

National parks. Canada's National Parks system, encompassing more than 50,000 sq miles (129 499 km²), is the largest and most rapidly expanding in the world. It has grown from the federal government's efforts, with cooperation of provincial and territorial governments, to preserve natural areas of outstanding scenic and biological interest for the benefit of the public.

The national park concept, which began with Yellowstone National Park in the United States in 1872, was soon applied in Canada. In 1885 the Canadian government reserved from private ownership the mineral hot springs of Sulphur Mountain in what is now Banff National Park. Two years later this 10-sq mile (26 km²) reserve was extended to 260 sq miles (673 km²) and named Rocky Mountain Park, the first federal park in Canada. Two land reserves in southern British Columbia — Yoho and Glacier — were made by the federal government in 1886, a reserve of 54 sq miles (140 km²) in the Waterton Lakes area of southern Alberta in 1895, and an area of 5,000 sq miles (12 950 km²) around Jasper, Alta. in 1907. These four reserves in the western mountain ranges, together with Rocky Mountain Park, formed the nucleus of the national park system after the Dominion Forest Reserves and Parks Act was passed in May 1911. A National Parks Branch was created that year to protect, administer and develop the parks.

By 1930, nine more national parks had been established. Three in Ontario consisted of federally owned Crown land or land held in trust for Indians: St. Lawrence Islands National Park, Point Pelee National Park and Georgian Bay Islands National Park. Prince Albert National Park in Saskatchewan and Riding Mountain National Park in Manitoba were former federal forest reserves. Elk Island National Park near Edmonton was established as a preserve for buffalo and Wood Buffalo National Park, a 17,300-sq mile (44 807 km²) area straddling the Alberta-Northwest Territories border, as a refuge for the largest surviving herd of buffalo in North America. In British Columbia two scenic areas were preserved — Mount Revelstoke National Park and Kootenay National Park.

Between 1930 and 1973 the following new parks were added: Northwest Territories: Nahanni and Auyuittuq (Baffin Island); Yukon Territory: Kluane; British Columbia: Pacific Rim; Ontario: Pukaskwa; Quebec: La Mauricie and Forillon; New Brunswick: Kouchibouguac and Fundy; Nova Scotia: Cape Breton Highlands and Kejimikujik; Prince Edward Island: Prince Edward Island National Park; Newfoundland: Terra Nova and Gros Morne.

For parks in the Yukon Territory and Northwest Territories, lands have been reserved from all alternative disposition by Orders in Council and proclamation. Within provinces, land is acquired by the province acting within a federal-provincial agreement to establish a national park. These lands are or will be transferred to Canada and the establishment of the park is formalized by Parliament.

In 1971, *The national parks system planning manual* was published, in recognition that new and comprehensive measures are needed to preserve Canada's natural heritage. With a view to protecting not only unique and outstanding areas of the Canadian land and sea-scapes but also those representative of its physical, biological, and oceanographic characteristics, 48 distinctive natural regions were identified for which natural history themes have been defined.

A detailed list of national parks was included in the 1972 and 1973 editions of the *Canada Year Book*, and a location map and details of these parks are available in *Canada's national parks* published by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

National marine parks. Canada is bounded by three oceans and has the largest volume of fresh water in the world. The national parks system will be extended to include representations of the Pacific, Arctic and Atlantic coasts and inland waters, with identification of the Marine Natural Regions and Marine Natural History Themes.