

National Parks in Nunavut

Abstract

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The Government of Canada's objective is to have a park representing each of Canada's 39 natural regions. Certain activities, such as harvesting of resources by aboriginal people may continue in a national park but commercial resource extraction, such as mining, is not permitted. Public appreciation and enjoyment through education and tourism are encouraged as long as they do not effect the ecological integrity of the park. The three existing National Park Reserves in Nunavut got National Park status in 1999. They are noted below along with the meaning of their names.

Auyuittuq National Park, whose area is 19 707 square kilometres, is found on the Cumberland Peninsula of eastern Baffin Island. This rugged mountain tundra park features active glaciers, deep valleys, spectacular fjords, and many species of arctic mammals and birds. It attracts adventure seekers from all over the world to hike and to climb its challenging peaks. The name means 'land that never melts'.

Quttinirpaaq National Park is found in northern Ellesmere Island. This park protects the most remote, fragile, rugged, and northerly lands in North America. Natural features include high mountains, deeply-cut plateaux, a polar desert, and arctic tundra landscape. However, the central feature is an Arctic oasis found around Hazen Lake. At 37 775 square kilometres, it is Canada's second largest national park (only Wood Buffalo National Park is larger). The name, Quttinirpaaq, means 'top of the world'.

Simirlik National Park covers approximately 22 000 square kilometres and protects a representative part of the Eastern Arctic Lowlands Natural Region and portions of the Lancaster Sound Marine Region. This park is comprised of three separate areas: Bylot Island is a spectacular area of rugged mountains, icefields and glaciers, coastal lowlands and seabird colonies; Oliver Sound is a long, narrow fjord with excellent opportunities for boating, hiking and camping; and the Borden Peninsula of Baffin Island is an extensive plateau dissected by broad river valleys. The park features landforms and superb wilderness hiking and camping, and a major seabird colony in the vicinity of Baillarge Bay. The name means 'place of glaciers'.

Proposed National Parks

This section describes three areas in Nunavut being studied for proposed National Parks.

Tuktut Nogait National Park is in Northwest Territories but borders Nunavut. This park will be expanded to include additional land in Nunavut. The added area would be surrounding Bluenose Lake, so as to protect all the calving areas of the caribou herd associated with this lake.

Another proposed park is **Ukkusiksalik** at Wager Bay, north of Rankin Inlet. The area is an important location for steatite, a rock formerly used in making pots and oil lamps in the traditional lifestyle of the Inuit. The entire Wager Bay watershed is being studied for its geological and tourism potential.

Northern Bathurst Island, (which may be renamed Tuktusiuqviauk), northwest of Resolute, is an area very representative of the High Arctic physiographic province. Several features relating to its topography, geology, fauna and flora can be observed including a major calving area for Peary Caribou, an endangered species.

Map Sources

National Parks

Parks Canada. National Parks, 1999.

References

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Nunavut Implementation Commission. 1995. Footprints in New Snow: A comprehensive Report from the Nunavut Implementation Commission to the Department of Indian and Northern Development, Government of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated Concerning the Establishment of the Nunavut Government. Iqaluit, Northwest Territories. 263 pp.

Related Web sites (1999 – 2009)

Federal Government

Parks Canada Agency
http://www.pc.gc.ca/intro/bienvenue-welcome/index_e.asp

Inter-agency

New Parks North.
<http://www.newparksnorth.org/default.htm>

