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Multi-Day Hiking Route

# Ramah Bay to Saglek Bay

TORNGAT MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK



S. Stone, Parks Canada



Parks  
Canada

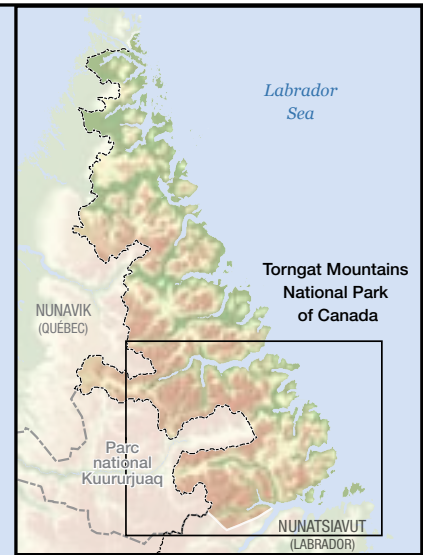
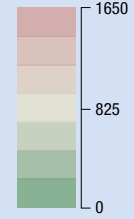
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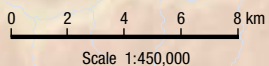
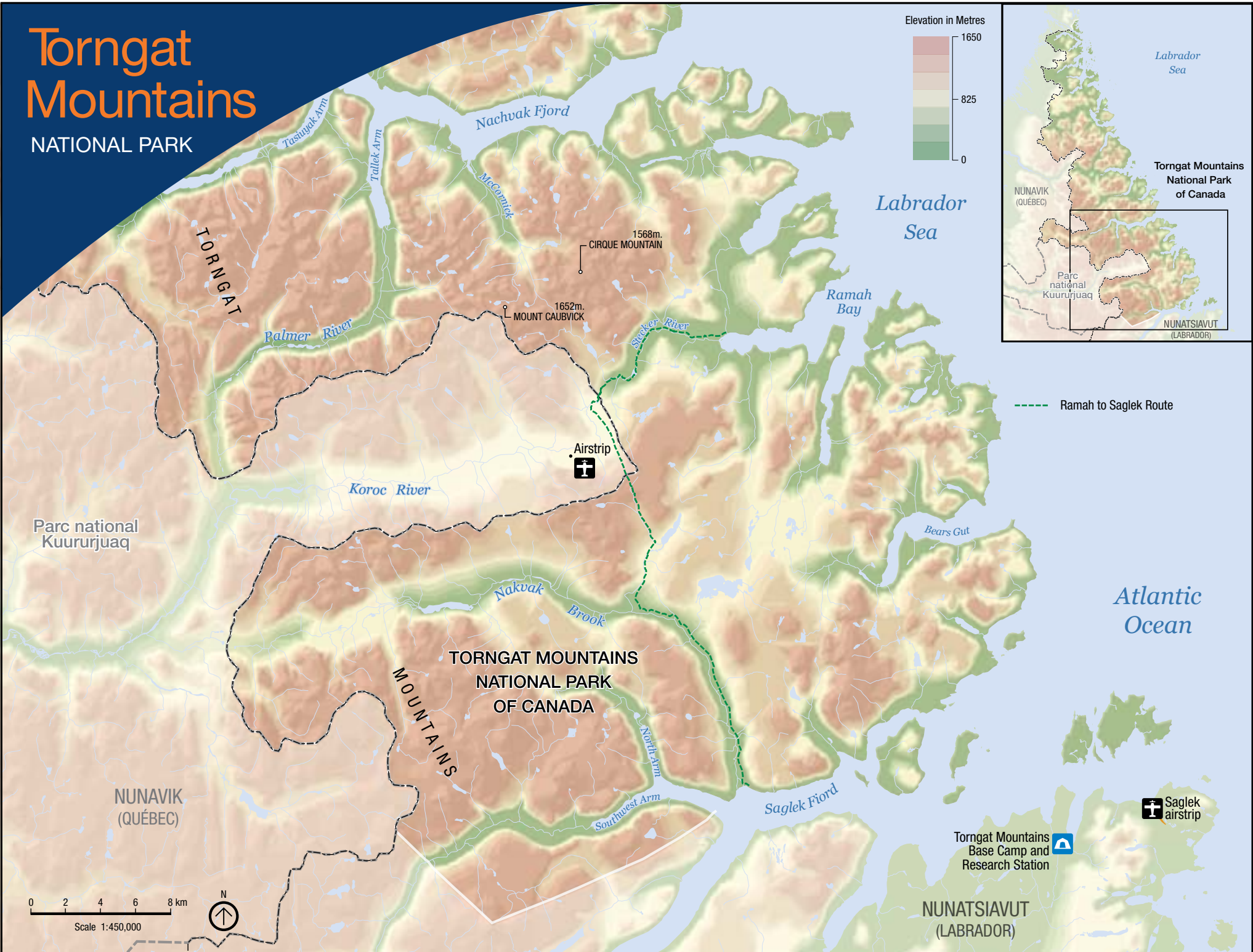
# Torngat Mountains

NATIONAL PARK

Elevation in Metres



--- Ramah to Saglek Route



# WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW TO HIKE FROM RAMAH BAY TO SAGLEK BAY?

## VISITOR REGISTRATION

Hiking parties who are interested in this hiking route will need to register (before their visit) with Torngat Mountains National Park (Parks Canada) as well as Parc national Kuururjuaq (Nunavik Parks) since the route passes through both parks. Visitors are also required to de-register after they have departed from either park to ensure that staff know they have left the parks and have been accounted for.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

**Torngat Mountains  
National Park of Canada**  
Phone: 1-888-922-1290  
Email: [torngats.info@pc.gc.ca](mailto:torngats.info@pc.gc.ca)

**Parc national Kuururjuaq**  
Phone: 1-819-337-5454  
Email: [info@nunavikparks.ca](mailto:info@nunavikparks.ca)

**Parks Canada  
24 Hour Emergency Dispatch**  
Phone: 1-780-852-3100

## TORNGAT MOUNTAINS BASE CAMP AND RESEARCH STATION

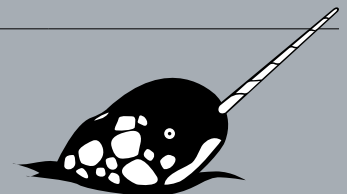
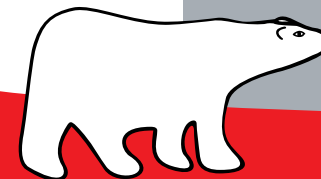
This camp is situated in St. John's Harbour in Saglek Bay. It presently operates from mid-July until early September. The base camp can provide support for visitor parties wanting to travel into Torngat Mountains National Park. Bear Guards, Inuit Guides, a helicopter, speed boats and longliners (fishing boats) are generally available for local charter. Arrangements can also be made for fixed wing access to the Saglek Airstrip (20V 519721 E 6482002 N) from Goose Bay, NL. Please contact the Nunatsiavut Group of Companies by phone (1-855-TORNGAT ext. 26) or email ([basecamp@ngc-ng.ca](mailto:basecamp@ngc-ng.ca)) for inquiries about base camp.

*Caribou on ridge north of Nakvak Brook*

## Route Overview

### Ramah Bay to Saglek Bay

<b>Type of hike</b>	Moderate to hard
<b>Distance</b>	67 km / 42 miles
<b>Time required</b>	Allow 5 to 6 days
<b>Elevation gain</b>	754 metres / 2450 feet
<b>Point of departure</b>	North shore of Ramah Bay (20V 480755 E 6525759 N) (NAD83)
<b>Alternate point of departure</b>	Gravel airstrip in the Koroc River Valley, QC (20V 466085 E 6514837 N) or do the hike in reverse and start from Saglek Bay.
<b>Route access</b>	1. By boat from base camp (2-3 hours by speed boat, 6 hours by longliner) 2. By helicopter from base camp (25 minutes one-way)
<b>Pick up</b>	1. By boat from base camp (1 hour by speed boat, 3 hours by longliner) 2. By helicopter (15 minutes one-way)





Cotton grass at Ramah Bay



Campsite #4 near Nakvak Brook

## ROUTE OVERVIEW

This challenging hike takes you through some of the most beautiful and varied terrain in the southern half of Torngat Mountains National Park. It starts in the rolling green tundra meadows of the Stecker River in Ramah Bay and winds its way up to the headwaters of the Stecker and then into the interior tributary valleys of the Koroc River in Parc national Kuururjuaq in Nunavik. The route then descends through tributaries of Nakvak Brook that drain the high mountain cirque valleys and finally into the lower portion of Nakvak Brook in Nunatsiavut. Numerous variations of this hike are possible, including many spectacular day hikes and climbs along the way.

This route description will focus on the main route shown in the accompanying map, and is based upon the trip log of Parks Canada staff and Inuit guides. If you choose to follow alternate routes, check with park staff for any updated information that might help. Some routes that look navigable on maps and Google Earth® may not actually be safe to follow.

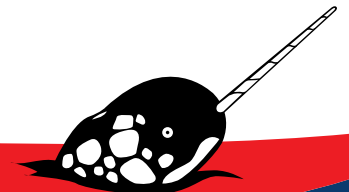
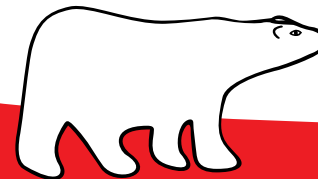
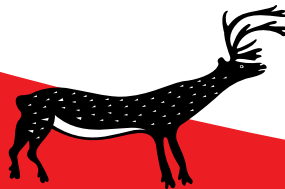
The three main valleys in this hike (Stecker Valley, Koroc River and Nakvak Brook) are traditional travel routes used by Inuit for generations and they connected families and communities in Nunavik and Nunatsiavut. Ramah Bay was the site of a Moravian Mission from 1871 to 1907. During this time, Inuit would

visit the mission to trade and attend ceremonies while some settled around the mission buildings. As you travel the valleys on this hike, keep your eyes open for evidence that people have been here before you. Tents rings, fox traps and food caches are scattered throughout the area, and wildlife trails, discarded antlers, wolf, caribou, fox and black bear tracks abound.

As with any hike in mountainous terrain, the weather can be challenging. This is very true for the Ramah Bay to Saglek Bay hike that follows deep, narrow valleys that funnel winds, increasing their strength to over 100km/hour. Be careful when pitching tents or hiking over exposed ridges. Tents have been destroyed,

and hikers dislodged, by the legendary winds of the Torngat Mountains.

All visitors are strongly encouraged to consult the [General Hiking Information for Torngat Mountains National Park](#) document before planning a hike in the Torngat Mountains.





Hikers approaching gravel terrace along Stecker River



Caribou antlers

## SECTION 1 STECKER RIVER VALLEY TO THE QUEBEC BORDER (PARC NATIONAL KUURURJUAQ)

20V 480755 E 6525759 N to  
20V 469035 E 6519853 N  
*Approximately 21 kilometres*

### ROUTE DESCRIPTION

This section of the hike takes about two days. If you are arriving by boat you can be dropped off on either side of Ramah Bay to start your hike. But due to the extensive tidal flats in the bay, you will have to be dropped off 1 or 2 km from the bottom of the bay – depending upon the tide. You can begin the hike on either side of the Stecker River valley until the 4-5 km point (20V 475922 E 6525911 N) where a large bluff blocks your way on the south side. If you started your hike late in the day this would be a good place to set up camp for the night. You should travel at least 4 to 6 km inland from tide water to reduce the likelihood of polar bear encounters.

Black bears, however, will be present throughout your hike. Therefore you must remain vigilant and manage your food and waste appropriately (refer to the “Managing Waste” section of the *General Hiking Information for Torngat Mountains National Park*).

The first 5-6 km of the hike is a mix of grassy meadows, sandy river beds and low gravel terraces. It is easy and rewarding hiking. This valley is rich with wildlife and it is common to see fresh wolf and black bear tracks in the river sands. Caribou trails are everywhere, though in recent years they are not as worn due to the decline in the Torngat Mountains Caribou Herd. Eventually the valley narrows

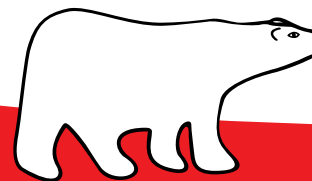
and you come to a small river entering the Stecker from the north. If you are on the south bank of the Stecker River, it is advisable to cross to the north bank for the next 3 to 4 km. This is an easy river to ford, though the water can be quite cold. Beyond the river you begin to travel over old boulder-strewn river beds and colluvium (i.e. slopes) and then onto long flat gravel terraces on the north side of the river. You will find numerous mounds of boulders that were built by Inuit in the past; these are likely food caches or fox traps (see right inset picture).

At the 11 km mark (approx 20V 472713 E 6523860 N) it is advisable to cross over to the south bank of the

river. Choose a place where the river is widest. When the water is low it is possible to cross without taking your



boots off. Now follow the river bank to a beautiful waterfall. If you are hiking late in August you should see Arctic

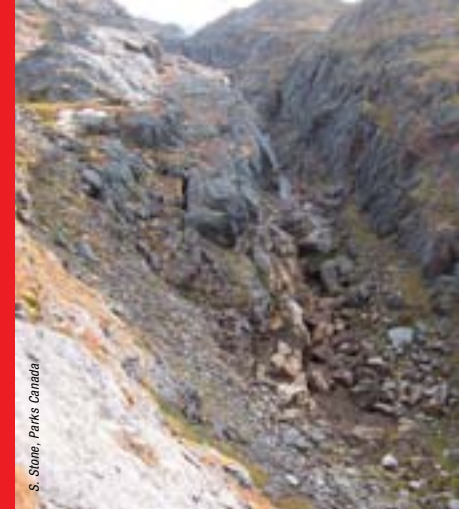




Large boulders around the south side of the lake



Alpine pond at QC/NL boundary; an ideal campsite



Gully leading to QC/NL boundary

char in their bright orange spawning colours trying to get over the waterfall.

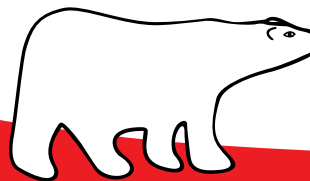


After stopping for a rest, continue on to the lake and traverse around on the left (south) side. This is the best route around the lake, but it is not easy. You will have to carefully work your way around, between and sometimes over very large boulders (see top left picture). Take your time and help each other with your packs.

After the lake you will start climbing through willow and birch thickets and over rocky ridges until you get to the provincial border. It is best to follow the left bank of the river, though you may find the need to cross back and forth once. Be sure to follow the main trunk of the river shown on the map. From the lake it is about 4km to the provincial border and the final hurdle; the last 0.5 km climbs about 400 feet (125m) through a rapidly narrowing gully with steep sides (see top right

picture). You will have to traverse up the left side of a steep rocky slope then cross over to the right side of the gully and then climb a well worn caribou path up a sandy slope to the crest of the ridge and the provincial boundary. Below you will find a small grassy meadow and an alpine pond. The path down is through old sand deposits probably created after a glacial dam located further down the Koroc Valley burst, draining a pro-glacial lake and leaving the lake sediment deposits

high and dry. Over time, the wind has redistributed the finer sands forming these deposits, which may be old sand dunes. This is a good place to camp.





Upper Koroc River Valley



Hikers climbing towards the saddle between the Koroc River Valley and Nakvak Brook

## SECTION 2

### QUEBEC BORDER TO LABRADOR BORDER (THROUGH PARC NATIONAL KUURUJUAQ)

20V 469026 E 6519861 N to  
20V 471633 E 6512734 N  
*Approximately 10.5 kilometres*

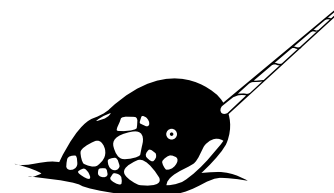
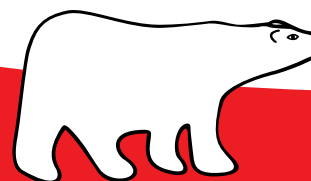
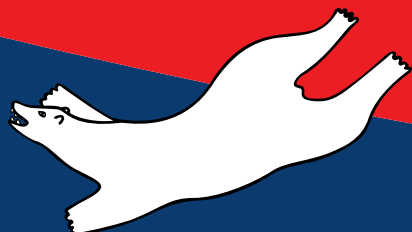
#### ROUTE DESCRIPTION

This section of the hike is entirely in Parc national Kuururjuaq and takes about 1 day or less depending on your energy level and weather conditions. The day involves a gentle hike along the upper reaches of the Koroc River valley as it flows south and then a serious climb of 1450 feet (450m) up a prominent side valley to a col (i.e. mountain pass) at an altitude of approximately 2450 feet (754m).

Once you leave the alpine pond campsite, head west for 0.5 km to 1 km and then turn south. You can choose to drop down into the valley bottom and hike along the Koroc River, or stay higher up on the east slope and traverse south along the 1100-foot (340m) contour. Either route affords easy hiking however, you will add approximately 300 feet (100m) to

your climb to the col at the end of the day if you choose the valley bottom route. The entrance to the valley is at 20V 470409 E 6515425 N. The climb is moderately steep and sustained for nearly 3 km. At the col (20V 471615 E 6512767 N) there are sheltered clefts in the rock where you can rest. Choose a spot that protects you from the wind. The winds that funnel

through the mountain passes can be strong and unpredictable. People have been knocked off their feet by freak gusts that come out of nowhere. Once you are sufficiently rested, work your way down into the valley to find a campsite. It is not recommended to camp at the col, unless you have no other choice.





Hikers travelling across alpine barren terrain



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Campsite above waterfall

# SECTION 3

## LABRADOR BORDER TO NAKVAK BROOK

20V 471615 E 6512767 N to  
20V 472863 E 6500665 N  
*Approximately 14.5 kilometres*

### ROUTE DESCRIPTION

This section covers the descent from the col to Nakvak Brook and should take about a day. It is fairly easy hiking except for at least one challenging river crossing. The first 7 km covers rugged rocky alpine barrens. Vegetation is sparse and confined to grasses and mosses in the stream courses. The terrain can be quite rugged and requires care as you descend. The route can follow either side of the stream draining the col and surrounding upland valleys, however, if you follow the left (north east) bank you will have to cross the stream before it enters a large lake at

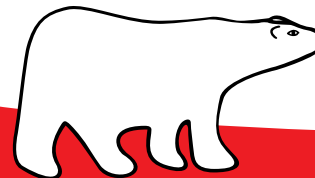
the bottom of the valley (suggested crossing 20 V 474239 E 6506709 N). At this crossing point, the route turns southwest and follows the larger stream that drains the lake. You will have to cross this stream within the next 2 km. This is a challenging stream crossing, particularly if the water level is high (see inset picture). The stream is wide and full of large boulders so pick your location carefully. A suggested location is at 20 V 473397 E 6505304 N. Continue down the left side of the stream until you reach the ridge that overlooks Nakvak Brook (20 V 472484 E 6501362 N).



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Difficult and cold stream crossing

Prior to reaching this ridge you will pass a spectacular waterfall (20 V 473250 E 6503310 N) that affords a great location for a rest or to set up camp for the night.







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Falls on Nakvak Brook

Hikers arriving at the mouth of Nakvak Brook on Saglek Bay

## SECTION 4 NAKVAK BROOK VALLEY TO MOUTH OF NAKVAK BROOK (PITUKKIK) ON SAGLEK BAY

20V 472863 E 6500665 N to  
20V 482760 E 6484277 N  
*Approximately 21 kilometres*

### ROUTE DESCRIPTION

This section is identical to Section 1 of the Nakvak Brook Trek, except that it is done in the opposite direction. It takes about 2 days to complete. Nakvak Brook is a traditional travel route that has been used for thousands of years. It is still used today by Inuit travelling between communities in Nunavik and Nunatsiavut.

The section begins with a fairly gentle descent of about 500 feet (150m) from the ridge to a lateral moraine along the north side of Nakvak Brook valley. Once you gain the ridgeline, you can turn left (east) and follow the ridge for about 1 km and then you must

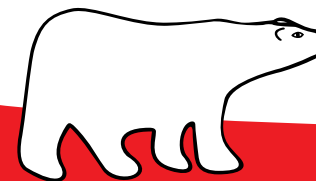
drop down to the river bank. Over the next 2 km, the route will alternate between open grassy meadows, alder and willow thickets and two rocky bluffs that you must scramble over. Be careful of your footing on these bluffs as the old caribou trails are growing over and the gravel and rocks can be loose. Once you have passed these bluffs at 20 V 476193 E 6499483 N, the valley opens up and you can begin to see your route to Saglek Bay. Over the next day and a half, you will travel over a mix of gentle rocky slopes, extensive gravel flats and the occasional (and sometimes frustrating) stretches of alder, willow and birch thickets. Take your time in the thickets and remember that the caribou trails are old and infrequently used, so they can easily disappear on you. At 20 V 476481 E 6498853 N

there is another beautiful waterfall which is an ideal spot for lunch or a campsite. If you are lucky you may see Arctic char in the deep pools below the falls.

Approximately 13 km downstream from the falls is an old rock slide that you must climb over. On the summit of the slide you can now see Saglek Bay and the braided mouth of Nakvak Brook widening before you, which is a breathtaking view. Across the river, to the west, you should be able to spot a prominent Inukshuk sitting on a gravel mound. This marker was erected by the Torngat Mountains Cooperative Management Board in 2009 to celebrate the historic connection between Inuit from Nunatsiavut and Nunavik. It also symbolizes the importance of

connecting Inuit youth with elders and the passing on of traditional knowledge and skills. This location has special significance for Inuit – take some time to reflect on its significance and to appreciate this vibrant Inuit homeland.

Now descend the rock slide and work your way through a series of gravel slopes and deep stream gullies. These last 2 hours will get you to the beach. If your pick up is due to arrive that day, proceed to the beach on the east side of the bay and walk for approximately 1 km along the beach to get to deeper water where boats can pick you up safely. If your pick up is the following day or if it gets delayed, you should camp at least 2 to 3 km inland from Saglek Bay. It is not advisable to camp on the beach as polar bears are frequently sighted here.





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## Important UTM Coordinates

### Landing sites for Twin Otter in the area:

Koroc River Airstrip	20V 466085 E 6514837 N
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### Suggested campsites:

*The following are suggested campsites based on expected travel distances for each day, starting at Ramah Bay*

KM 6 – Along Stecker River before first Brook enters from the North	20V 475922 E 6525911 N
KM 18 – Pond at NL/QC Border	20sV 469026 E 6519861 N
KM 29 – Alpine valley below high point of the hike	20V 472383 E 6511063 N
KM 38 – Waterfall in tributary stream of Nakvak Brook	20V 473250 E 6503310 N
KM 50 – Nakvak Brook	20V 478956 E 6496278 N
KM 64 – Near mouth of Nakvak Brook	20V 482116 E 6485245 N

### Points of interest:

Food caches and fox traps	20V 475176 E 6526231 N
River crossing for Stecker River	20V 472713 E 6523860 N
Waterfall on Stecker River	20V 472510 E 6523159 N
Entrance to valley leading to 2450 ft col	20V 470409 E 6515425 N
High point of hike – 2450 ft col on NL/QC boundary	20V 471615 E 6512767 N
River crossing (upper site)	20V 474239 E 6506709 N
River crossing (lower site, subject to water levels)	20V 473397 E 6505304 N
Waterfall in tributary stream of Nakvak Brook	20V 473250 E 6503310 N
Ridge top overlooking decent route into Nakvak Brook	20V 472484 E 6501362 N

### Links:

Torngat Mountains National Park website:  
<http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/pn-np/nl/torngats/index.aspx>

Torngat Mountains Base Camp and Research Station:  
<http://www.torngatbasecamp.com/home/>

