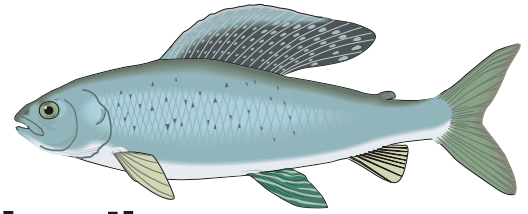


Nahanni National Park Reserve Pronounced “Naa-haa-nee”



Climate

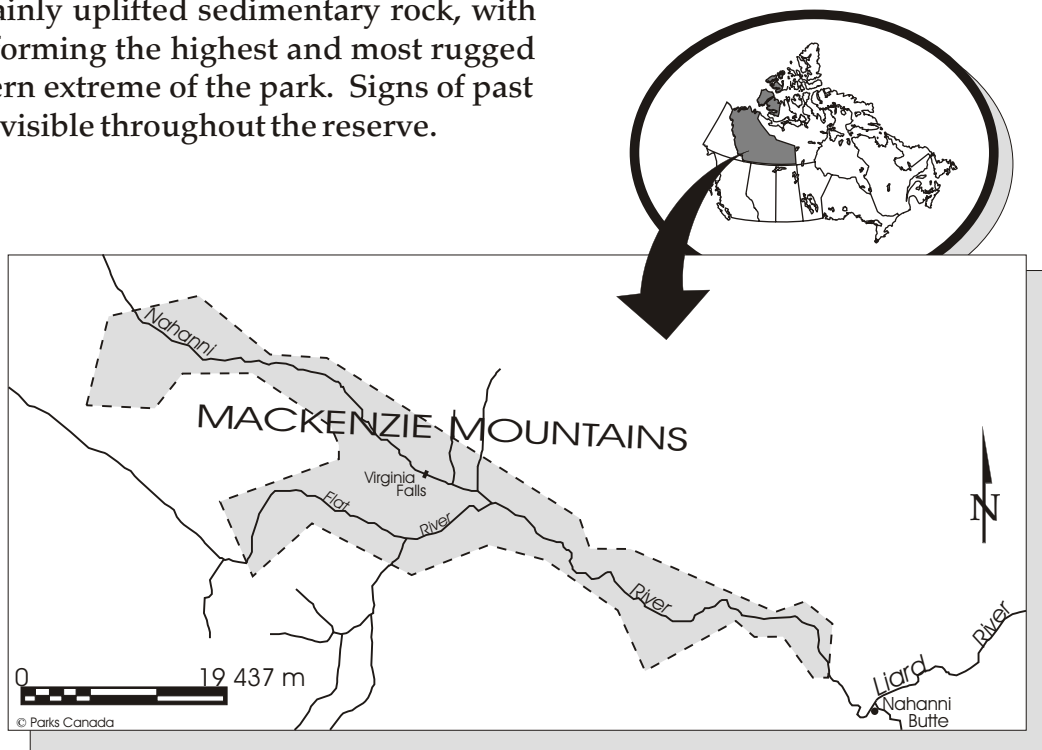
Nahanni has a cold continental climate. Summers see maximum precipitation, some of which comes from large-scale storms that rain 100-150 mm over several days. Winters get minimal precipitation, about 15 mm, from the cold, dry air. Temperatures are similarly extreme with nearby stations recording range extremes at 27°C and -50°C. In the summer and fall, the weather patterns are dominated by westerly air currents from the Pacific, and are replaced by arctic airstreams during the winter and spring.

Geology

The South Nahanni River passes through four canyons, rugged mountains, and cave systems. There are also significant tufa (calcium carbonate) deposits. The mountains are mainly uplifted sedimentary rock, with igneous bedrock forming the highest and most rugged peaks at the western extreme of the park. Signs of past glacial activity are visible throughout the reserve.

Location

Nahanni National Park Reserve is located in the southwest corner of the Northwest Territories, centered along the south Nahanni and Flat Rivers that run through the Mackenzie Mountains, west of Great Slave Lake. Established in 1976, the park reserve represents the Mackenzie Mountains Natural Region. The total park area is about 4 766 km², and includes 320 km of the river that is the park's namesake. The river itself is part of the Canadian Heritage Rivers System, and the entire park has the distinction of being the first area to be declared a World Heritage Site of global significance under the UNESCO (United Nations) World Heritage Convention. Nahanni is located in the Taiga Cordillera and Taiga Plains Ecozones.



Vegetation

Alpine and boreal plant species combine to form a rich mosaic of vegetation. Open forests of spruce, valleys of poplar and white birch, lodgepole and jack pine in the east, and black spruce, are replaced by shrubs and other alpine vegetation at the higher elevations of some steep-sloped sections of canyon. At Wildmint Hotsprings there are wild mint, goldenrods, yellow monkeyflower, and asters. Almost 600 species of plant life have been recorded in the park.

Wildlife

Nahanni's wildlife benefits greatly from the habitat diversity in the park. The most successful species are those that adapt to the highly seasonal environment. About 40 different mammals are found in the park, including grizzly and black bears, wolves, woodland caribou, mountain goats, Dall's sheep, moose, shrews, voles, bats, squirrels, marmots, mink, marten, red fox, wolverine, lynx, muskrat, and beaver. There are about 170 species of birds, of which 58 breed in the park. Bird species include Golden Eagles, Trumpeter Swans, Red-necked Grebes, and three species of loons. The waters of Nahanni contain over 10 species of fish, such as arctic greyling and Dolly Varden trout.

Activities

The Nahanni River has acquired a reputation for exhilarating wild river touring for expert canoeists, skilled at negotiating whirlpools and rapids. There are only three formalized camping areas, but random camping is permitted. Nahanni Butte also has camping facilities. There is a day-use area by Virginia Falls with a float-plane dock, helicopter pad, privies, trails and boardwalks. The thundering tumble of water over a 100 m ledge offers a spectacular site to see, hear, and feel. Twice the height of Niagara Falls, they can be heard from kilometers distant, and one can feel the earth tremble when they are viewed up close. All wilderness canoe trips require a reservation and must be registered with the park office. Public access is restricted to aircraft or non-motorized boats. There are no roads within the park boundary, the closest road coming only to within 64 km of the eastern park boundary. Float planes can be chartered at Fort Simpson, Fort Liard, Watson Lake, and Fort Nelson.

For more information, contact:
The Superintendent
Nahanni National Park Reserve
P.O. Box 348,
Fort Simpson, Northwest Territories X0E 0N0
Telephone: (867) 695-3151
Fax: (867) 695-2446
Website: www.pc.gc.ca/nahanni

