

## Timeless Beauty

Nunavik is Quebec's Arctic region. A vast and virgin territory lying north of the 55th parallel and bordered by Hudson Bay, Hudson Strait and Ungava Bay. Imagine 507,000 km<sup>2</sup> (195,700 sq. mi.) of truly wild Arctic tundra, taiga forest, scenic mountains, majestic rivers and countless lakes! This unspoiled region is home to a rich array of plants, fish and animals, each perfectly adapted to the unique Northern environment.

### Be prepared for a true fishing adventure!

Nunavik lakes, rivers and coastal waters team with Arctic char, Atlantic salmon, brook trout and lake trout, offering anglers an abundant renewable resource which has changed little since the beginning of time. While you fish, you may also have an opportunity to observe caribou, muskox, black bears, wolves, foxes, ptarmigan, geese, ducks and birds of prey.



## Inuit

Nunavik has sustained humans for more than 4,000 years. Today, it is inhabited by close to 11,000 Inuit who live in 14 modern villages along the coast. Only four communities, Kuujjuaq, Puvirnituq, Inukjuak and Salluit, number more than 1,000 inhabitants, and English is the second language of more than 90% of the region's residents.

The ancestors of today's friendly, industrious Inuit population migrated east from Alaska in the 12th century, carrying with them knowledge of the bow and arrow, the igloo, the kayak and the dogsled. In the course of their evolution, this nomadic hunting people developed an admirable system of values based on strong family ties, shared resources and respect for human life and nature, that continues to this day.

The Inuit still rely on traditional hunting and fishing skills for daily sustenance. Fish, in particular, is an important renewable resource. For centuries, traditional knowledge of ecology has been wisely employed to sustain its development. Today, the Inuit invite you to visit their fishing paradise. Accommodated in comfortable, modern fishing camps, you will be able to take advantage of their ancestral know-how.



## Arctic Char

Weight	Anadromous, 3.6 to 7 kg (8 to 15 lb.)
	Landlocked, 1 to 2.25 kg (2 to 5 lb.)
Record	15 kg (32 lb.)
Other names	Sea trout, <i>iqaluppik</i> (in Inuktitut)

Almost exclusively a Northern fish, Arctic char is not well known among anglers. Yet once hooked, the fight it puts up easily rivals that of the Atlantic salmon. Arctic char will swim out in long runs and can skilfully throw a barbless fly with characteristic, powerful shakes of its head. Arctic char is definitely the rarest kind of delicacy, the prize catch of only the most adventurous anglers.

This beauty however, like other fish in Nunavik's harsh climate, grows slowly. Fry, which are 25 mm (1 in.) long on hatching, double in length during their first year. Three to five years later they have reached 8-15 cm (4-6 in.) in length. At this stage, they join in summer migrations downstream to the sea where there is an abundance of small fish (including sand lance and capelin) as well as shrimp. They feed voraciously for a number of weeks before returning inland to winter. To protect against predators, Arctic char is endowed with the ability to adapt its colouring to the different environments it inhabits; generally it is a dark colour in lakes and lighter shades while at sea.

Anadromous Arctic char, like its cousin the salmon, may feed in the sea but always reproduces in freshwater. It reaches sexual maturity at age seven or eight when it measures up to 50 cm (20 in.). During its spawning period through late September and early October, Arctic char boasts a bright red underside. Most mature Arctic char will not spawn on re-entering freshwater in the late summer. Rather, a whole year will be spent in its home lake before it moves to a spawning area the following fall. A year-round freshwater form of this species known as landlocked Arctic char (*nutillik*, in Inuktitut) can be found in some lakes.

A real delicacy for the Inuit, Arctic char is fished throughout the year and traditionally with a spear known as a *kakivak*.



**Location:** Arctic char is found in 173 different river basins throughout Nunavik, rarely more than 75 km (46 mi.) inland from the sea.

## Atlantic Salmon

Weight	4.5 to 7 kg (10 to 15 lb.)
Record	Over 13.6 kg (30 lb.)
Other name	<i>Sama</i> (in Inuktitut)

In the North, Atlantic salmon matures in the hostile seas between Greenland and Labrador, endowing it with a powerful character and making it the ultimate strike for any expert fly fisherman. When it takes your line, the peacefulness of your surroundings will erupt like a furious explosion. Streaking into the air, over and over again, this robust fish will relentlessly try to throw your line. Beyond a doubt, Atlantic salmon is the hardest fighting fish in the region.

In any of the main four Ungava Bay river basins where Atlantic salmon parr mature, they spend four to seven years fighting for mostly small insect larvae. Once approximately 20 cm (8 in.) in length, warmer spring water, 9-10°C (45-50°F) and longer days trigger a seaward migration. Atlantic salmon smolt follow the river's current to the sea but do not enter coastal waters immediately. They spend some time adjusting in river estuaries before schools move off to the Davis Strait and the Labrador Sea to live and winter for one or two years.

Finally, every year, mature survivors return to their home rivers near the middle of August to spawn. It is at these times that you will perceive innumerable ghost-like forms pooling at the bottom of rapids in their steady migration against an opposing current. If you swing your line into these waters, be prepared for them to explode. Other Atlantic salmon, known as grilse, spend another full year in their home rivers before reproducing.

Unlike their migrating cousins the Arctic char, Atlantic salmon may jump water obstacles as high as 3 m (10 ft.) to return to spawning grounds. With this strength, Atlantic salmon seem to dance at the end of a taut line before plunging with a mighty heave back into the water.

Interestingly, some members of this species never leave their home rivers for the sea. These are known as ouananiche, or landlocked salmon, and such populations have been documented in Nunavik.



**Location:** The main river basins for Atlantic salmon in Nunavik are the George, the Koksoak, the Leaf and the Whale rivers.

## Brook Trout or Sea-run Trout

Weight	1.5 to 2 kg (3 to 4 lb.)
Record	Brook trout 5 kg (11 lb.) Sea-run trout 4.5 kg (10 lb.)
Other names	Brook char, speckled trout, sea trout, brookie, square-tailed trout, <i>aanak</i> (in Inuktitut)

Brook trout, widespread throughout Quebec, is much sought after by fly fishermen. In Nunavik, you will have an excellent chance of finding that trophy you so much want to be a part of your fishing excursion.

Brook trout shares many similarities with its cousin, the Arctic char. In particular, some populations, known as sea-run trout, will move to salt water estuaries in summer. As well, the brook trout adapts its colouring to its environment. At sea, it is generally light green on the back with silvery sides, while in freshwater, a darker colour is displayed. Both its sea and year-round freshwater forms are easily identifiable by their red spots circled with a trace of blue. This type of trout is traditionally harvested by Inuit, in spring through the ice and also in summer.

Brook trout spawn in streams between August and October when water temperature begins to drop and the amount of daylight once again shortens. It reproduces several times over the course of its life span, which is approximately seven to ten years long.

A carnivorous fish, brook trout eat anything they can find and swallow, including small insects and, as the brook trout grows, fish and even small mammals. Many aspects of the life cycle of brook trout in Nunavik remain undocumented.



**Location:** Brook trout is found almost everywhere in Nunavik except at higher altitudes in the Torngat Mountains and tundra areas.

## Lake Trout

Weight	3.6 to 4.5 kg (8 to 10 lb.)
Record	Over 21.5 kg (47 lb.)
Other names	Lake char, grey trout, <i>isiuralittaak</i> (in Inuktitut)

Since lake trout grows to a healthy size, it is a favourite among trophy anglers. That heavy tug that comes when this species strikes your lure is something all anglers dream about. Make your dreams come true in Nunavik, where, as throughout the rest of Canada, lake trout inhabits many lakes and streams, not to mention rivers.

Lake trout, which has few predators in the North, is always on the move during the summer, gobbling parr, whitefish and chubs, as well as insects. A highly adaptive species, the lake trout's food source is limited only by each particular river basin's ecology, so don't be surprised if one happens to strike the brook trout you are reeling in.

Once it has grown to approximately 40 cm (16 in.) long, lake trout spawns in the lakes and rivers it inhabits. Lake trout is an important country food for Inuit who harvest it near their communities. It is fished often during the early winter and by line (*aulasautimut*) through the ice in early spring.



**Location:** Widely distributed throughout the region, there are few places lake trout is not found.





