

Mineral Spotlight: Sodalite

Deep blue with white streaks of calcium, this mineral is a prized rock collector's find. The fascination with sodalite arises from both its beautiful blue color in daylight and its golden orange fluorescence under UV light at night.

Sodalite is a feldspathoid, which is a group of minerals that mimic feldspars (like the cleavelandite and labradorite feldspars in the museum). Feldspathoids form out of silica-poor, alkali-rich magmas, crystallizing instead of quartz and often with other feldspars.

In Michigan, this mineral is well known because of its presence in fluorescent wave-polished foid-syenites (a type of feldspar-rich rock). These "Yooperlights™" as they were named, launched into rockhound popularity in 2017 when U.P. mineral dealer Erik Rintamaki discovered them on a 4:00 am beach walk with his new ultraviolet flashlight. Since then, they have become one of the favorite finds along the cobbled Michigan coasts. Besides along Lake Superior beaches, you can find some of these rocks on the touch table in the museum.

This feature was posted on Dice Museum social media by Museum intern Josian Aardema on 6/6/2023.

