

Ivvavik

National Park of Canada

Pronounced "Eev-vah-veek"

Climate

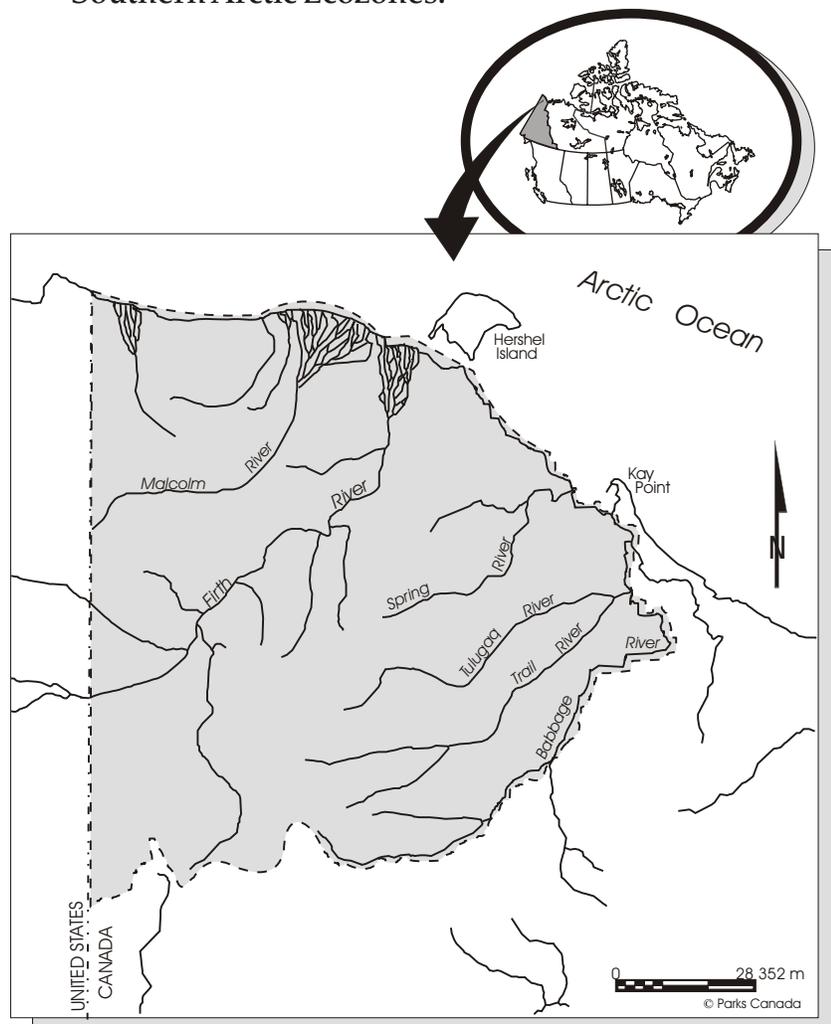
Climate varies greatly within the park. This is mainly because of the variations in landscape shape and elevation. Winters are long and cold, but summers can be warm, even hot! Average daily July temperatures are 7°C, though freezing temperatures can still occur throughout the 'warmer' months (June-September) of the year. Extended periods of warm temperatures in mid-summer are rare near the coast, but more common inland. The sun stays above the horizon constantly from the last week of May through to mid-July. The park's plants and animals respond with vigour to these long days of the "midnight sun".

Geology

The park is dominated by the 1 800 m British Mountains. It escaped glaciation during the last Ice Age, except along the coast. Instead of landforms typical in glaciated areas (cirques, U-shaped valleys), the British Mountains show the influence of rivers. Gentle slopes and V-shaped valleys are covered with thin layers of sediment deposited by wind and water. Ivvavik also has outstanding permafrost features like patterned ground, ground ice and tussock, and trailing heath tundra. These result from the lower levels of soil being frozen year round.

Location

Ivvavik National Park is a 10 168 km² wilderness area situated in the northwest corner of the Yukon about 800 km northwest of Whitehorse, Yukon, and 200 km west of Inuvik, Northwest Territories. The park was established in 1984 after the settlement of the Inuvialuit Final Agreement. The park area is bounded by the Beaufort Sea to the north, the Canada/Alaska border to the west, Vuntut National Park to the south, and the Babbage River to the east. Park operations are based out of Inuvik. Ivvavik National Park represents the Northern Yukon and Mackenzie Delta Natural Regions. Ivvavik is located in the Taiga Cordillera and the Southern Arctic Ecozones.

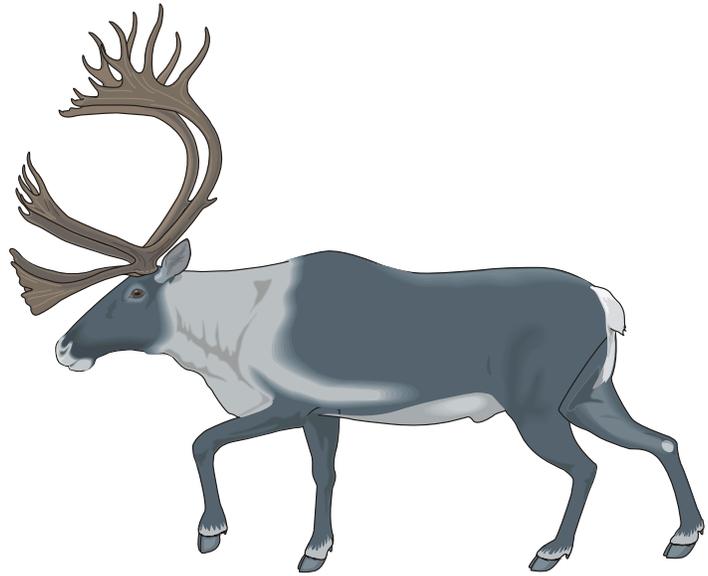


Vegetation

Compared to other arctic environments, Ivvavik includes an unusually diverse variety of plants. The vegetation is mainly a treeless arctic tundra with sedges, as well as shrubs like willow, dwarf birch, and cranberry. Higher in the mountains, an alpine tundra of lichens replaces the arctic tundra. Here one can also find scattered patches of wildflowers like mountain avens and saxifrage. At the southern end of the park, open stands of stunted spruce and poplar mark the northern limit of the boreal forest.

Wildlife

The northern Yukon has been called the richest area of Canada's arctic in terms of wildlife. Habitat for barren ground caribou, grizzly bear, Dall's sheep, and arctic fox is exceptional. The Porcupine caribou herd, one of the world's largest at over 129 000 animals, is the park's most prominent feature. Their annual migration patterns take them to their large calving ground on the northern coastal plain. Musk-ox, once nearly eliminated, are re-establishing themselves following their reintroduction to the north coast of Alaska. Several birds of prey live in the park, including golden eagles, gyrfalcons, peregrine falcons, and rough-legged hawks. The coastal plain is an important waterfowl nesting area for snow geese and tundra swans. The Firth and Babbage Rivers are prime wintering, spawning, and feeding areas for Dolly Varden Char and arctic greyling.



Activities

If Ivvavik National Park is to remain for all time an area of unspoiled wilderness, then visitor activities must be planned which respect this principle. Rafting, canoeing, hiking, and camping offer visitors a chance to enjoy the wilderness without destroying it for others. The exceptional opportunities to view the caribou herd and migratory waterfowl, as well as sighting grizzly bears, are only augmented by the sense of almost total isolation. Historic and archaeological sites in the park reveal the extent and types of human activities that have occurred over time. The area's rugged terrain challenges rafters, backpackers, and other visitors who wish to experience and appreciate Ivvavik's special qualities.

For more information, contact:
Ivvavik National Park
P.O. Box 1840
Inuvik, Northwest Territories X0E 0T0
Telephone: (867) 777-8800
Fax: (867) 777-8820
Website: www.pc.gc.ca/ivvavik