

About Taloyoak

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Taloyoak and Spence Bay

The hamlet of Taloyoak (pronounced Talouruaq), is a medium-sized community in Nunavut, and the most northern community of mainland Canada. It has a population just over 800 people. It was formerly known as Spence Bay and its name was changed to Taloyoak in 1992.¹ The Inuktitut name reflects what generations have called it. Although not completely clear, Taloyoak probably means “caribous blind,” which is a low stone wall built to corral caribou during the hunt. There is such a blind outside of the townsite.² Taloyoak was founded in 1948 when the Hudson’s Bay Company moved from Fort Ross and, soon after, the RCMP and missionaries followed.³ Later, the government encouraged the Inuit to settle in Taloyoak.

Netsilingmiut Inuit and the Kitikmeot Region

Taloyoak is in the Kitikmeot Region of Nunavut. The region consists of the south and east portions of Victoria Island, Boothia Peninsula, King William Island and the southern part of the Prince of Wales Island.⁴ It is home to 5 350 people and the communities of Cambridge Bay, Gjoa Haven, Kugaaruk, Kuluktuk and Taloyoak.⁵

Geography

Nunavut covers 2 093 190km² and 21% of that land is freshwater, the highest average for any province or territory in Canada (157 077km² is freshwater). Nunavut sits on the Precambrian Shield, more commonly known as the Canadian Shield.⁶ The rocks that form the Canadian Shield are the oldest and most stable rocks in Canada and the former mountains that have since eroded account for the rolling rocks that we see today.⁷ Taloyoak is firmly within the Tundra Region or biome.⁸ The tundra, which comprises 20% of Canada’s landmass is a treeless region characterized by its variety of hills, valleys, rivers lakes and sea coasts. The Arctic is classified as a semi-desert, despite vast quantities of shallow ponds and fens present during the summer months.⁹

Climate

¹ Natural Resources Canada; “Community Name Changes,” accessed August 31, 2010, http://geonames.nrcan.gc.ca/education/change_e.php#Taloyoak.

² Ibid.

³ Deborah Maguire; “A Brief Description of Netsilik School and Taloyoak,” accessed August 31, 2010, http://www.polarnet.ca/~netsilik/Capstone/Description_Nets_Taloyoak.html.

⁴ Explore Nunavut; “Kitikmeot Region,” accessed August 31, 2010, <http://www.explorenunavut.com/kitikmeot.php>.

⁵ Nunavut Bureau of Statistics; “Total population by Inuit identity for Nunavut, regions and communities, 1996, 2001 & 2006 Censuses,” accessed August 31, 2010, <http://www.gov.nu.ca/eia/stats/census.html>.

⁶ The Canadian Encyclopedia; “Shield,” accessed September 7, 2010, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1ARTA0007352>

⁷ The Canadian Encyclopedia; “Geological Regions,” accessed September 7, 2010, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1ARTA0003212>

⁸ The Canadian Encyclopedia, “North,” Accessed September 7, 2010, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1ARTA0005792>

⁹ Ibid.

Taloyoak is very dry and its annual precipitation (snow and rain) is 168mm.¹⁰ As a comparison, Edmonton's annual average is 455mm while Eastern cities like Toronto gets 834mm and Montreal gets an average of 978mm.¹¹ Taloyoak northernmost settlement on the mainland of Nunavut and its average temperature is -35°C in January and 8.4°C in July.¹² The short summer signals 20 hours of sunshine and the sea ice begins to break up in June.¹³ Summer time means warmer temperatures, but it also means many mosquitoes and flies!

Demographics of Nunavut

Nunavut was home to 29 325 people in 2006 and, although several languages are spoken, English is the most used.¹⁴ Of that population, 25 830 knew only English, 1 170 spoke both French and English, 20 knew only French, and 2 305 spoke neither French nor English.¹⁵

Nunavut has the highest rate of infant mortality in Canada. The national infant mortality average in Canada in 2007 was 5.1 per thousand. Nunavut had an infant mortality rate of 15.1 deaths per thousand in 2007. In comparison, Alberta had a similar average of 6 deaths per thousand infants.¹⁶ In 2005, Nunavut women had a rate of 120.3 pregnancies per 1 000 women. The national average was 54.6 pregnancies per 1 000 women.¹⁷

The Nunavut Territory is also becoming more urbanized. In 2001, 68% of Nunavut's population was rural while in 2006 it declined to 57%.¹⁸

The real gross domestic product (GDP) for Nunavut was \$1 181.7 million dollars in 2006.¹⁹ One million comes from fishing, hunting and trapping, \$28.2 million came from mining and oil and gas extraction in

¹⁰ The Weather Network; "Statistics: Taloyoak, NU, Canada," accessed August 31, 2010, <http://www.theweathernetwork.com/statistics/temperature/cl2403854>; "Statistics: Edmonton Municipal, AB, Canada

¹¹ The Weather Network; "Statistics: Taloyoak, NU, Canada," accessed August 31, 2010, <http://www.theweathernetwork.com/statistics/temperature/cl2403854>; "Statistics: Edmonton Municipal, AB, Canada, accessed August 31, 2010, <http://www.theweathernetwork.com/statistics/precipitation/cl3012209>; The Weather Network: "Statistics: Toronto, ON, Canada," accessed September 8, 2010, <http://www.theweathernetwork.com/statistics/CL6158350/caon0696>; The Weather Network; "Statistics: Montreal QC, Canada," accessed September 8, 2010, <http://www.theweathernetwork.com/statistics/CL7025250/caqc0363>

¹² The Weather Network; "Statistics: Taloyoak, NU, Canada," accessed August 31, 2010, <http://www.theweathernetwork.com/statistics/temperature/cl2403854>.

¹³ Kitikmeot School Operations; "Taloyoak, Nunavut," accessed August 31, 2010, <http://mailhub.edu.nu.ca/kitikmeot/orientation/Taloyoak.html>.

¹⁴ StatsCan; "Population by knowledge of official language, by province and territory (2006 Census)," accessed August 31, 2010, <http://www40.statcan.gc.ca/l01/cst01/demo15-eng.htm>.

¹⁵ StatsCan; "Population by knowledge of official language, by province and territory (2006 Census)," accessed August 31, 2010, <http://www40.statcan.gc.ca/l01/cst01/demo15-eng.htm>.

¹⁶ StatsCan; "Infant mortality rates, by province and territory," accessed August 31, 2010, <http://www40.statcan.gc.ca/l01/cst01/health21a-eng.htm>.

¹⁷ All numbers from this paragraph are referenced from: StatsCan; "Pregnancy outcomes by province or territory of residence," accessed August 21, 2010, <http://www40.statcan.gc.ca/l01/cst01/hlth64a-eng.htm>

¹⁸ StatsCan; "Population urban and rural, by province and territory," accessed August 31, 2010, <http://www40.statcan.gc.ca/l01/cst01/demo62n-eng.htm>

2006.²⁰ Education services accounted for 125.6 million and public administration another 315.2 million dollars.²¹ Nunavut has been experiencing real growth in the last few years with new construction and better housing seen throughout the province.²²

Demographics of Taloyoak

Taloyoak was the home of 810 people, according to the most recent census in 2006.²³ Of those 810 people, 740 identify themselves as Inuk.²⁴ In 2005, 495 people were aged 15 and older and, of those people, 85.9% earned an income.²⁵ The median income was \$15 744/year in an area where the cost of living is very high.²⁶ The median income for all of Nunavut is \$20 982.²⁷

Unemployment rates are also high: 41% of Inuit over the age of 15 are employed while the unemployment rate is 28.9% for the same group. Non-Inuit 15 years of age and older have an employment rate of 75%. In Nunavut as a whole, the employment rate for Inuit ages 15 and older is 56.2% and 90% for non-Inuit over the age of 15.²⁸

Higher education for people in Taloyoak requires an individual to leave the Territory to earn a degree or certificate. In 2006, 260 of the 295 people between the ages of 25 and 64 did not have a certificate, diploma or degree. Twenty people had high school certificates or its equivalent. Forty-five had an apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma.²⁹

¹⁹ Government of Nunavut; "Nunavut Gross Domestic Product by Industry in Current Prices, 2000 to 2006," accessed August 31, 2010, <http://www.gov.nu.ca/eia/stats/GDP/Ind/Nunavut%20GDP%20by%20Industry,%202000%20to%202006.pdf>

²⁰ Government of Nunavut; "Nunavut Gross Domestic Product by Industry in Current Prices, 2000 to 2006," accessed August 31, 2010, <http://www.gov.nu.ca/eia/stats/GDP/Ind/Nunavut%20GDP%20by%20Industry,%202000%20to%202006.pdf>

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ottawa Health Services Network Inc; "Nunavut Geography and Culture," accessed August 31, 2010, http://www.ohsni.com/index.php?url=/content_pages/v/~Nunavut_Geography__Culture

²³ Nunavut Bureau of Statistics; "Total population by Inuit identity for Nunavut, regions and communities, 1996, 2001, 2006 Censuses," accessed August 31, 2010, <http://www.gov.nu.ca/eia/stats/census.html>

²⁴ Inuk is the singular term for a person of Inuit descent. Much like one Canadian and many Canadians, one Inuk and many Inuit.

²⁵ Nunavut Bureau of Statistics, "Presence of Income and median total income for the population 15 years and over in Nunavut, regions and communities, 2005," accessed August 31, 2010, <http://www.gov.nu.ca/eia/stats/census.html>.

²⁶ Nunavut Bureau of Statistics, "Presence of Income and median total income for the population 15 years and over in Nunavut, regions and communities, 2005," accessed August 31, 2010, <http://www.gov.nu.ca/eia/stats/census.html>.

²⁷ Nunavut Bureau of Statistics, "Presence of Income and median total income for the population 15 years and over in Nunavut, regions and communities, 2005," accessed August 31, 2010, <http://www.gov.nu.ca/eia/stats/census.html>.

²⁸ All information from this paragraph is derived from: Nunavut Bureau of Statistics; "Employment rate and unemployment rate for the population aged 15 and over by Inuit identity, for Nunavut, regions and communities, 2001 Census," accessed August 31, 2010 <http://www.gov.nu.ca/eia/stats/census.html>.

²⁹ All information for this paragraph is derived from: Nunavut Bureau of Statistics; "Population 25 to 64 years by highest certificate, diploma or degree, for Nunavut, regions and communities, 2006 Census," accessed August 31, 2010, <http://www.gov.nu.ca/eia/stats/census.html>.