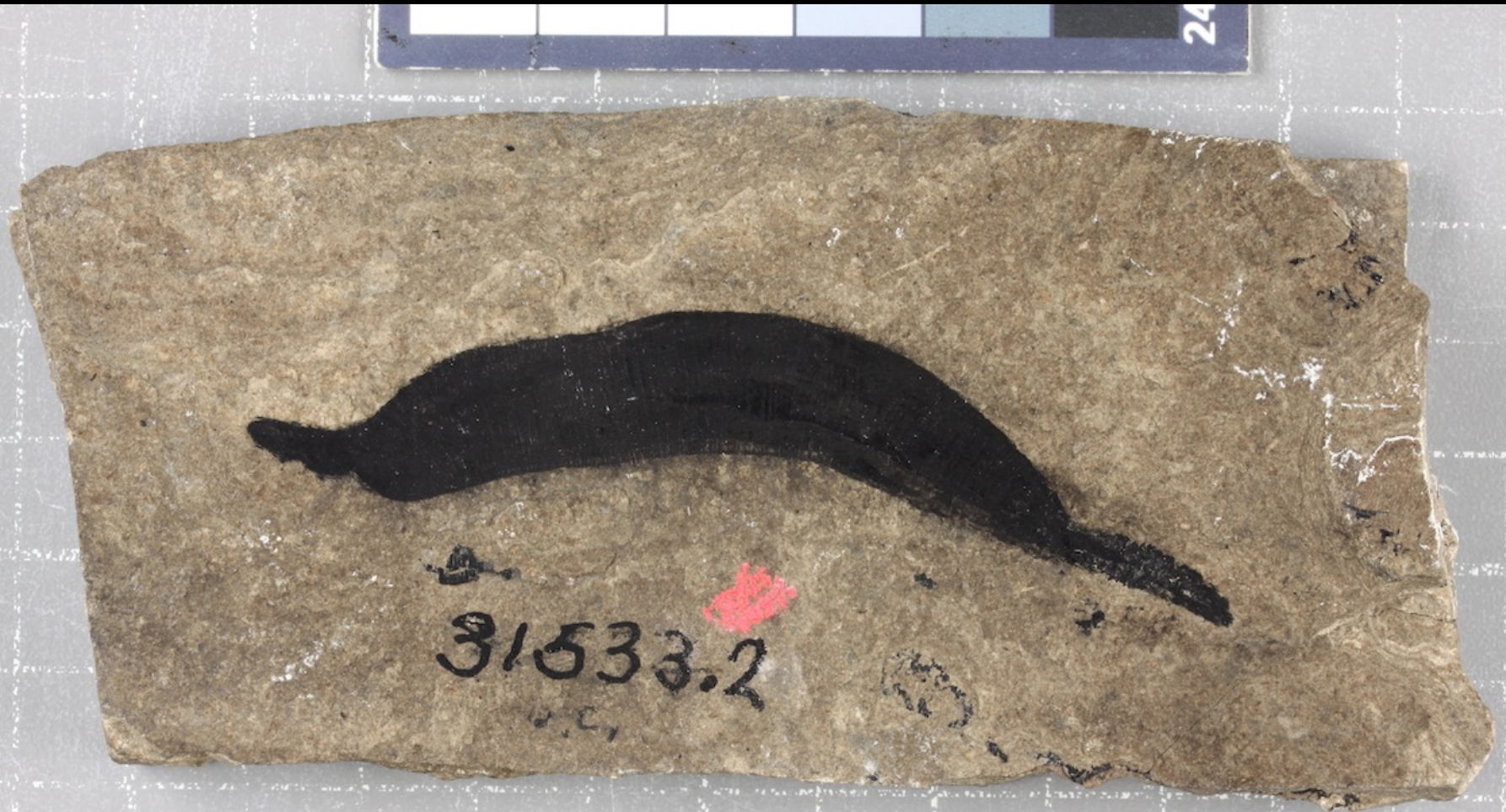
One Directional, Low Angle, Non-Polarized Light



UC 31533-2

Lecthaylus gregarius Weller
Racine Dolomite, Silurian
Blue Island, Illinois

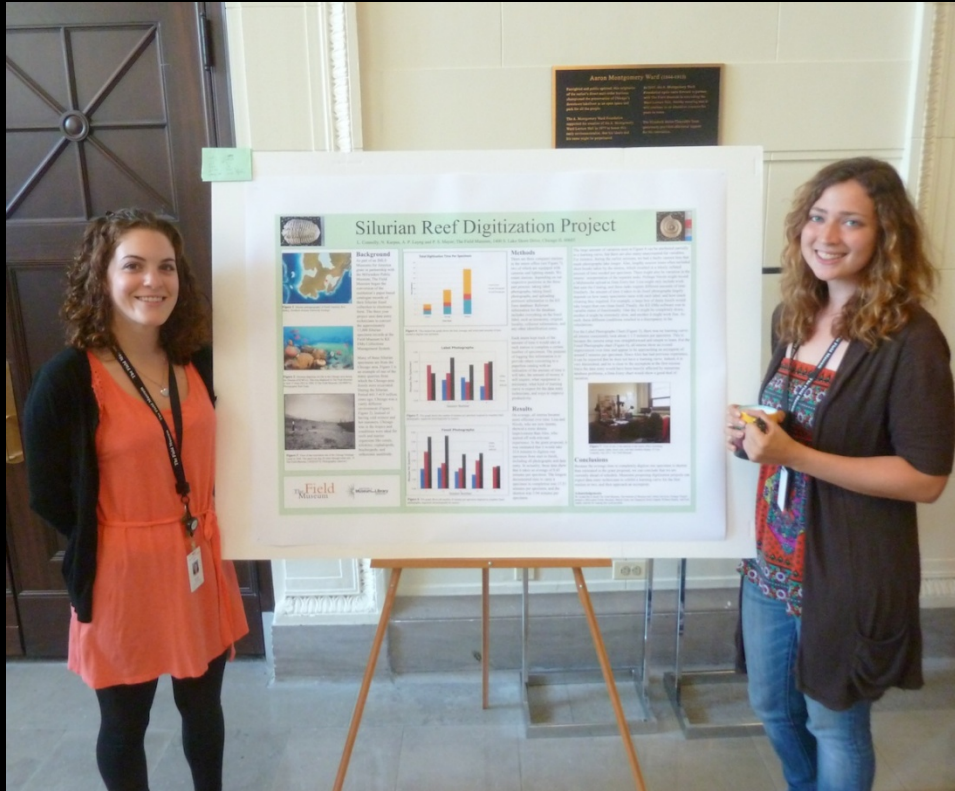
High-Angle, Polarized Light



UC 31533-2

Lecthaylus gregarius Weller
Racine Dolomite, Silurian
Blue Island, Illinois

Summary



- 15,000 Silurian specimen to be digitized in 3 summers.
- Workflow and error detection designed around collection organization.
- Digitization rates now averaging ~5 minutes per specimen
- Error rates less than 2%
- Low angle and polarized light to enhance fossil images

Rosco Cinegel 17 x 20
inch Linear Light
Polarizing Filter by
Barndoor Lighting
Outfitters

~\$46 on Amazon

My set up:

- Kaiser RS1 Camera Stand
- Kaiser RB 5004 High Frequency Daylight Light Set
- Canon EOS 60D + lenses
- CameraTrax 24 ColorCard 2" x 3"



Articles on Polarized Light and Fossil Photography

- Rayner, R.J. 1992. A method of improving contrast in illustrations of coalified fossils. *Palaeontologia Africana*,49.
- Boyle B. 1992. Fossil detail leaps with double polarization. *Professional Photographers of Canada*, 22: 10-12.
- Bengtson S. 2000. Teasing Fossils out of shale with Cameras and Computers, *Palaeontologia Electronica*, 3(1):14pp.
http://palaeo-electronica.org/2000_1/fossils/issue1_00.htm

Jean-Bernard Caron
Royal Ontario Museum

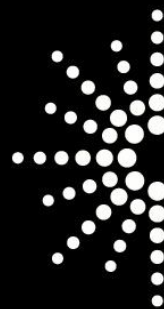
Video on polarizing light photography and submerged Burgess Shale fossils in water.

<http://burgess-shale.rom.on.ca/en/science/fieldwork-collections/labwork-collections/02-photographing-fossils.php>



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- The Grainger Digital Initiative
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- Ian Glasspool
- Scott Lidgard



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