

Our Land

Nunavut, Canada's largest territory, extends over 2 million square kilometres, covering one fifth of the Canadian landmass. This vast region of mostly barren land and permafrost consists of all those parts of Canada which lie north of the 60th parallel and east of the western boundary shown on the map that are not part of either Quebec or Newfoundland and Labrador. It includes the islands in Hudson Bay, James Bay and Ungava Bay which do not belong to Manitoba, Ontario or Quebec. Nunavut means "Our land" in Inuktitut, the Inuit language.

Nunavut encompasses a greater expanse of offshore than any other Canadian province or territory. A huge part of Nunavut consists of islands, including Canada's largest, Baffin Island at 507 451 square kilometres, most of Victoria Island, (217 291 square kilometres) and Ellesmere Island, the northernmost (196 236 square kilometres). The islands are separated by straits in the Arctic Ocean which are covered with ice most of the year.

The territory has varied topography. Most of Nunavut lies within the Canadian Shield, consisting of plateaux and uplands. However the Innuitian region comprises the second highest mountain chain in Canada and includes its highest point. This is Barbeau Peak on Ellesmere Island which is 2616 metres high. Other parts of Nunavut are within the Arctic Lowlands, plains that stretch out from sea level.

