

Ellesmere Island National Park

Just 800 kilometers from the North Pole, Ellesmere Island is one of Canada's most remote national parks. It is located in the Queen Elizabeth Islands, 600 kilometers north of Grise Fjord, one of North America's most northerly permanent communities. The park landscape is composed of hundreds of glaciers that reach into numerous valleys and fjords. The highest peak in eastern North America, Mount Barbeau (2,600 meters), towers over the park. Because of the low precipitation, most of the area is a polar desert. Lake Hazen, the largest lake north of the Arctic Circle, lies at the base of the Grant Land Mountains. Here there are areas of thermal oases, which attract wildlife and support vegetation. The park is also home to musk ox, peary caribou, arctic wolves, arctic fox and polar bear. On the northern coast, ice shelves reach far into the Arctic Ocean, while on the southern coast, 900-meter high cliffs rise over glacial valleys and deeply cut fjords. Artifacts from ancient cultures and cairns left by European explorers provide evidence of the island's important history. Access to the park is via charter air service out of Resolute.