

Tuktut Nogait National Park of Canada Pronounced “Took-toot-Noo-guy-t”

Climate

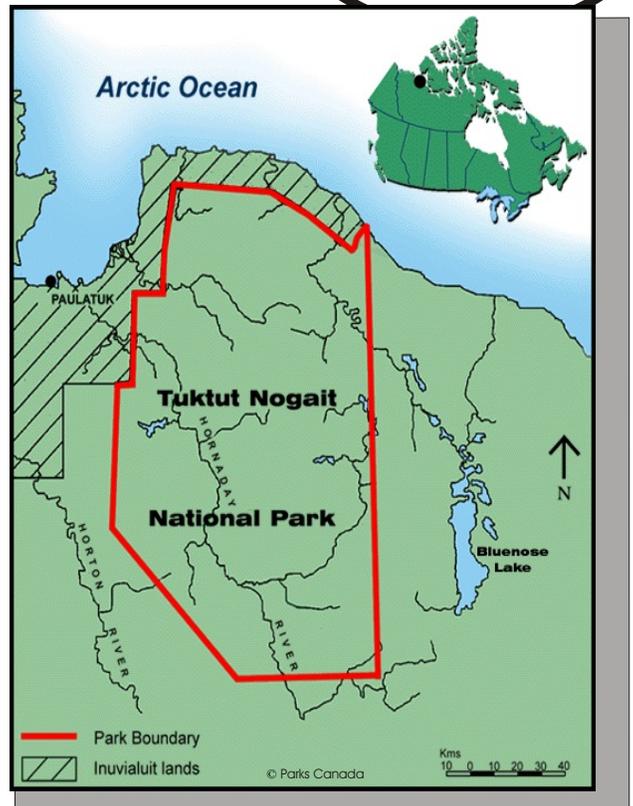
Tuktut Nogait’s weather will challenge you. It can be extremely hostile, even in mid-summer. Long spells of rain, ice-cold winds and occasional snowstorms or frost are not uncommon. There is no natural protection in the open tundra terrain and no firewood. Snowmelt begins in mid to late May and river ice breaks up in the first week of June. Coastal areas are largely influenced by maritime air masses. The winters are very long and cold with temperatures averaging at about -27°C and the summers are short, with 24 hours of daylight from mid-June to mid-July, and temperatures ranging at about 8°C.

Geology

Tuktut Nogait encompasses an area of 16 340 km² and lies within the Inuvialuit Settlement Region. Numerous archaeological sites can be found in the Park, such as the 3 000 year old site, “Aulvalik”, bearing testimony to the human history of the area that stretches back thousands of years. The land is rich in minerals such as zinc and gold, and there is much mining outside of the park in the Northwest Territories. Rocklands include exposed bedrock and ruck rubble, and are common in the park. Permafrost also occurs throughout the park.

Location

“Tuktut Nogait” means “young caribou” in Inuvialuktun, the language of the Inuvialuit. It became a National Park on December 10, 1998. It is located in the northeastern region of the Northwest Territories, on the border of Nunavut, and bounded to the north by the Beaufort Sea. The park is approximately 45 km east of the community of Paulatuk, and 425 km northeast of the town of Inuvik. Inuvik, with a population of 3 667 is the largest community in the region and is serviced daily by scheduled aircraft from southern Canada. Tuktut Nogait is located in the Southern Arctic Ecozone.



Vegetation

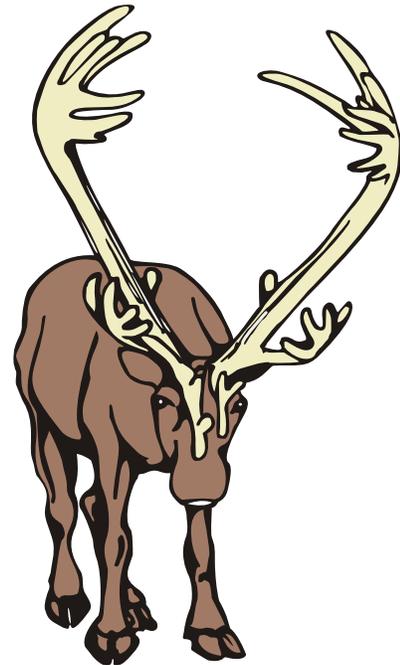
Tuktut Nogait is a landscape of tundra vegetation, barren rock, lichens, willows, rolling hills and deep river canyons. Features include the spectacular valleys and canyons along the Hornaday and Brock Rivers as well as La Roncière Falls, many lakes, eskers, and hills. During the third week of June, the tundra is transformed into a botanical garden with beautiful carpets of flowers, and by the end of August, incredibly colourful autumn vegetation is at its peak. Species of wildflowers include: the arctic poppy, the edible river beauty, moss campion, dwarf birch and white mountain heather. Stunted spruce trees make their home along the river valleys, indicating the northerly limit of tree growth.

Wildlife

The park has been set aside to protect for all time a natural area representative of the Tundra Hills Natural Region as well as to protect the calving habitat of the Bluenose caribou, with a population of about 500 000. Abundant cliffs and ramparts provide good nesting habitat for birds of prey such as hawks, peregrine falcons, eagles and ospreys. The density of these nesting birds is among the highest of any location in the Northwest Territories. The Tundra Hills Region is also known as the nesting ground for one of the most rare birds in Canada, the Eskimo Curlew. The hills and valleys are also an excellent habitat for caribou and muskox, wolves and the barren-ground grizzly bear. Although very little information is available on the abundance of fish species in the water, arctic char is the most common species found.

Activities

The park offers many opportunities to experience wildlife and nature at its best. Tuktut Nogait is an experienced hiker's paradise. Other activities in the park include: canoeing the adventurous and at times, dangerous, Hornaday River, as well as photography, fishing and primitive camping. Access to the park is by private boat, by hiking from Paulatuk, and by charter aircraft from Inuvik.



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