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New Light Species and the CMB

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In the massless limit, the effects of new light species on the Cosmic Microwave Background can be parameterized in terms of a single number, the relativistic degrees of freedom. I will survey the set of natural, minimal models containing new light species and provide a map between the parameters of any particular theory and the predicted effective number of degrees of freedom. I will then use this map to interpret the recent results from the Planck satellite's Cosmic Microwave Background survey, presenting new constraints on the parameter space of several models containing new light species.

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