

26 Northern Davis Region

Represented by: Auyuittuq National Park



“THE LAND THAT NEVER MELTS”

The Ice Age still grips this region of jagged peaks, deep fiords, looming glaciers and massive ice caps. But there is also a delicate beauty here ... pastel tundra flowers, soft mossy meadows, sparkling streams of glacial meltwater.



Bylot Island

THE LAND:

Ice and rock reign supreme in this natural region. The northern portion of the region is blanketed by thick ice caps and glaciers, smoothing the unevenness of the bedrock below. Tongues of ice touch the sea, calving glaciers into dark waters.

The east coast of Baffin Island presents a different face. This is a land of spectacular mountains, glaciers, deep fiords and the massive Penny Ice Cap. Here can be found classic alpine glacial scenery, the best in Canada and, in the opinion of some climbers, the best in the world.



Mt. Thor, Auyuittuq National Park Reserve

A third face of this natural region is seen on western Baffin Island, where the mountains slope down to meet the coast in a low lake-studded coastal plain. In contrast to the east side, the coast is low, and broad intertidal flats are typical. The southern part of Baffin Island presents a fourth face - a high rocky plateau.

VEGETATION:

Vegetation ranges from very patchy and open to lush tundra meadows. The broken rock of glacial moraines supports a scanty cover of lichens, with mosses and cushion plants such as moss campion, purple saxifrage and mountain avens nestling in the low spots. Cushion plants can thrive in the harsh Arctic environment by creating their own micro-climate. The temperature within the dense mass of leaves is several degrees higher than the ambient temperature. The fragile-looking arctic poppy sends its cheery yellow flower up to 30 centimetres above even the most barren areas.

In the southern areas of Baffin Island, lush tundra vegetation is found. Arctic shrubs





Major Land Uses

Traditional harvesting
Marine mammals
(seals, walrus, narwhal, whales)
Tourism

Main Communities

Pangnirtung
Iqaluit

Aboriginal Peoples

Inuit

Parks and Natural Areas

Auyuittuq National Park

Further Information

Hamlet of Pangnirtung

such as dwarf birch, willow, heather, and blueberry and their berry-bearing kin form a continuous colourful carpet in sheltered valleys. On less favourable areas, tundra covered by tussocks of grasses and sedges makes for one of the most difficult walking surfaces known.

WILDLIFE:

Although most of this region is ice and rock, several highly productive land and marine areas exist. The lush tundra supports land mammals such as arctic hare, lemming, wolf, arctic fox, red fox and caribou.



Mt. Asgard

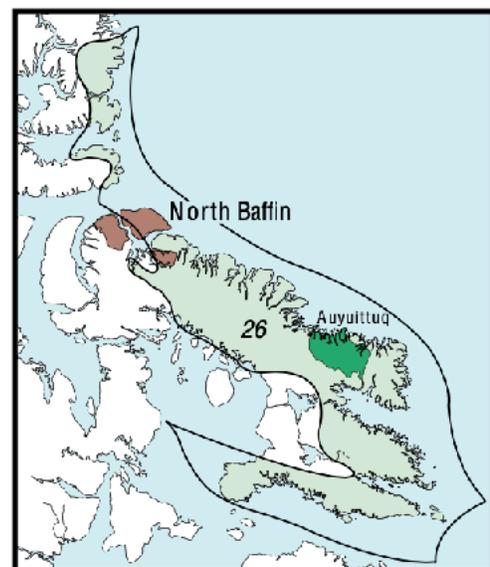
Polar bear, walrus, beluga, narwhal and several species of seal (ringed, bearded, hooded) are common in the offshore waters. The waters of Lancaster Sound, off the north tip of Baffin Island, are unusually productive, harbouring large populations of many species of marine mammals and seabirds.

The cliffs of Bylot Island north of Baffin Island and the Hall Peninsula at its southern tip support huge rookeries of northern fulmars, thick-billed murre, black-legged kittiwakes and other seabirds. The largest northern fulmar colony known, containing between 200 000 and 500 000 birds, is found on Cape Searle on the east coast of Baffin Island. Two Migratory Bird Sanctuaries, Bylot Island and Cape Dorset, protect seabird colonies.

STATUS OF NATIONAL PARKS:

Auyuittuq - "the land that never melts" - National Park Reserve (19,707km²) is a rugged wilderness park. Actually, each summer the land does melt - but only at its edges. Water pours from the snouts of glaciers, and a few inches of soil above the permafrost turns into a slurry of mud and gravel. The massive Penny Ice Cap takes up much of the park interior, spawning glaciers that are still actively shaping the land. The glacier-carved peaks and the Akshayuk Pass hiking route attract adventurers from around the world. Auyuittuq includes a large marine component encompassing the fiords along the northern portion of the park.

Under the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement, signed in 1993, Government and Inuit are negotiating an Inuit Impact and Benefits Agreement to formally establish Auyuittuq National Park Reserve as a national park. These negotiations are expected to be concluded in 1997.





As different as night and day! Two views of the same scene contrast the endless days and long nights of this village located on the Arctic Circle.





An overview of Pangnirtung, on the shore of southern Baffin Island. The landing strip provides the only connection to the rest of Canada for most of the year. A late summer sea lift brings most supplies, including non-perishable food and diesel fuel for the electricity generators. Note the fence in foreground of the lower photo. This reduces the number of polar bears in town, and keeps people from wandering off during bad weather.





Hamlet of Pangnirtung

Enjoying the spring weather!

Much of the traditional food comes from the sea: fish, seals, small whales



Hamlet of Pangnirtung



Monjur Mourshed



Hamlet of Pangnirtung