



Visitor Information Package

To arrive prepared, to identify backcountry challenges and to plan an enriching Arctic experience, please read this package thoroughly.

For More Information

Contact our Park Office in Pond Inlet, or visit our website.

Pond Inlet Office

Phone: (867) 899-8092

Fax: (867) 899-8104

sirmilik.info@pc.gc.ca

Hours of Operation

Year Round

Monday to Friday 8:30am-12 noon, 1pm-5pm

parkscanada.gc.ca/sirmilik



Related Websites

Additional Resources: parkscanada.gc.ca/sirmilik

Nunavut Tourism: www.nunavuttourism.com

Mirnguiqsirviit – Nunavut Territorial Parks: www.nunavutparks.com

Weather Conditions –

Pond Inlet: www.weatheroffice.gc.ca/city/pages/nu-25_metric_e.html

Arctic Bay: www.weatheroffice.gc.ca/city/pages/nu-10_metric_e.html

Transport Canada: www.tc.gc.ca

What kind of explorer are you? Find out how to maximize your Canadian travel experience by visiting www.caen.canada.travel/traveller-types

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Since 2012

Mountain Guide certification is required for all guides leading clients in glaciated and / or technical mountain terrain. See page 12 for more information.



MIDNIGHT IN QUTTINIRPAAQ NATIONAL PARK – YOU’LL LOVE THE NIGHTLIFE.

Be on top of the world, literally, for two-weeks on Ellesmere Island. Explore from Tanquary Fjord during day trips and multi-day backpacking adventures. See the midnight sun, glaciers, polar desert, muskoxen, and wolves; walk the 4500-year old Muskox Way, the route of ancient peoples. While mostly self-guided, Park staff delight in sharing their knowledge of local natural and cultural history.

Contact nunavutinfo@pc.gc.ca to ask for more information or call 1-888-773-8888.

Nunavut’s Iconic Experiences

There are four national parks in Nunavut representing various examples of Canada’s 39 natural regions - Quttinirpaaq (Eastern High Arctic), Sirmilik (Eastern Arctic Lowlands), Ukkusiksalik (Central Tundra) and Auyuittuq (Northern Davis). In order for you to be better able to enjoy your national parks in Nunavut, we begin in 2014 to roll out our “Iconic Experiences” - unique excursions packages, custom-designed for each park - with Quttinirpaaq National Park having the honour of kicking it all off.

Watch for new Iconic Experiences at other national parks in Nunavut coming in 2015 and beyond!

Welcome

Sirmilik, Inuktitut for “Place of the Glaciers” is a park in four parts – Bylot Island (jointly managed with the Canadian Wildlife Service as a bird sanctuary), Baillarge Bay Sea Bird Colony, Oliver Sound and the Borden Peninsula. At the northern tip of Baffin Island, Sirmilik is part of the high Arctic experience, located right beside the legendary Northwest Passage and the wildlife-rich waters of Lancaster Sound!

Even before entering the park, the massive spills of glaciers into Eclipse Sound can be seen shining and brilliant in the Arctic light from the community of Pond Inlet, one of the two gateway communities to the park. Sixteen glaciers alone fan out across Bylot Island. Others carve out the landscape of the Borden Peninsula and calve into the waters of Oliver Sound from Baffin Island.

Climb and cross glaciers by ski and crampon in brilliant high intensity spring light. Ski the sea ice or take in the floe edge where marine life is concentrated at the deep navy blue waters exposed against the startling white of ice in May or June. July is ice break up so you must wait until August and September to hike u-shaped river valleys sculpted by glaciers. Boat or kayak in the sounds, or explore this part of the high Arctic on an expedition cruise ship.

These open waters attract some of the largest numbers of arctic sea birds that can be seen circling in late summer skies. Filling the air with their cries as they feast on the bounty found in this part of the marine ecosystem, while narwhal and seals in the thousands chase their catch alongside.

On land, brilliant, profuse plant life scatters across the landscape and the exposed geology of the cliff faces reveals layers of multi-coloured rock. From magenta to ochre to green and grey, hoodoos huddle like a crowd in the distance.

All this and more awaits your visit to Sirmilik!



Important Information

Pre-Trip

Before booking my travel I have:

- contacted Parks Canada in Pond Inlet;
- allowed sufficient time prior to entering the park to attend a mandatory orientation and registration session;
- received the Sirmilik National Park Visitor Information Package (this publication);
- received the Sirmilik National Park interpretive brochure/map;
- received the Safety in Polar Bear Country brochure.

For hiking or skiing I have:

- provided Parks Canada with a detailed itinerary of my planned trip including any side trips;
- contacted local outfitters to arrange for transport into the park (optional but recommended).

For mountaineering or glacier travel I have:

- contacted Parks Canada well in advance to discuss routes and plans;
- provided Parks Canada with a detailed route description of my planned trip .

If I am starting my trip in Arctic Bay I have:

- booked my flights accordingly to attend an orientation and registration session in Pond Inlet or Iqaluit;
- contacted local outfitters to arrange for transport into the park.

To setup a base camp or caches (a permit is needed in advance) I have:

- provided Parks Canada with details of my planned trip including base camp operations and cache content and location;
- requested and received permission from Parks Canada to create a base camp and/or cache.

For a sea kayaking trip I have:

- provided Parks Canada with details of my planned trip.

I have booked a time for my registration and orientation.

Date: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

Post-Trip

After leaving the park I will:

- contact Parks Canada to de-register
- complete the Nunavut Visitor Survey

Permits

Permits for operating a business (guiding, outfitting), filming and commercial photography, research, landing an aircraft, establishing a cache or base camp, or for transporting a firearm through the park must be acquired through the Parks Canada office well in advance (some permits may take 90 days or more to be issued). Research permits are only issued in winter and spring.

Registration and De-registration

For visitor safety, it is mandatory to register all trips into the park prior to entering and to de-register once done. **If you plan on travelling on Inuit-owned land contact the Qikiqtani Inuit Association at 1-800-667-2742 for permission.** During the registration and orientation we can point out areas of interest along your route. This information helps make your trip safe and enjoyable. We also provide information on the hazards present in the park, and the risks associated with the activities you plan to undertake. You will be briefed on current route conditions, weather, water levels, area closures, park regulations, polar bear sightings and much more.

To register your trip:

- Make a reservation for your orientation at the Parks Canada office in Pond Inlet at least 48 hours in advance by phone or email.
- Orientations are conducted during regular business hours (Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 4:30pm). Orientations will not be started past 3:30pm. Please consider this when making your travel and trip plans, and allow appropriate time for your orientation.
- If you are beginning your trip from Arctic Bay, please schedule your flights accordingly to allow time for your orientation and registration to take place in Pond Inlet or Iqaluit.
- This can take 60-90 minutes depending on what type of trip you are going on.

To de-register your trip:

- Within 24 hours of exiting the park, visit the Parks Canada office in Pond Inlet or contact them by phone at (867) 899-8092. If you wish to speak to a Parks Canada staff member, please call during business hours.
- **Failing to de-register within 24 hours of this date will initiate an investigation by park staff.**

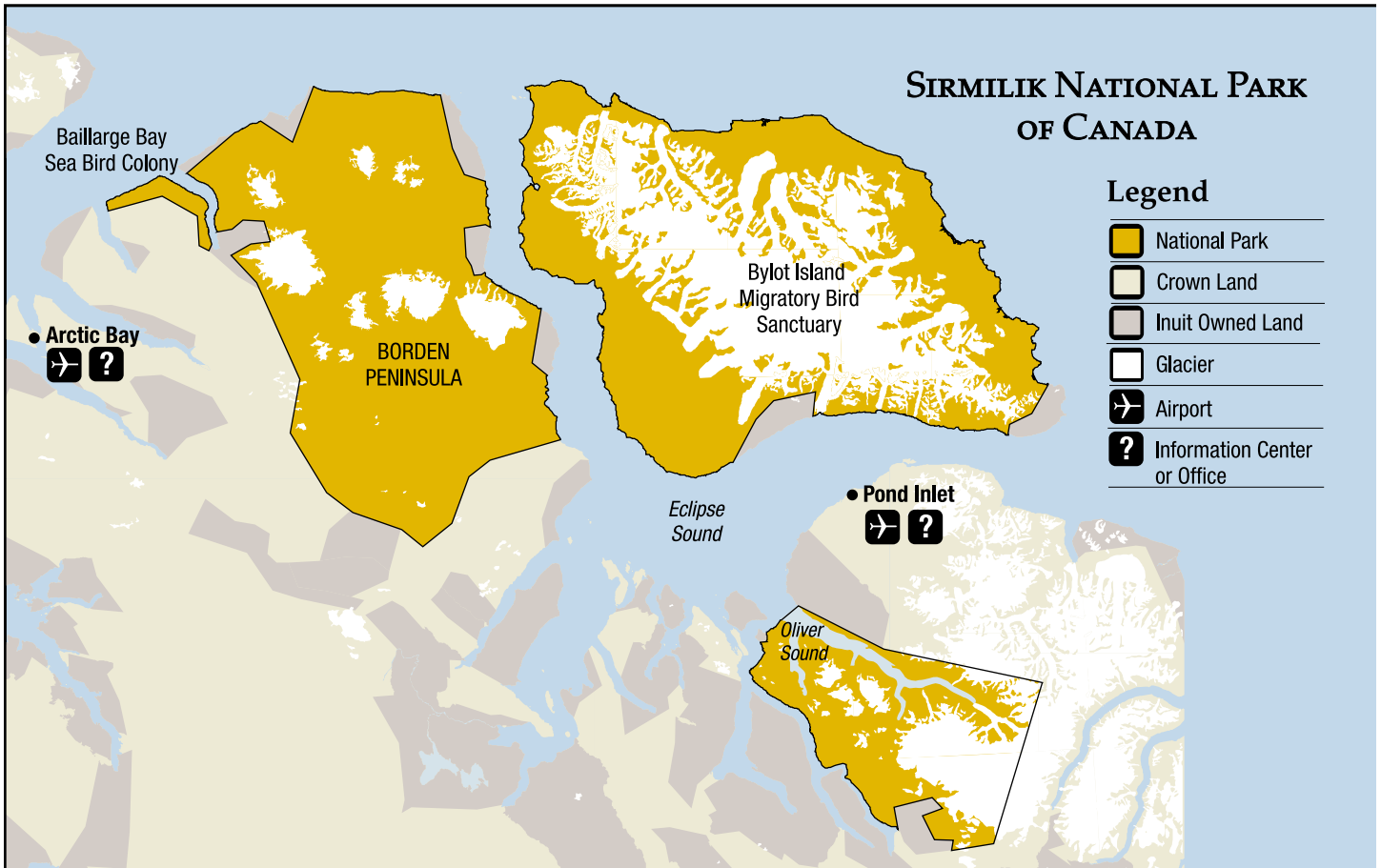
What information will you need to provide when you arrive?

- The name, address and phone number of each group member and an emergency contact for each member;
- A de-registration date (date you plan to exit the park);
- The name(s) of the local outfitter(s) that you plan to use;
- Your flight information;
- A list of your equipment (brand, number, colour, etc), your satellite phone number (if applicable);
- The type of activities you will undertake; and,
- Your detailed in-park trip plans.



Photo: Christian Kimber

Planning your trip

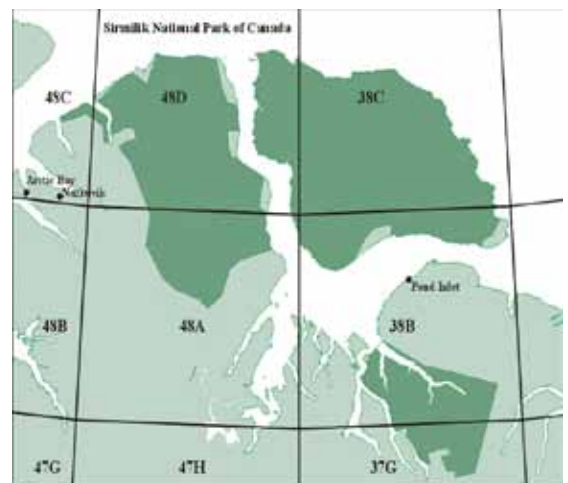


Topographic Maps

Route planning is best done with 1:250,000 maps while navigation should be done with the appropriate 1:50,000 maps. A diagram of the corresponding 1:250,000 maps can be found below.

Call the Parks Office in Pond Inlet for assistance with your route directions. For all areas of the park, you will need to purchase topographic maps prior to arrival.

To find regional distribution centres for topographic maps please check http://maps.nrcan.gc.ca/distribution_e.php



When to visit: Arctic seasons and your trip

The following are approximate dates for the methods of accessing the park. Please check in advance with the park office in Pond Inlet for this year's likeliest scenario.

Late March to Early June (spring)	The best time of year for winter activities. Frozen oceans mean it's possible to travel from either Pond Inlet or Arctic Bay to the park boundary by snowmobile or dog team to start your trip.
Late June to mid-July (break up)*	During ice break up, travel to the park is impossible. This is a great time to explore the areas around Pond Inlet and Arctic Bay.
Late July to late September (summer)	This is the best time for hiking and camping. Boat travel to the park is possible.
October to early November (freeze up)*	During freeze up, travel to the park is impossible.
November – February (winter)	Travel to Sirmilik National Park is not advisable at this time. Cold temperatures, near-constant darkness & access difficulties in early winter make winter travel unpleasant, dangerous and, often, impossible.

* If your plans include travel to the park during break up or freeze up, please phone to check ice conditions. You can also check: <http://ice-glaces.ec.gc.ca/> for Arctic ice conditions.



Emergency Medical Travel & Visitors to Nunavut

From the Nunavut Department of Health website (<http://gov.nu.ca/health/information/medical-travel>):

If you are not a resident of Nunavut and you need medical travel during your stay in the territory, you will be responsible for all medical travel costs.

Visitors needing medevac will be invoiced for the full cost of the flight.

No travel assistance is offered to visitors to return home. You will need to make your own travel arrangements if you wish to return to the community you were visiting.

The Department of Health suggests that you buy travel insurance before visiting Nunavut. Health care in Nunavut can be very expensive. Be prepared for emergencies.

How to Get Here

Air Access to Nunavut

First Air and Canadian North offer scheduled flights to Pond Inlet and Arctic Bay via Iqaluit from Montreal, Ottawa, and Yellowknife.

For information on how to get to the park from Pond Inlet and Arctic Bay, see local outfitters information on page 6.

Please Note: If you are shipping supplies from an international location, please allow at least 4-6 weeks for these items to clear customs on top of the normal shipping time.

First Air Ltd.
1-800-267-1247
www.firstair.ca

Canadian North
1-800-661-1505
www.canadiannorth.com

For charter service (call for quotes):
Air Nunavut
1-866-388-5888
info@airnunavut.ca

**Weather conditions in the north may dictate your travel schedule.
Be flexible enough to allow for lengthy delays in your plans.**

Travelling with Dangerous Goods

Transport Canada has several regulations about how to transport used stoves and fuel bottles. For details about how to treat your gear in order to transport it on a plane please go to the following link: www.tc.gc.ca/civilaviation/commerce/dangerousgoods/news/notices/menu.htm. If you have any questions about these regulations please contact the inspector from your region. A list of contacts can be found at: www.tc.gc.ca/civilaviation/commerce/dangerousgoods/contact.htm

We recommend bringing new, unused stoves and new, empty fuel canisters with you to avoid difficulties when traveling. Please keep these items in their original packaging and bring all receipts with you. You will likely also need to leave these items in the communities on your return trip home.

Bear deterrents and many noisemaking devices used to scare bears are strictly prohibited from travel on airplanes.

To make your travel easier, we recommend buying your stove fuel in the community where you begin your trip and leave any unused fuel behind. White gas is readily available in the communities. Some compressed tanks may be available – contact stores directly for more information. Outfitters in both communities often accept leftover white gas. Contact outfitters directly. You can also check with local outfitters or stores to see if bear deterrents are available for purchase locally. Commercial deterrents are limited in the north; you will need to check for availability with local outfitters or stores prior to your trip.

Please Note: Due to the problem of travelling with dangerous goods, Sirmilik has a limited supply of bear deterrents to sign out. Please contact the office for more details.

Community Information

Local Outfitters

Travel to and from Sirmilik, from either Pond Inlet or Arctic Bay, can be arranged with local outfitters who are licensed to operate in Sirmilik National Park. Outfitters will take you to and from the park by either boat or snowmobile, depending on the season. In Pond Inlet, park staff can help you make the necessary arrangements with local outfitters. In Arctic Bay, call the Hamlet Office at (867) 439-9917.

Please Note: Outfitters must have a current National Parks Business Licence to transport visitors to the park. Ensure your outfitter has a current licence before hiring them. This package was produced in advance of the annual licensing and permitting cycle.

Pond Inlet

Polar Sea Adventures (Equipment rentals also)

Dave Reid
Phone: (867) 899-8870
Fax: (867) 899-8010
Email: info@polarsea.ca
www.polarsea.ca

Tagak Outfitting Service

Sheatie Tagak
Phone: (867) 899-8932
Fax: (867) 899-8616

Inuarak Outfitting

Enookie Inuaraq
Phone: (867) 899-8551
Fax: (867) 899-8111
Email: inuarak@gmail.com

Taxi

Elijah Ekloo
Phone: (867) 899-1466

Arctic Bay

Damien Qaunaq
Phone: (867) 439-8031
Email: dqaunaq@hotmail.com

Tom Naqitarvik
Phone: (867) 439-8175
Email: t_naqitarvik@hotmail.com

Moses Koonoo
Phone: (867) 439-8175
joanna_koonoo@hotmail.com

Jonah Oyukuluk
Phone: (867) 439-8134

Ullivik Outfitting

Andrew Taqtu
Phone: (867) 439-8156

Arqvartuuq Services

Transportation to and from airport
Phone: (867) 439-8227
Fax: (867) 439 8017

Taxi

Ikpiarjuk Service
Telephone: (867) 439-8188



Photo: Christian Kimber

Community Visitor Information

Pond Inlet

Nattinnak Visitors Centre
Phone: (867) 899-8226
Fax: (867) 899-8246

Arctic Bay

Hamlet Office
Phone: (867) 439-9917
Fax: (867) 439-8767

Local Stores

Pond Inlet

Northern Store: (867) 899-8848
Tununiq Sauniq Co-op Ltd: (867) 899-5100

Arctic Bay

Northern Store: (867) 439-9914
Taqut Co-op Association: (867) 439-9934

Accommodations

Pond Inlet

Tununiq Sauniq Hotel

Phone: (867) 899-6500
Fax: (867) 899-8364
Email: innsnorth@arcticco-op.com

Blackpoint Lodge

Phone: (867) 899-8555
Email: John@solunarctic.com

Campground

Minimal services. Located 5km from town.

Arctic Bay

Tangmaarvik Inn

Phone : (867) 439-8005
Fax : (867) 439-8007



Photo: Todd Windle



Photo: Tyler Harbidge

Activities

Hiking and skiing opportunities are endless in Sirmilik National Park, while there are no designated travel routes, park staff will be able to help you with trip planning.

Hiking

A high plateau and broad river valleys of the Borden Peninsula and the variety of terrain of Bylot Island are prime hiking destinations in the park. In the Southwest region of Bylot there are extensive opportunities for wildlife viewing from foxes to geese. Most hikes on Bylot Island will put you up-close to numerous ancient glaciers whose grandeur can occupy your entire view. With 16 glaciers to choose from on Bylot Island alone, the hardest part of your trip will be deciding which ones to visit. Your approach to the glaciers is across varied terrain that will provide you with a hands-on experience into the world of glacial features and how their movement sculpts this land.

Day or Weekend Trips



Photo: Doug Stern

Bylot Island can be seen from Pond Inlet. Visitors who only have a day or two can hire local outfitters to bring them to the island by boat or snow machine depending on the season for a short day hike or visit to Sermilik Glacier.

Contact our office or an outfitter directly to discuss what trip would be best for you.

Wildlife Viewing

Bylot Island is a Migratory Bird Sanctuary managed jointly with the Canadian Wildlife Service. The island is a haven for seabirds, migratory waterfowl, and other wildlife and has the largest colony of greater snow geese in the world. The Bail-large Bay sea bird cliffs, near Arctic Bay, are home to thousands of thick-billed murres and black-legged kittiwakes best seen by expedition style cruise ships.



Photo: Mark Mallory

Sea Kayaking

During open waters, the opportunities await. The waters of Oliver Sound are located in the park and can be used for sea kayaking with a local guide or on your own. Equipment rentals may be available in Pond Inlet.

Skiing, Mountaineering and Glacier Travel

Sirmilik National Park is 'the place of glaciers'. Spring (late March to early June) is the ideal time for ski touring and mountaineering here, especially on Bylot Island. Groups planning to do glacier travel should have an experienced leader and have thorough knowledge of glacier travel including crevasse rescue.



Floe Edge Tours

The most popular wildlife viewing is guided, spring floe edge tours where visitors may see narwhal, beluga whales, polar bear and many species of birds. During your spring trip to the floe edge ask your guide to take you past the thousands of migrating birds that nest on the cliffs of Sirmilik National Park. You may also want to inquire about a visit to some of the many cultural sites located in the park or travel to see our magnificent glaciers.



Photo: Terry Kalluk

Inuit Cultural Activities



Photo: Christian Kimber

You may encounter beneficiaries of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (NLCA) while travelling in Sirmilik. We would like to remind you to respect Inuit subsistence hunting, fishing and trapping rights and refrain from interfering with their activities. Beneficiaries of the NLCA may travel through the park by motorized vehicle for the purposes of harvesting. Anyone transporting a visitor to the park for commercial gain requires a license and all visitors need to be registered.

Tour Companies

If you prefer to travel in a guided group, please contact one of the tour companies below. Please check that the company you are planning to travel with is currently licensed to operate in the park before hiring them.

This package was produced in advance of the annual licensing and permitting cycle.

Black Feather Wilderness Adventure Company

Parry Sound, ON
Toll Free: 1-888-849-7668
Phone: (705) 746-1372
Fax: (705) 746-7048
info@blackfeather.com
www.blackfeather.com

Polar Sea Adventures (Equipment rentals also)

Pond Inlet, NU
Phone: (867) 899-8870
Fax: (867) 899-8010
info@info@polarsea.ca
www.polarsea.ca

Cruise North Expeditions Inc

Mississauga, ON
Toll Free: 1-855-5-ARCTIC (1-855-527-2842)
Phone: 1-647-729-3568
Fax: 1-905-271-4000
info@cruisenorthexpeditions.com
www.cruisenorthexpeditions.com

Quark Expeditions

Waterbury, Vermont
Toll Free: 1-888-892-0334
Phone: (203) 803-2888
Fax: (203) 857-0427
enquiry@quarkexpeditions.com
www.quarkexpeditions.com

Adventure Canada

Mississauga, ON
Toll Free: 1-800-363-7566
Phone: 905-271-4000
Fax: (905) 271-5595
info@adventurecanada.com
www.adventurecanada.com

Arctic Kingdom

Mississauga, ON
Toll-free: 1-888-737-6818
Phone: (416) 322-7066
Fax: (416) 887-0529
adventures@arctickingdom.com
www.arctickingdom.com



Photo: Mark Mallory

Important Safety Information

River Crossings

River crossings are the most significant hazard facing summer visitors. Streams and rivers in Sirmilik are mostly glacial fed, so water volume and velocity changes throughout the day and from day to day. As the day progresses, glacial melt caused by warming temperatures increases the volume of rivers and streams. Rainfall also affects the volume and velocity of rivers and streams at any time of day. These factors make crossings unpredictable and susceptible to rapid change. Be prepared to wait out high water for hours or even days: at certain times of year, water levels are likely to significantly affect your trip route and schedule, so plan accordingly.

River Crossing Tips

Gear Considerations

- Footwear: Neoprene boots with gripping soles will protect your feet from the cold water and will allow you to keep your boots and socks dry. Alternatively, hiking boots with gaiters will provide some warmth, ankle support and may protect your feet from tumbling rocks, but you must be prepared to hike in wet boots.
- Hiking poles: hiking poles are essential for balance while crossing and are useful for testing water depth.

Deciding to Cross

- Group abilities: Ensure that all group members are willing to take the risk. Consider the abilities of the weakest group member.
- Timing: Be prepared to wait hours or days until water levels are low enough for your group to make a safe crossing. During warm periods, water levels are generally lowest between 2 am and 7 am. Following heavy rain, water levels may continue to rise for several hours.
- Location: Assess the safest location to cross, remembering that ideal crossing locations change regularly. Consider the following:
 - Water depth
 - Braided areas tend to be shallower than single channels.
 - Water speed
 - Flatter areas tend to have slower-moving water than steeper areas.

Hazards

- Riverbanks: may be unstable and could collapse.
- Underwater: cloudy water can obscure rolling rocks and unstable footing.
- Downstream: be aware of waterfalls, deep pools, open sea, etc.

Safe crossing techniques

- Heavy packs make crossings more difficult; you may wish to test cross without a pack or have stronger members shuttle packs.
- When crossing with a pack, unfasten waist and chest straps so you can remove your pack easily if you become pinned underwater.
- Face upstream, move with the current and use hiking poles to maintain balance.
- Consider group crossing techniques, i.e. Leader is upstream with group members in single file behind for support and to take advantage of the group's downstream eddy.

To learn more about river safety, consider taking a swiftwater safety course before your trip.

All rivers and streams are dangerous. Some streams may remain uncrossable for some members of your group. Be prepared to change your route or turn back.

Terrain Hazards

Rockfall

Bare, freshly broken rock is a sign of active rockfall; these areas may extend well out from the rock walls and cliffs. In or around steep terrain, choose routes carefully, watch and listen for falling rock and avoid stopping for long breaks in potentially active or unprotected areas. Be particularly careful when it is raining and during periods of freeze-melt temperatures as these conditions loosen rock and increase rockfall. Choose campsites in protected areas, away from steep terrain.

Glacier Travel

Low temperatures combined with low annual snowfall means that glacial movement is very slow. Crevasses and icefalls are reduced compared to glaciers in more southerly regions of North America. However, glaciers must still be treated with respect as they can be dangerous. Only those experienced in glacier travel and crevasse rescue and who have proper equipment should travel on glaciers. **Beginning in 2012, all guides operating in glaciated and / or technical mountain terrain will require full IFMGA/IVBV/UIAGM/ACMG certification as an Alpine, Mountain, or Ski guide.** Contact the park office for more information.



Photo: Doug Stern

Avalanches

If there is snow and you will be travelling across or near slopes of more than 25° angle, you need to consider the possibility of avalanches. You should be trained and experienced in assessing avalanche hazards, route-finding skills and self-rescue techniques if you plan to travel in avalanche areas. All members should carry an avalanche transceiver, shovel and probe.

Water Quality

We advise you to fine filter (<0.5microns), treat (iodine or chlorine in warm water), or boil your drinking water. To prevent the spread of diseases, human waste should be disposed of in a responsible manner, at least 100 metres from water sources and 50 metres from trails. More information will be provided during your orientation.

Snow Machine and Qamutik (sled) Safety

Snow machines can provide quick access to wilderness areas and are a common method of travel to some of the National Parks in Nunavut.

Travelling, using a snow machine and qamutik can, however, be dangerous and must be treated with respect. Injuries result when the snow machine makes a sudden stop; when the driver or passenger falls from the machine or qamutik due to bouncing over uneven terrain; when the snow machine flips; or when the qamutik is pulled by a rope rather than a rigid hitch and the sled overtakes the snow machine pulling it.



Photo: Christian Kimber

Avoiding Accidents and Injuries

- Check your qamutik frequently to ensure you know how it is riding and where it is in relation to your snow machine.
- If you slow down or stop unexpectedly, check your qamutik's location. Prevent your qamutik from running into others or your own snow machine by slowing your speed gradually.
- Be especially careful when approaching other snow machines, people on foot and other types of vehicles. Plan your stops in advance and slow your machine as you approach the location you intend to stop.
- Use qamutiks with a steel hitch.
- Avoid travelling at high speeds. Adjust your speed to the terrain and other conditions.

Thin Ice Areas/Sea Ice

- Some parts of the sea ice are prone to thinning earlier than the rest of the ice due to strong water currents. Please talk to our staff to identify these locations. For current ice conditions please visit <http://ice-glaces.ec.gc.ca> (go to Eastern Arctic then Approaches to Resolute)
- If there is deep snow and one area is darker than the surrounding area, the dark area is typically thin ice. Pass by that area giving it a wide berth.
- When deep snow is present with water on top or the snow is soaked through with water, it means that there is open water beneath it. Do not approach these areas.
- Sea ice close to river mouths is generally thin.
- Bays and inlets often have strong currents during spring and are prone to thin ice and open water. Avoid travelling through bays and inlets that have narrow channels.

Floe Edge

Camping close to the floe edge can be dangerous. Be especially wary when prevailing winds are strong and during large tides (full or new moons) since these conditions increase the following risks:

- Ice breaks up along the floe edge.
- A huge pan of ice may break off from the land fast ice (up to 10 kilometres or more in size) even if there is no wind or extreme tides. Bring a global positioning system (GPS) and regularly check to see if the coordinates change. If you don't have a GPS visually align a piece of ice some distance from you to the land and periodically check to see if the ice you are on is moving.
- Watch for moving ice that is wedging and piling up into the land fast ice.
- Polar bears travel along the floe edge in search of food. They will hunt for fresh prey or will scavenge any carcasses they find. Do not camp near an old kill because polar bears, with their excellent senses of smell, will come to forage from it. Polar bears are very efficient and skilled stalkers (both on ice and in the water). Always keep watch for them.
- Camp well away from the floe edge itself.

Boat and Kayak Safety

During the summer season boat and kayak trips are the most popular way to explore Sirmilik. There are several skills you will need in order to be properly prepared to travel safely in this area. We recommend:

- You are comfortable with bracing, manoeuvring, surf landing and launching and self-rescue
- You can interpret marine charts and tide tables and use them to identify marine hazards
- You can establish your position and follow waypoints using a GPS.
- You can navigate in fog
- You are able to estimate the speed of a current and estimate ferry angle under varying conditions

Wind and Rough Water

Remember that areas of calm seas and areas of wind and rough waters may be relatively close together. Generally, during the full and new moons you can expect three to four days of strong prevailing winds and rough sea conditions. Local outfitters know the conditions and weather trends for the area. Please listen to local knowledge and local outfitter advice regarding winds, rough water and points of land that are dangerous during challenging weather conditions.

Climate and Extreme Weather

The polar marine climate means long, cold winters and short, cool summers. Although summer brings almost endless daylight from May to August, the sun is absent from the sky December and January. Spring brings strong winds and late summer is often cloudy. In winter, loss of daylight and the presence of sea ice can make for extremely cold weather.

Weather in the Arctic is notoriously changeable. Abrupt weather changes can affect sea and boating conditions forcing boaters to wait out rough waters, sometimes for several days. **Be prepared for snow anytime, anywhere in Sirmilik!** White out conditions are possible any time of year.

Hypothermia and Frostbite

Hypothermia is a life-threatening condition. People with hypothermia can no longer keep themselves warm and cannot re-warm themselves without assistance. Know the signs and symptoms of hypothermia, how to treat it and take precautions to prevent its onset. Remember to take the windchill factor into account when evaluating temperatures. Skiers, mountaineers and other winter and spring travellers must guard against frostbite when travelling in Sirmilik National Park. Conditions of extreme cold are common and care should be taken to avoid exposing the skin.



Polar Bears and other wildlife

Polar bears may be encountered at any time of the year and in any area of the park, including glaciers.

The more people in your party, the less likely you will encounter a bear. Polar bears are most active along the coast of the Borden Peninsula and along the north, west, and east coasts of Bylot Island. Be particularly cautious in March/April when females with cubs are emerging from their dens and July to October when the sea ice is gone and bears are forced ashore.

For more information, please speak with our parks staff, read the Safety in Polar Bear Country pamphlet carefully and watch the Polar Bears: A Guide to Safety DVD at the park office or distributed at www.distributionaccess.com.

If you are nervous about bears, or uncertain of your ability to deal with them, consider joining a guided group. Guides are knowledgeable and experienced at travelling in bear country. When hiring a guide, ask about their experience, how they will avoid encountering polar bears and their plans of action should you encounter a bear.

Report polar bear encounters

Report sightings, tracks and signs to Parks Canada staff as soon as possible by radio or satellite phone.

Foxes and wolves can carry rabies. Do not allow them to approach you. Be especially suspicious if wildlife appears “friendly” or “tame”.

Birds and wildlife are inquisitive and opportunistic. They will scavenge food left out and raid caches that are not securely stashed. Make sure food and garbage is securely stored.

Walrus or whales can be aggressive and easily upset a boat. Keep your distance.

As a general rule keep a safe distance from all wildlife and remember that it is illegal to touch, feed or entice wildlife with food items in a National Park.

Search and Rescue

Sirmilik is one of the most remote parks in North America, and rescue services and facilities are very limited. Our public safety staff are trained in first aid, patient stabilization and evacuation in non-technical terrain. Park search and rescue operations may be delayed by poor weather conditions, geography, aircraft or staff availability. For high-angle technical evacuations, assistance from outside of Nunavut is required.

TO HELP US AND YOURSELF, PLEASE:

- Be self-reliant and responsible for your own safety;
- Have the required equipment, knowledge, skills and physical fitness;
- Consider the public safety information and advice provided by Parks Canada;
- Seek out additional advice from our staff if you are uncertain about what you may encounter;
- Follow the public safety registration and de-registration program;
- Be prepared for emergencies (medical, wildlife or weather related).

When will a search be initiated?

A search and rescue response will be initiated when a distress signal is reported or when a group has failed to de-register and an initial investigation suggests a group is overdue. In the case of an overdue group, a physical search may not occur until at least 48 hours after the de-registration date has passed.

**IN CASE OF EMERGENCY
CALL THE EMERGENCY DISPATCH LINE
(780) 852 3100
THIS NUMBER IS MONITORED 24 HOURS A DAY**

Do not forget to de-register!

Visitors who fail to de-register place an unnecessary burden on our limited search and rescue capabilities. You can place rescue staff in danger and make the rescue team unavailable for a real emergency. Please remember to visit or call our Parks Canada office upon your safe return from the park.

Air Support

- There are only commercial aircraft in Pond Inlet or Arctic Bay
- Air access may be delayed, sometimes for many days, due to poor visibility, weather conditions or high winds.
- Aircraft cannot land in the backcountry if the terrain is unsuitable for a safe landing.



Minimizing Risk

Experience Level

Your group should have advanced skills in wilderness first aid and be prepared to handle any medical, wildlife or weather related emergency. If someone in your group is uncertain about their skill level, consider travelling with an experienced guide. Contact information can be found in this package.



Communications

Please be aware that all of these recommended modes of communication can be unreliable and at times you will be unable to make contact with anyone. If you are having difficulty receiving a signal it may be possible to get to higher ground to improve signal strength. This can be very time consuming and in some cases dangerous, please use caution. As always with technology, be aware of the weaknesses of your system.

Sirmilik National Park lies within the area of compass unreliability. GPS receivers are your best bet for navigation. Keep in mind that batteries must be kept warm and even the best unit can fail. Bring a backup unit and the right maps.

Satellite Phones are the preferred means of making contact. Your phone can put you in touch with emergency assistance 24 hours a day. We recommend obtaining a satellite phone prior to your trip.

*The Iridium system provides the most reliable coverage over Sirmilik but other options are available. Make sure to bring extra batteries. Portable solar chargers for batteries are also recommended. Be sure to write down emergency phone numbers **and** program them into the phone.*

SPOT can be used to allow family and friends to track your progress on your trip as well as initiate a distress signal, however **visitors should be aware that the SPOT satellite network has poor coverage around Sirmilik, particularly north of 73 degrees N latitude.** SPOT devices should not, therefore, be relied upon for communication. Please advise your family and friends of this to remove any undue concern about your progress should they not receive an OK. Emergency signals are received by the Canadian Forces and they will initiate a rescue if one is received. This signal is non-reversible and is to be used in a life-threatening situation only. During your registration we will collect information about your unit in the event that there is a need to check the activity from it.

Personal Locator Beacons (PLB) can also be carried into remote areas. When activated, they send a distress signal to the Canadian Forces in Trenton, Ontario who will initiate a rescue from there. Once activated, the signal is non-reversible; these are to be used in a life-threatening situation only. Make sure your PLB is properly registered by calling the Canadian Personal Emergency Beacon Registry in Ottawa at (613) 992-0079 or online at www.canadianbeaconregistry.forces.gc.ca/. Only PLB's that transmit a distress signal at 406 MHz are permitted in Canada.

Environmental Conservation Practices

- Choose routes on durable terrain.
- When traveling across steep terrain use rock outcrops or snow.
- Select campsites in durable locations where signs of your occupation will be minimal, especially for base camps or if you are traveling in a large group.
- Minimize the use of soaps and, when necessary, use biodegradable soap.
- Dish and excess cooking water should be poured into a shallow sump hole away from your campsite and 50 meters away from water sources.
- Pack out everything that you packed in. This includes your toilet paper!
- Do not build cairns (rock pile or Inuksuk), markers, or leave messages in the dirt.
- Please do not cover human waste as it will degrade quicker in the sun and air. Please use an area away from main routes and water sources.



Photo: Mark Mallory

Fees

Entry fees are charged at most national parks. Most of the money raised through admission fees remains in the particular park where it is collected. This means that every time you visit a park you are investing in its future – and in a legacy for future generations.

Nunavut's national parks are backcountry parks and the following fees will be charged at the time of your mandatory registration:

- A day trip permit for the park is \$12.00 per person.
- The overnight permit fee is \$24.50 per person per night.
- An Annual Northern Park Backcountry Excursion Pass is \$147.20 per person. It is valid in any national park or reserve in Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, and Yukon except for Kluane and Wood Buffalo National Parks. It is your best option if your trip is greater than 6 days, or you plan to visit other parks in this area this year.

The Parks Canada Discovery Passes covering Park Entry Fees are not valid in the National Parks in Nunavut.

These are the fees, at time of print. New Fees will soon be implemented. They are likely to be slightly higher.

Park Regulations

Working Together to Preserve our Natural and Cultural Areas

The Canada National Parks Act and Regulations, as well as other federal legislation, are in place to preserve and protect our natural and cultural resources. The following is a guide to ensure you have a safe and memorable wilderness experience while visiting Sirmilik National Park and are provided as brief information statements for convenience only. For a complete listing of park regulations please contact the park office.

- **Registration and De-registration:** You must register and attend the mandatory orientation before entering the park and de-register upon exiting.
- **Firearms:** No person shall be in possession of a firearm in the park (does not apply to persons authorized by the superintendent).
- **Pets:** Must be kept under physical control at all times.
- **Fishing** is not permitted anywhere in Sirmilik National Park.

Preserving Sirmilik's Natural and Cultural Integrity

- All garbage must be packed out.
- Campfires are not permitted in the park.
- No person shall remove, deface, damage or destroy any flora or natural objects in the park.
- No person shall wilfully remove, deface, damage or destroy any prehistoric or historic artefacts or structures in the park.
- No person shall hunt, disturb, hold in captivity or destroy any wildlife within the park.
- No person shall disturb or destroy a nest, lair or den in the park.
- No person shall touch, feed or entice wildlife in the park.





Sirmilik. *Real. Inspiring.*