

## Press Release

(translation by Tony Fox Aarhus University 26 May 2026)

**The Government of Greenland is to establish a new National Park in West Greenland in close cooperation with Qeqertalik Municipality and Qeqqata Municipality**

*The Government of Greenland has adopted the Executive Order establishing the West Greenland National Park, which will enter into force on 1 June 2026. This is Greenland's first establishment of a national park in more than 50 years – and the first developed by Greenland itself. The national park covers an area of 22,249.80 km<sup>2</sup> outside built-up areas between Kangerlussuaq and Disko Bay in West Greenland and is located bordering and extending inland from the ice sheet.*

The purpose is to preserve the area's nature and landscapes for future generations and ensure that citizens can continue their traditional uses of the area, while allowing tourism to develop to the benefit of local communities.

*“With the establishment of the West Greenland National Park, we are taking an important step to protect the unique natural values of West Greenland for the benefit of both current and future generations. It is a national park created by Greenland itself, ensuring that citizens can continue to use the area as they have always done, while at the same time creating new opportunities for local development and sustainable tourism,”* says the Naalakkersuisoq for Environment, Nature, Energy and Research, Jørgen Rosbach.

The area extends from the glaciers of the ice sheet, over recently exposed land to more mature coastal landscapes along West Greenland's deep fjord systems. The varied landscape provides a rich biodiversity, which includes several rare and endangered species, as well as a number of species that have been the subject of local use for centuries. Citizens' access to travel, hunt, fish and pick berries in the area continues. Only in a few, limited sub-areas do time-limited restrictions apply for shorter periods to protect vulnerable species such as harbour seal, Greenland White-fronted Goose, moulting sea ducks and reindeer during the calving season.

*“Since the municipalities expressed their desire for a national park in 2020, researchers, local citizens, trappers and other stakeholders have contributed knowledge, insight and commitment, which has directly shaped the extent and content of the park. It has been crucial for us that local knowledge has not only been heard, but also has had a real influence on the final result, so that we ensure a national park that takes into account the traditional use of the area now and in the future,”* says the Mayor of Qeqertalik Municipality, Simigaq Heilmann.

Preparations for the establishment of the national park were initiated in 2020 by Qeqertalik Municipality, Qeqqata Municipality and the Wild Nature Foundation. The Government of Greenland has secured funding for the majority of the work on the national park with support from the EU's Green Growth Programme. The programme supports green initiatives in Greenland, including the protection of biodiversity and the development of sustainable industries.

With support from the EU, Greenland has been able to undertake an ambitious programme, where we both protect nature and create new, sustainable opportunities for local development – including within tourism. The national park is a Greenlandic initiative with clear local ownership, and the cooperation with the EU shows how international partnerships can support Greenland's own priorities and development goals. Since its launch, the project has gathered extensive knowledge, citizen meetings have been held in the municipalities in 2022, 2023 and 2025, and a public consultation has been held from December 2025 to March 2026. The consultation responses have led to adjustments to the executive order before it was submitted and adopted by the Government of Greenland.

*“For the Qeqqata Municipality, it has been crucial that the national park both contributes to protecting some of Greenland's most unique natural assets and at the same time takes into account the way the area has traditionally been used for hunting and fishing through generations. We see the national park as an opportunity to strengthen local tourism development in a way that is in line with local wishes and values, and that can create long-term value for local communities,”* says the Mayor of Qeqqata Municipality, Malik Berthelsen.

The Ministry and the two municipalities will now continue their close cooperation in the steering committee for the national park to ensure that future management is in line with the national park's purpose for the benefit of nature, as well as current and future generations.

One of the first initiatives will be to give the national park a Greenlandic name, and citizens will be invited to participate in a naming competition in the near future – more information will follow.

Contact: Ministry of Environment, Nature, Energy and Research, [pan@nanoq.gl](mailto:pan@nanoq.gl)

Useful links:

- Executive Order (Announcements of the Legislative Assembly): [https://nalunaarutit.gl/groenlandsk-lovgivning/2026/selvstyrets-bekendtgørelse-nr-16-af-21\\_05\\_2026?sc\\_lang=da](https://nalunaarutit.gl/groenlandsk-lovgivning/2026/selvstyrets-bekendtgørelse-nr-16-af-21_05_2026?sc_lang=da)
- Background report: [https://natur.gl/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Baggrundsrapport-forud-for-etablering-af-nationalpark-i-Vest-groenland\\_20250520.pdf](https://natur.gl/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/Baggrundsrapport-forud-for-etablering-af-nationalpark-i-Vest-groenland_20250520.pdf)
- Impact assessment: [https://naalakkersuisut.gl/-/media/horinger/2025/12/1712\\_nationalpark/dafinal-konsekvensanalyse-af-etablering-af-en-nationalpark-i-vestgrnland.pdf](https://naalakkersuisut.gl/-/media/horinger/2025/12/1712_nationalpark/dafinal-konsekvensanalyse-af-etablering-af-en-nationalpark-i-vestgrnland.pdf)

## **West Greenland National Park – in brief**

### **Facts about West Greenland National Park**

Area: 22,249.80 km<sup>2</sup>

Location: West Greenland, between Kangerlussuaq and Disko Bay

Effective from: June 1, 2026

Initiators: Qeqertalik Municipality, Qeqqata Municipality and Wild Nature Foundation

Funding: EU Green Growth

### **The National Park's three main objectives: Nature protection, local use and tourism in balance**

West Greenland National Park covers a large area between Kangerlussuaq and Disko Bay and was established to:

- Ensure continued protection of biodiversity, unique landscapes, wildlife, natural processes and cultural monuments
- Preserve and support local use of the area, including hunting, fishing, berry picking and other traditional activities
- Strengthen opportunities for sustainable tourism for the benefit of local citizens, tourism operators and the local economy

### **A large and coherent natural area**

The National Park covers approx. 22,250 km<sup>2</sup> with fjords, mountains, wetlands, plains and ice sheets. The area is rich in biodiversity and supports a number of rare and endangered species.

### **Continued access to traditional activities**

The national park continues to provide good opportunities for traditional use – such as fishing, hunting and gathering berries and plants – while protecting nature and developing tourism sustainably.

### **Free access – only a few, time-limited areas are exempt**

There is basically free access to travel in the national park. Only in smaller, delimited areas do special considerations for wildlife apply for shorter periods, as the vast majority of the park is open most of the year (see map):

- Area A: restrictions in the breeding area for harbour seals in summer – access prohibited from 1 May to 15 September.
- Area B: protection of resting geese in spring – motorized traffic, flying lower than 500 m above sea or ground level, and flying drones lower than 100 m above sea level or terrain prohibited from April 20 to May 20.
- Area C: protection for moulting sea ducks in late summer – reduced sailing speed within 200 m of the coast from July 15 to September 30.
- Area D: protection of calving reindeer in early summer – from May 20 to June 20, access is only possible via paths laid out by the municipality.

### **Sustainable and responsible experience of nature**

The national park offers the opportunity to experience a typical West Greenland landscape with rich Arctic biodiversity and cultural monuments that represent thousands of years of use of the area. Visitors are encouraged to travel responsibly in the area, including responsibility for their own safety and protection, and to show consideration for the current traditional use of the area, which is still taking place there.

### **Locally based management and shared responsibility**

The municipalities are part of the steering committee for the National Park and will continue to supervise the area as a natural part of their existing responsibilities. The steering committee will prepare a management plan that supports a balanced development of the National Park with respect for nature, users of the area and local tourism development.