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BACKGROUNDER

TORNGAT MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK RESERVE OF CANADA

The Torngat Mountains National Park Reserve of Canada is located in northern Labrador and encompasses roughly 10,000 km². It extends from Saglek Fjord in the south, to the very northern tip of Labrador; and from the provincial boundary with Quebec in the west, to the waters of the Labrador Sea in the east.

Although interest in the establishment of a national park in the area first arose in the early 1970s, it wasn't until late 1992 that it became possible to launch a public feasibility study. In 1996, this study concluded that a national park in the Torngat Mountains was feasible.

The national park reserve will protect an area of spectacular Arctic wilderness, with towering mountains, breathtaking fjords, gentle river valleys and rugged coastal landscapes – a wilderness that has been home to the Inuit and their ancestors for thousands of years. Dramatic Nachvak Fjord, which lies near the centre of the park reserve, was formed by a glacier cutting through the Torngat Mountains as it flowed to the sea during the last ice age. Today, the Torngat Mountains include the highest peaks in continental eastern North America, and are dotted by many small glaciers.

The national park reserve – the first to be established in Labrador – is also home to a variety of wildlife. It includes much of the range of the small Torngat Mountains caribou herd, as well as a portion of the George River caribou herd, the world's largest. Polar bears frequent the area, and a unique population of tundra-dwelling black bears is also present. Wolves and arctic fox live here, and the plentiful bird life includes the peregrine falcon and golden eagle.

Within the park reserve, hundreds of archaeological sites, which include tent rings, stone caribou fences, caches and graves, tell the story of peoples and cultures, particularly the Inuit, that have made this special part of Canada their home over the millennia.

This national park reserve is accessible, and will offer visitors an exceptional opportunity to experience the Arctic landscape and environment. Visitor activities will include such wilderness-oriented experiences as hiking, climbing and kayaking. Understanding the reserve's natural resources, and especially its rich human history, should be of special interest to visitors.