

Terra Nova National Park

Newfoundland



Terra Nova National Park

Cover: ochre bog

Southwest arm, Alexander Bay

Below: iceberg in Newman Sound

Pitcher plant

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 landforms 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."

Terra Nova National Park, 153 square miles in area, is a superb example of Newfoundland's eastern coastal region, with its rocky points, deeply indented shoreline and rolling, forested landscape. It is situated on Bonavista Bay, about 48 miles southeast of Gander, and is the most easterly of Canada's national parks.

The park environment

Each national park has its own character, its unique story as a living outdoor museum. The Terra Nova story is that of a marine environment in all its diversity and of the boreal forest reflecting the cooling influence of the sea.

The land: the effects of ice power

Newfoundland is situated on the northeastern extremity of the great Appalachian mountain chain, which stretches 2,000 miles to the southeastern United States. Its rocks began as sand and mud deposited at the bottom of the sea more than 600 million years ago. Unimaginable forces, acting over millions of years, lifted and buckled these sedimentary rocks, and Newfoundland rose out of the sea.

Tremendous heat and pressures within the earth's crust altered the rock formations to their present-day form. Ice Age glaciers scratched and eroded the mountain terrain of Newfoundland, and when the last of these huge continental ice sheets melted away, it left behind deposits of sand, gravel and large boulders. This glacial sand and gravel created the tidal flats at the heads of Newman and Clode Sounds, while Terra Nova's many lakes and bogs were formed in depressions gouged out of the rock surface by the glaciers.

Perhaps the park's most distinctive features are the many fjords or "sounds", which reach inland like long arms of the sea and are also the result of glacial movement. As the ice melted, the sea-level rose, flooding the deep glacier-carved valleys and producing the inlets.

The sea has a direct influence on the entire environment of the park. Modified by the coastal branch of the cold Labrador current in the North Atlantic ocean, Terra Nova's climate is characterized by cool summers, mild winters and considerable precipitation. The area's shallow, acid soil with its boreal forest of spruce and fir also reflects the sea's cooling influence. Arctic icebergs, moved by the



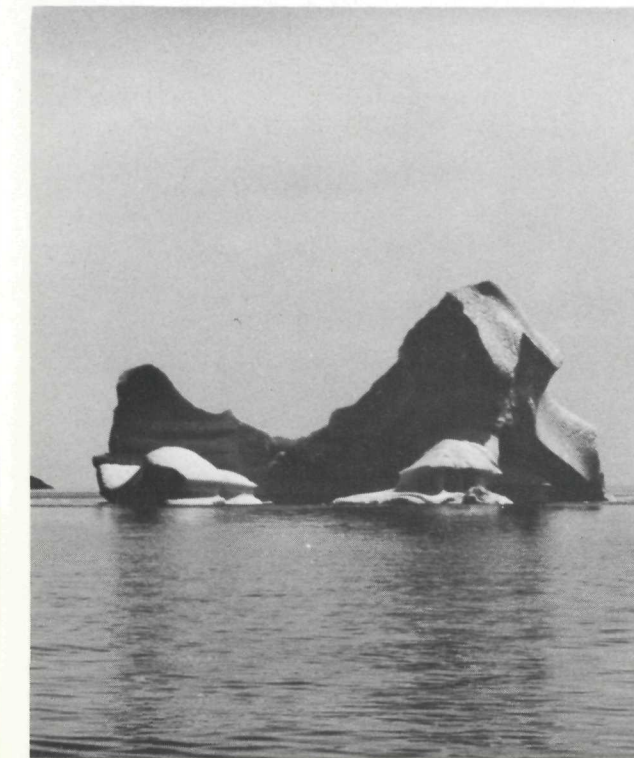
wind and ocean currents, are frequently seen off-shore in the months of May and June.

The plants: dominant northern species

Terra Nova's rolling terrain is thickly covered with a boreal or northern forest dominated by black spruce and balsam fir. Speckled alder and red maple thrive in stream valleys and stands of white birch and poplar are scattered throughout the park. Typical northern wild flowers found in the forest and along its edges include the mayflower, stemless lady's slipper orchid, fireweed, twinflower and wild aster.

The numerous bogs, thickly matted with wet, spongy sphagnum moss, are of great interest. Growing up out of the moss are such shrubs as the bog laurel, leatherleaf and Labrador tea. Grass-like sedges and cotton-grass occur, too. Newfoundland's floral emblem, the pitcher plant, and delicate bog orchids like the dragon's tongue can also be found in these areas.

Along the shore seaweeds such as Irish moss, bladder-wrack and sea boot-lace cling tightly to the rocks. In deeper water grow the kelps – long blade-like seaweeds often found washed up on beaches after a storm. These hardy plants survive the annual winter scouring of the coast by sea ice, which drifts down from the north and often jams the bays and sounds.



The animals: each to its own habitat

The variety of animals found in Terra Nova is restricted by Newfoundland's isolation from the mainland. Deer, skunk, snake and porcupine are not found on the island and small mammals are represented only by the masked shrew, which was introduced in 1958, and by the field mouse.

The moose, Terra Nova's most noticeable animal, was introduced to the province in 1878 and brought there again in 1904. Moose are often seen beside the Trans-Canada Highway and in the park headquarters area. Black bear are also common.

Beaver are present in the park and their cuttings are especially noticeable near Big Brook and Southwest Brook. Snowshoe or varying hare are numerous in Terra Nova, while the lynx, fox, muskrat and mink are shy animals and seldom seen.

Blue mussels, barnacles and periwinkles cling to the rocks along the seashore. Starfish, green sea urchins, sea anemones, crabs and lobsters thrive in deeper waters.

Seal and pothead whale are sometimes seen in coastal waters off the park shoreline and otter make their homes along the shore and in some inland streams and ponds.

Birdlife is both numerous and varied. Sea birds, including the black-backed gull, common tern, murre and herring gull are common. Bald eagles and ospreys can

Newfoundland





sometimes be seen along the coast and in the stream valleys.

Typical land birds include thrushes, flycatchers, sparrows and warblers. Finches, such as the crossbill and evening grosbeak, are numerous in the fall and winter months. The Canada jay or whiskeyjack is the campground thief and will steal any unguarded food.

A brief park history

Prior to the establishment of Terra Nova as a national park, sawmills and pulpwood camps operated in the area and forests close to the shoreline were extensively cut over. Fishermen established temporary summer camps on some of the islands within the present park boundaries and local residents hunted moose and ran traplines in the area. Most of these old camps and sawmills have been cleared away, but evidence of their existence can be seen occasionally. A small cemetery at Minchin Cove contains the graves of men who once operated a sawmill there.

In 1957 the provincial and federal governments signed an agreement creating Terra Nova National Park. At that time there were no roads in the area and the easiest means of access to the park was by boat from Happy Adventure. By 1959 the Terra Nova section of the road linking Port Blandford with Gambo was completed. It was paved in 1960 and is now part of the Trans-Canada Highway. The national park was officially opened in 1961.

How to get there

Situated approximately 145 miles northwest of St. John's, Terra Nova is bisected by the Trans-Canada Highway and is easily accessible by car or bus.

The closest commercial airport is at Gander, about 48 miles northwest of the park. Visitors travelling by air can best reach the park from Gander by rented car, taxi or bus. Newfoundland is also accessible via auto-ferry from North Sydney, Nova Scotia.

How to enjoy the park

Season – The park is open all year but most visitor services are only available in the summer season. Summer is the busiest time, but visits to the park at other seasons are increasing every year. Swimming, canoeing, boating, fishing and camping are favourite summer activities while hiking and snowshoeing are becoming increasingly popular during the winter months.

Boating – Rowboats and canoes are permitted on all the park's freshwater lakes. Motor boats are permitted on salt water but may not be used on freshwater ponds, streams or lakes in the park. Launching facilities are available on Newman Sound. All boats must carry proper safety equipment and conform with federal navigation regulations.

Fishing – Fishing for brook trout is excellent in most park ponds, streams and lakes. In some of the deeper ponds



the patient angler can take Arctic char and ouananiche (landlocked salmon). Saltwater fish include the cod, sculpin and capelin.

Southwest Brook and Big Brook are restricted to fly fishing only.

Hiking – This is one of the best ways to explore a national park. There are several trails in Terra Nova and a few primitive trails provide access to remote areas of the park, while others are readily accessible for day walking. There is a riding trail in the northern section of the park.

Snowmobiles – These must stay on trails designated for their use, and permits must be obtained from the park

warden or the administration office. All other motorized land vehicles are restricted to public roads.

Other facilities

A supervised swimming beach is situated at Sandy Pond. Grocery stores, restaurants, garages and other visitor services are available in nearby communities and there is a small restaurant and grocery store inside the park.

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 wildlife, including birds and animals, and all plants, 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.

Where to stay

Camping brings you into the closest contact with the park's natural environment. Camping facilities are provided at two campgrounds, the larger of which is situated at Newman Sound in the park headquarters area. The other campground is unserviced and accessible only by boat or on foot.

Daily camping fees vary and depend on whether the site is unserviced or has electricity. Camping space is allocated on a first-come, first-served basis; reservations cannot be accepted. Campgrounds open about May 15 and close about October 31, depending on weather conditions. The maximum allowable stay in a campground is two weeks.

Visitors on overnight trail trips may camp outside the established campgrounds provided they register with a park warden before and after each trip and obtain a campfire permit.

Additional accommodation is offered in nearby communities; details can be obtained from the park information centre.

Fires

Campfires may be set only in fireplaces provided for this purpose, or in outdoor portable stoves. Barbecues may be used only in campgrounds or 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. Fire restrictions may be imposed during high fire hazard conditions.

Anyone finding an unattended fire should try to extinguish it, or if it is 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 Terra Nova's complex natural environment, you are urged to take advantage of the free interpretive program, conducted by the park naturalist and his trained staff. It will provide you with an insight into how climate, land forms, plants and animals are interrelated, and it will make your stay more rewarding.

During the day there are conducted field trips; in the evening informative talks illustrated with slides or films are given in the outdoor theatre near the Newman Sound picnic area.

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

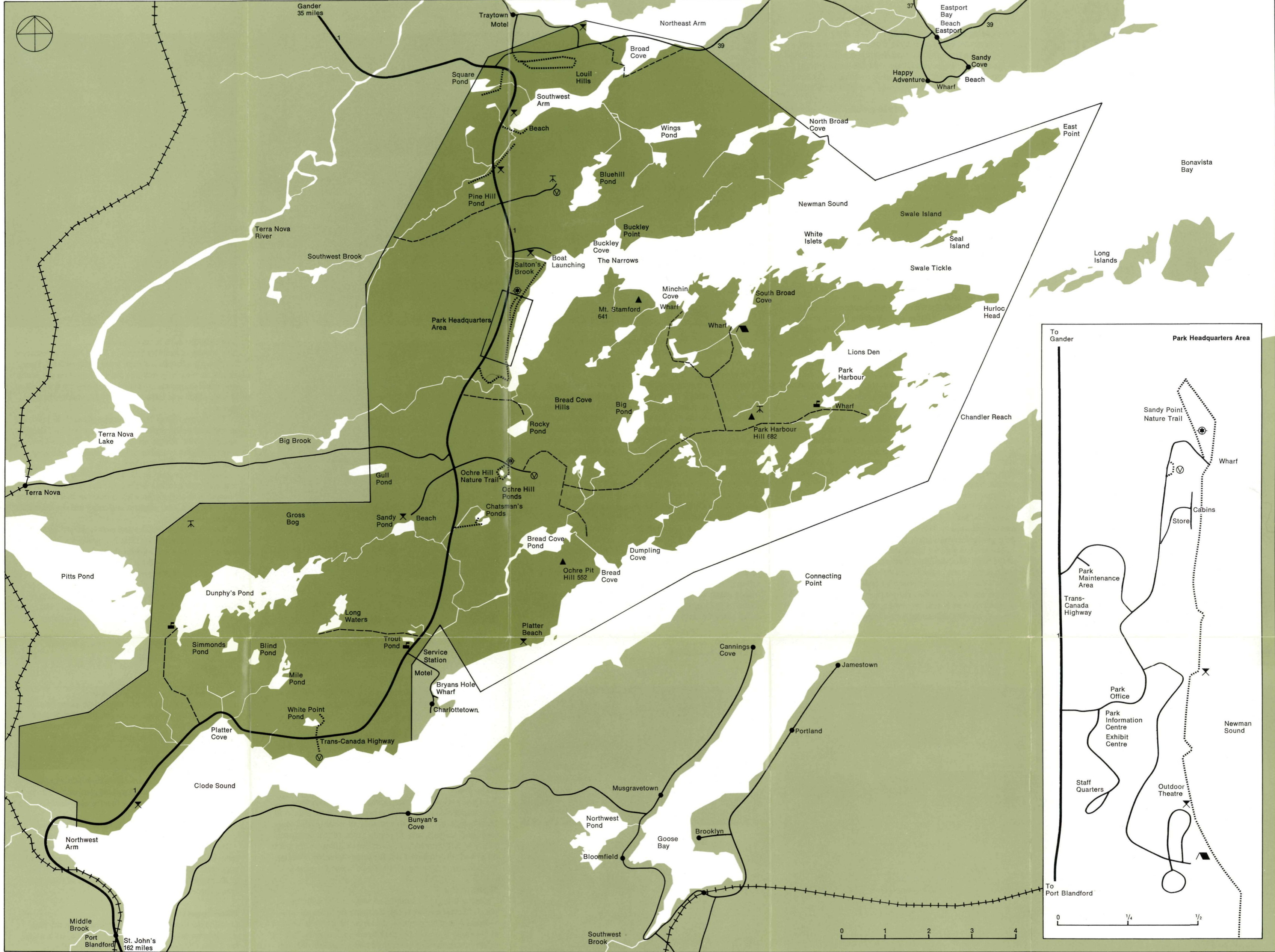
Information on the interpretive program is available from bulletin boards, the park information centre and park staff. Special groups, including school, scout and guide organizations, may take advantage of these programs throughout the year.

Where to get information

Detailed information may be obtained from the park information centre located in the headquarters area on the Trans-Canada Highway. Uniformed staff will answer questions, provide maps, outline travel routes and refer visitors to the 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 about the park is available from the Superintendent, Terra Nova National Park, Glovertown, Newfoundland. For information about other national parks, write to the Director, National and Historic Parks Branch, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 400 Laurier Ave. West, Ottawa 4, Ontario.



Terra Nova National Park

- Trans-Canada Highway
- Secondary Road
- ⋯ Walking or Hiking Trail
- - - Fire Road, Trail
- + + + Railroad
- Lake, River, Creek
- ▲ Mountain
- Warden's Cabin
- ⊗ Picnic Area
- ▲ Campground
- ⊙ Nature Trail
- ⊙ Viewpoint
- ⊗ Fire Lookout

