



Tundra Hills

Represented by: Tuktut Nogait National Park

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Wilberforce Falls

THE LAND:

The western part of this region is underlain by sedimentary bedrock in undisturbed horizontal layers creating a landscape of plains, patterned ground and pingos. The eastern part of the region is part of the ancient Canadian Shield. Here the topography is rugged and hilly, with many lakes, large and small. The ice sheets have added the final touches to the landscape - eskers, drumlins, deposits of glacial till and other glacial features. Step-like series of raised cobble beaches and marine clay deposits more than 60 metres above sea level are a testimonial to the combination of higher sea levels in post-glacial times and the re-bounding of the land after being released from the weight of the glaciers. The rivers have cut deep gorges and canyons through the sedimentary bedrock. These have been compared to the canyons of the southwest United States. Wilberforce Falls on the Hood River is one of the most spectacular waterfalls in Canada.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of this region is the "smoking hills", a site of slow-burning bituminous coal. In this land-

BREAKFAST WITH CARIBOU, LUNCH WITH MUSKOX

The coast consists of precipitous banks ... the shale was in a state of ignition in many places and the hot sulphureous airs from the land were strongly contrasted with the cold sea-breezes ... the baked clays of yellow, brown, white and red colours caused the place to resemble a brick field or pottery.

*J. Richardson, 1826,
describing the "Smoking Hills"*



Smoking Hills

scape, which resembles paintings of Hell, sulphur fumes have killed off the vegetation, and smoke billows from the cracks in the ash-covered ground.

VEGETATION:

More than 95 percent of this region is tundra - rock barrens where mountain avens and purple saxifrage grow in dense mats; polar deserts where only lichens can thrive; verdant wet sedge meadows; dense carpets

Natural Region 15

of willows, dwarf birch and heath vegetation. An undulating band of stunted, creeping spruce trees interspersed among the heaths and other typical tundra species extends into this region along river valleys, marking the northerly limit of tree growth.



Ptarmigan

for the Eskimo curlew, perhaps the rarest bird in Canada, is in this region. In the 1800s it existed in huge flocks, but by 1900 it was hovering on the brink of extinction, a victim of over-hunting.

WILDLIFE:

The wildlife of this region features few resident species and many summer migrants. This reflects the difference in the availability of food between the continuous summer sunshine and the long, dark winter.

Two major caribou herds, the Bluenose Herd and the Bathurst Herd, migrate throughout this region. Together they are estimated to number over 500,000 animals. Native peoples in the region still depend on the caribou as they have for thousands of years. There are also significant populations of muskox in the region that are recovering from over-hunting early in the 20th century.

The only known remaining nesting ground

STATUS OF NATIONAL PARKS:

A national park establishment agreement was recently concluded by Canada, the Inuvialuit and the Government of the Northwest Territories, establishing Tuktut Nogait National Park (16,340 km²). This newest of Canada's national parks protects a significant portion of a larger national park proposal; the remaining part is protected by a land reserve pending completion of consultations and negotiations.

There are three land claim agreements which affect the study area. Tuktut Nogait National Park lies within the Inuvialuit Settlement Region, and encompasses about 58 percent of the study area. Within Nunavut, consultations with Inuit are underway. The Nunavut portion includes about 36 percent of the study area. Within the Sahtu Dene and Métis claim area, consultations are also in progress. The Sahtu portion includes about 6 percent of the proposed park.



Hornaday River

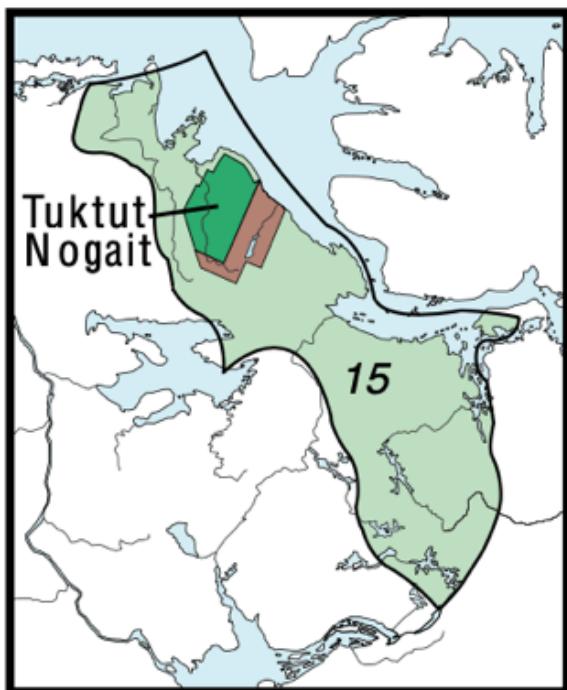


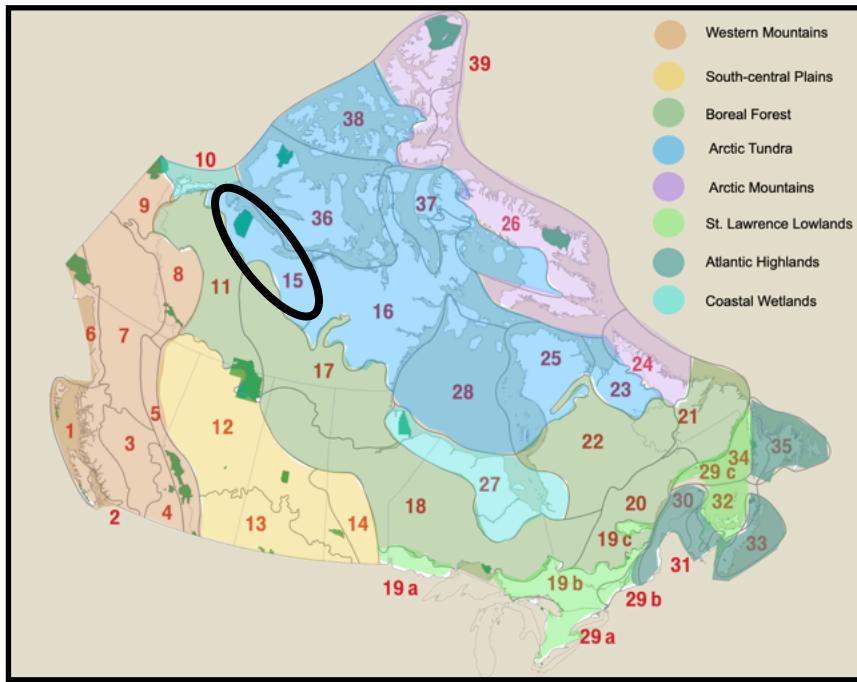
Hornaday River

Completion of park agreements for the remaining part of the study area will require the support and co-operation of the residents of Kugluktuk, as well as Inuit, Dene and Métis, and the Government of the Northwest Territories. The continued support and cooperation of the residents of Paulatuk and the Inuvialuit is also important.



Bluenose Lake Area





Author's note:

I have not been able to find any additional photographs of this region. If you are able to supply any, they would be greatly appreciated.

- Rob

Major Land Uses

Traditional living
Diamond mines

Main Communities

Kugluktuk
Bathurst Inlet

Aboriginal Peoples

Parks and Natural Areas
Tuktut Nougait National Park

Further Information