



Nastapoka Falls

A SILENT, ENDLESS LAND

Scattered, patternless lakes, a litter of angular boulders and a pastel green and grey sweep of rock and low shrubs that goes on seemingly forever without change - silent except for the screams of circling hawks.

THE LAND:

This is a vast wild peneplain, strewn with low granite hills and strewn with boulders. The region is underlain by the bedrock of the Canadian Shield, which lies exposed over much of the land; in other places it is smoothed by a thin veneer of glacial drift. At the coast of Hudson Strait, the plateau stops abruptly, plunging precipitously as much as 600 metres to the sea.

The New Quebec Crater, the most spectacular and well-defined meteorite impact crater in Canada, is found in this region. This is a "simple crater" - a circular depression 260 metres deep in solid granite and 3 kilometres across, surrounded by walls over 150 metres high. One of the clearest lakes in the world fills much of the crater.

The climate is rigorous. There are really only two seasons - a long, bitterly cold winter and a brief cool summer. The lowest monthly temperature is never above freezing point. Snow lies from the end of September to the end of June, and in deeper ravines as late as the middle of July.



Hudson Bay Coast

VEGETATION:

This region is characterized by a nearly continuous cover of dwarf tundra vegetation, usually less than 30 centimetres tall. Creeping black spruce, dwarf birch, willow and woody shrubs such as northern Labrador tea, blueberry, crowberry, and bearberry are conspicuous species. In the brief fall, the leaves of the low arctic shrubs carpet the tundra in brilliant shades of red and orange.

WILDLIFE:

Caribou find important summer range and calving grounds in this region. Other conspicuous land mammals include the wolf, arctic fox, red fox and lemming. Waterfowl such as Canada geese and snow geese nest

Natural Region 25

and moult throughout the region. Willow and rock ptarmigan are plentiful. Ptarmigan, along with ravens, are the only birds remaining here all year round. Hawks, particularly the rough-legged hawk and gyrfalcon, wheel and soar through the air on the lookout for lemmings or young ptarmigan. Snow buntings and Lapland longspurs flit silently among the lichen-covered boulders, stuffing their beaks with mosquitoes and gnats. Thick-billed murre and other seabirds nest on the cliffs along the north coast of the region. There are about 800 000 thick-billed murres at Digges Island and Cape Wolstenholme, the biggest colonies of this species in Canada. Large colo-



Leaf River

nies of Eiders also nest on the offshore islands, and spend the entire year in Hudson Bay. Muskox were introduced to this region in the 1970s and 80s.

STATUS OF NATIONAL PARKS:

No national park has yet been established in this region. Based on a recently completed study, Leaf River and d'Youville Hills have been identified, but field studies are needed to confirm the degree to which these sites represent the natural region.

The Leaf River Estuary on Ungava Bay is the site of the highest tides in the world (18 metres). Broad tidal flats provide feeding and nesting areas for Canada geese and other waterfowl. Caribou and a small herd of musk-oxen inhabit the inland areas. D'Youville Hills (Povungnituk Hills) form a series of east-west ridges and valleys with a relatively high relief along the shore of Hudson Bay but of a more subdued character further inland.

These two areas fall within the area covered by the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreements. The establishment of a new national park in this natural region will require the concurrence of the Government of Quebec, local Aboriginal people and Makavik Corporation.



Major Land Uses

Main Communities

Aboriginal Peoples

Traditional caribou-based living

Parks and Natural Areas

Further Information



