Cape Breton Highlands National Park

Nova Scotia

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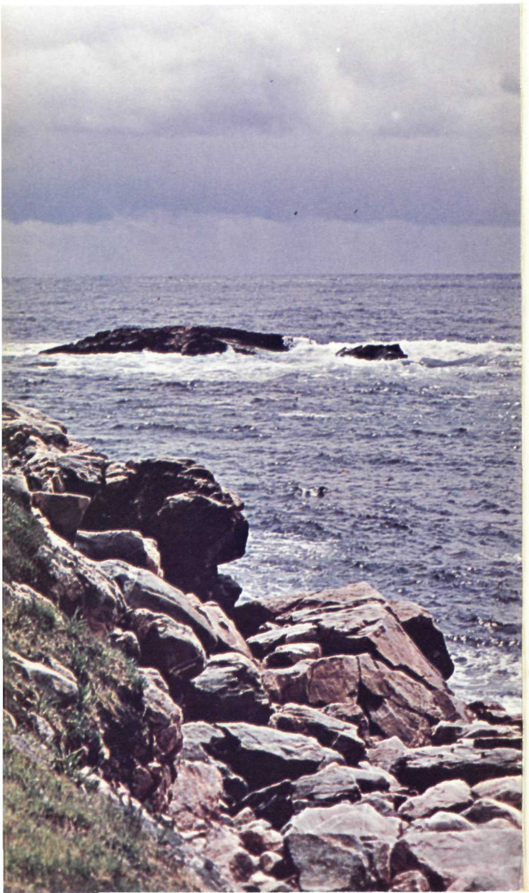


Introducing a Park and an Idea

Canada covers half a continent, fronts on three oceans, and stretches from the extreme Arctic more than halfway to the equator. There is a great variety of land forms in this immense country, and Canada's national parks have been created to preserve important examples for you and for generations to come.

The National Parks Act of 1930 specifies that national parks are "dedicated to the people . . . for their benefit, education and enjoyment" and must remain "unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

Cape Breton Highlands National Park, 367 square miles in area, forms part of a huge tableland rising over 1,700 feet above the sea in the northern section of Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia. With its rugged Atlantic shoreline and mountainous background, the park is reminiscent of the coastal areas of Scotland.

The Park Environment

Each national park has its own character, its unique story as a living, outdoor museum. Cape Breton Highlands' story is the drama of a mountainous landscape with bold headlands, numerous streams, lakes, and forests as well as treeless barrens. The park is home for a remarkable diversity of living things.

The Land: An Ancient Landscape

Fringed with a lower coastal plain, the Cape Breton Highlands are a northeastern extension of an old land surface found in parts of New England, the Eastern Townships of Quebec, and the Maritime provinces to the west. The plateau of western Newfoundland is probably part of the same upland.

In the park, this highland reaches an altitude of 1,747 feet, the highest point in Nova Scotia. Spectacular cliffs rise some 1,000 feet above the park's western shore, where the plateau comes almost directly to the sea. The eastern part slopes more gently, although a long east-facing cliff is found along a fault, or break in the earth's crust, extending along the North Aspy River Valley, and north beyond it.

Streams have cut deeply into the plateau, producing the steep but rounded hills which, with their forest cover, make these valley areas so beautiful. In one place, the Chéticamp River has etched a 1,000-foot-deep valley.

The park's geological history goes back at least a billion years. Sedimentary material such as sand, lime, mud, and gravel collected on the bottom of an ancient sea, and finally solidified into rock. Later, during a period of volcanic action, masses of molten igneous material crystallized to form granite and similar rock.

Perhaps 300 million years ago, more sedimentary material collected in shallow waters, estuaries, and river deltas to form conglomerate (a substance composed of

Conducted field trip

rocks of varying sizes), sandstone, and shale. Later, when parts of the sea evaporated, it left behind reddish beds with gypsum deposits.

In the park, the flat-bedded sedimentary rock of the earth's crust folded, cracked and was upended during the last 500 million years. Molten granite from below was forced upward through these cracks or faults, cooled, and now forms the hardest rock in the park.

Over the course of millions of years, rivers eroded the land to a flat plain. Again the landscape was altered when enormous pressures within the earth lifted the area to a large plateau. The Great Ice Age, which covered the whole of North America during the past million years, now began its work, scraping away soil, and leaving boulders and masses of glacial debris scattered across the landscape.

The ice retreated, and once again streams are eroding and changing the face of the land.

The Plants: A Diversified Community

Much of the park is covered with a typical Acadian Forest, which includes balsam fir, white, black, and red spruce, white and yellow birch, sugar maple, elm, beech, ash, trembling and largetooth aspen, and balsam poplar.

Although evergreens predominate at the higher elevations, large areas of the park's central plateau are mostly devoid of trees. Seldom seen by the visitor, this interesting section is reminiscent of Labrador or other subarctic regions. Here are small ponds and lakes, muskeg, and broad areas of drier heath-barrens, in which reindeer lichen, sheep-laurel and many other subarctic plants grow. Spruce and other trees, which grow in the interior heath-bogs and along the bold coastal headlands, are stunted and twisted into bizarre shapes. The headlands are also the home of creeping and ground juniper, black crowberry, Scotch lovage, and other plants able to exist despite the wind and salt spray.

The Animals: Each Seeks Its Own Habitat

Some of the animals in the park have become accustomed to man and may be observed at fairly close range. How-

Cormorant nests

ever, they are still wild, and should be viewed and photographed with caution.

About 21 species of mammals have been recorded in the park, including most of those found on the Nova Scotian mainland. Characteristic to the area are the lynx, Keen's bat, snowshoe hare, black bear, red fox, short-tailed weasel, red squirrel, and chipmunk. Beaver are well established in the park. Muskrat, flying squirrel, otter, mink, pine marten, and bobcats also inhabit the area.

Small herds of woodland caribou were flown into the park in 1968 and 1969. They joined the moose to bring the animal population of the park closer to its original state before the first European settlement.

So far, over 150 species of birds have been recorded in the park. However, the actual numbers are probably greater, and the park naturalist welcomes reports of sightings.

Cape Breton Highlands National Park is a good observation area for many species of seabirds. Gannets are frequently seen diving along the coast in summer, when great black-backed and herring gulls, common and Arctic terns, great cormorants, black guillemots, and common ravens nest along the coast. The ring-necked duck, common and red-breasted merganser, and common goldeneye breed in the park, and other types of ducks and geese are visitors during migration periods in spring and autumn.

Many shorebirds nest in Cape Breton Highlands National Park, including the American woodcock, common snipe, spotted sand-piper, and greater yellowlegs. Even more birds, such as the black-bellied plover, ruddy turnstone, whimbrel, and white-rumped sandpiper set down during southward migrations from late July to November.

Spruce and ruffed grouse are common park residents, as are the bald eagle, red-tailed hawk, goshawk, and barred owl. But the park's specialty is its variety of small land birds, including the warbler, thrush, woodpecker, and finch. The area marks the southern limit in which many of these birds are at their most abundant. They include bay-breasted, blackpoll, mourning, Tennessee and Blackburnian warbler, boreal chickadee, Lincoln's and fox sparrow, white-winged and red crossbill, pine siskin, and pine grosbeak.

There are a few non-poisonous snakes in the park, including the garter snake. Several salamanders, frogs, and the American toad also inhabit the area.

Eastern brook trout and its sea trout form can be taken from park waters and Atlantic salmon are caught in the Chéticamp River pools. Local fishermen often take visitors out for the increasingly popular sport of deep sea-fishing.

A Brief History

John Cabot probably landed in northern Cape Breton Island in 1497; the Cabot Trail that circles part of the

Cover: Green Cove.
Top: Pleasant Bay; bottom: Falls near Aspey River

island is named after him. Ingonish may be one of the oldest communities in North America, as there are indications that it was first settled by Portuguese colonists about 1521.

For the first half of the 18th century, Cape Breton Island, or "Isle Royale", was a French colony, and Ingonish, known as "Port d'Orléans", became an important settlement, second only to Louisbourg. After the fall of Louisbourg in 1758, the settlers left. The Acadian expulsions contributed to the formation of new French settlements in the area, notably in the Chéticamp area. Today these are still primarily French-speaking villages.

In the early 19th century, while the island was still a separate British colony, there was a major influx of English, Irish, and especially Scottish settlers. Many of their descendents still live in the same settlements today.

In 1820, Cape Breton Island became part of Nova Scotia. Finally, in 1936, Cape Breton Highlands National Park was created to preserve the land and its wildlife in their pristine state.

How To Get There

Most visitors motor to Cape Breton Highlands National Park, which is situated 75 miles north of Sydney, and 280 miles northeast of Halifax.

The park is accessible via the Cabot Trail, which circles a portion of the island and leads to both the Ingonish Beach and Chéticamp entrances. The Trail also passes through some sections of the park, affording magnificent views of surf-washed coast.

During the summer there is a bus service to the park from Sydney, which is accessible both by air and rail. Cape Breton Island is accessible via the Trans-Canada Highway, which crosses from the mainland over the Canso Causeway.

How To Enjoy The Park

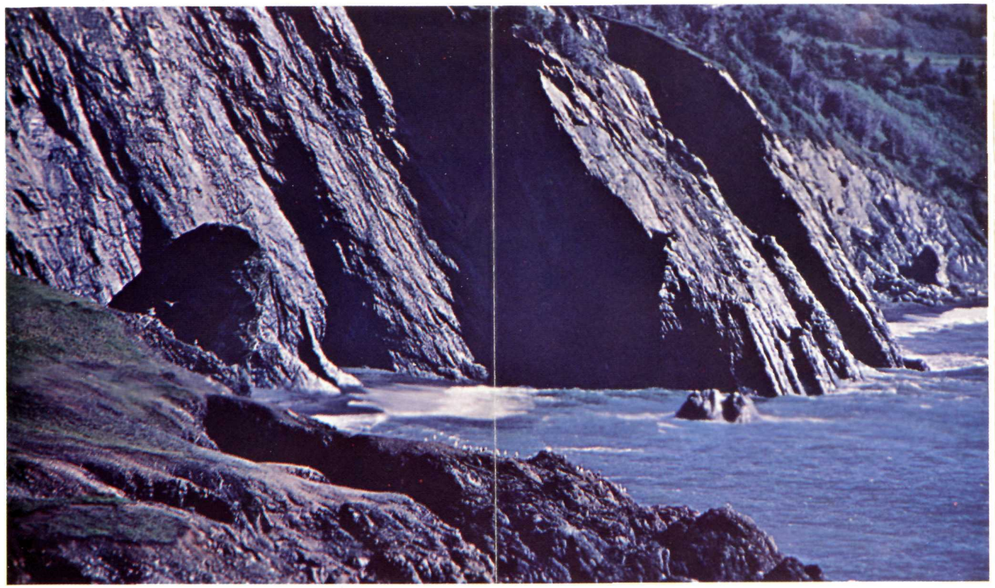
Season – The park is open all year, although visitor services are seasonal. Summer is the busiest time, but visits to the park at other seasons, particularly in autumn, are increasing every year.

Snowmobiles – These must stay on trails designated for their use, and permits must be obtained from park wardens or the administration office. All other motorized vehicles are restricted to public roads.

Hiking – This is one of the best ways to explore the park. Cape Breton Highlands has more than 20 trails, many leading along the sea coast, around lakes, and into the interior barrens. Some trails provide access to good fishing lakes in remote sections of the park. Most trails are readily accessible for day walking, especially in the Black Brook, Warren Lake, and Chéticamp areas. A map of the park's hiking trails is available from park information centres.

Fishing – Fishing in the park is by permit, available at a

Cliffs at Corney Brook



nominal charge at the administration building, information centres, or from a park warden. Fishing regulations and up-to-date information can be obtained from information centres. Visitors can arrange deep-sea fishing trips with local fishermen.

Some Don'ts

National parks are selected areas set apart as nature sanctuaries and special care is taken to maintain them in their natural state. For this reason, all birds, animals, wildlife, trees, rocks, and fossils are to be left undisturbed. Even the wildflowers are not to be picked; they must be left for others to enjoy. Feeding, touching, or molesting wild animals is not permitted.

Please help protect your park for future enjoyment. It is part of your national heritage.

You may bring your dog or cat, but dogs must be kept on leash. Permits or vaccination certificates are not required.

Where To Stay

Camping brings you into the closest contact with the natural environment and the values for which the park was created. Camping facilities are provided at seven campgrounds, the largest of which are Broad Cove, Chéticamp, Black Brook, and Ingonish Beach.

Daily fees vary and depend on whether the site is serviced or unserviced. Camping space is allocated on a first-come, first-served basis, and the maximum allowable stay is two weeks. Campgrounds open about May 20 and close about October 15, depending on the weather.

It is not permissible to camp outside established campgrounds, although visitors on overnight trail trips may camp en route, provided they register with a park warden before and after each trip, and obtain a campfire permit.

A variety of other accommodation and visitor services is available in villages on the Cabot Trail, just outside the park. Details are available at the park information centres.

In addition, the park offers a variety of other visitor facilities, including an 18-hole golf course and a half-mile-long supervised ocean beach.

Fires

Campfires may be set only in fireplaces provided for this purpose, or in outdoor stoves. Barbecues may be used only in campgrounds or in picnic areas, and all coals must be dumped into existing park fireplaces. Fire permits must be obtained from a park warden for open fires during trail travel.

Anyone finding an unattended fire should try to extinguish it, or if beyond his control, report it at once to the nearest park employee.

How To Get The Most Out Of Your Visit

To help you understand and appreciate the park's complex natural environment, you are urged to take advantage of the free interpretive program, conducted by a professional naturalist and his staff. It will provide you with an insight into how climate, sea, land formations, plants, and animals are interrelated, and make your stay more rewarding.

During the day there are conducted field trips; in the evening, informative talks are held, illustrated with slides or films.

Self-guiding trails, exhibits, interpretive signs, and viewpoints also explain the park's natural features.

Information on the interpretive program is available from bulletin boards, information centres, and park staff.

Where To Get Information

Detailed information may be obtained at information centres located at the Ingonish Beach and Chéticamp entrances. Uniformed staff will answer questions, provide maps, outline travel routes, and refer visitors to various areas and facilities in the park. Special events are posted on bulletin boards.

Park wardens, though not primarily responsible for general information, will help visitors whenever possible.

Additional information on Cape Breton Highlands is available from the Superintendent, Cape Breton Highlands National Park, Ingonish Beach, Nova Scotia. For information on other national parks write the Director, National and Historic Parks Branch, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Ottawa.

Issued under authority of
Hon. Jean Chrétien, P.C., M.P.,
Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development

Prepared by the park's staff and the
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Cape Breton Highlands National Park

Aspy Bay
North Pond
Aspy Bay
Gray Glen Brook
North Harbour Cape North
Dingwall
Cape North
South Pond
Black Head
White Point
Sunrise Lookout
Smelt Brook
Red River
Glasgow Brook
Effies Brook
Big Intervale
South Mountain
Rachel Brook
Trout Brook
Pleasant Bay
Red River
South Aspy River
Glasgow Lakes
New Haven
MacKenzie Point
John Dee Lake
Mica Hill Lake
Grande Anse River
Long Lake
Neil Brook
Neil Harbour
Gulf of St. Lawrence
Beulach Ban Falls
Round Lake
Halfway Brook
Fishing Cove
North Aspy River
Middle Aspy River
Lobster Lake
Jigging Cove Lake
McIntosh Brook
White Capes
North Mountain
Donovan Brook
South Point
Fishing Cove River
MacKenzie Mountain
Black Brook Cove
Red Head
George Brook
Black Brook
Black Point
South Fishing Cove River
MacKenzie River
Mary Ann Falls
Green Cove
Lake of Islands
Baldwin Lake
Jumping Brook
Branch Pond
Mary Ann Brook
Benjie's Lake
Sunday Lake
Black Brook
Big Southwest Brook
French Mountain
Warren Brook
Rocky Bay
French Mountain Lake
Roper Brook
Cap Rouge
Dundas Lakes
Warren Lake
Broad Cove
Corney Brook
Roper Lake
Highest Point in Nova Scotia 1747
White Hill Lake
Dundas Brook
Archibald Point
1382
Trout Brook
Fishing Cove Lake
Ingonish
Corney Lake
Cameron Brook
Ingonish Island
Presqu'ile
Everlasting Barren
Jerome Brook
Cann Lake
North Bay Ingonish
Clyburn Brook
Ingonish Centre
Fire Tower
MacDougall Lake
1405
Golf Course
Chéticamp Lake
Two Island Lake
Middle Head
Petit Etang
Robert Brook
Administration Offices
Freshwater Lake
South Bay Ingonish
Atlantic Ocean
1625
South Clyburn Brook
Chéticamp
Little Lake
Ingonish Beach
Chéticamp River
Power Brook
Ingonish Harbour
Leblanc Brook
South Ingonish Harbour
Cape Smoky
Ingonish Ferry
Belle Marche
Artemise Brook
McKinnon Brook
Faribault Brook
Northeast Margaree
Ingonish River
Baddeck
Sydney
0 1 2 4

Highway (Cabot Trail)
Secondary Road
Walking or Hiking Trail
Lake, River, Creek
Mountain
Warden's Cabin
Picnic Area
Campground
Viewpoint