



On Polar Tides

Nigel Foster

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In 1981, Nigel Foster flew to Canada's Baffin Island to begin a solo kayak trip south toward northern Labrador. After crossing the 40-mile wide Hudson Strait in howling winds and fighting a 10 knot tide race, Foster crash-landed on a small island in the dark. He had frostbitten fingers and was 300 miles from the closest village. With unimaginable good fortune, eight days later he ran across an oil tanker and hitched a ride south. He had survived—marking one of the most notable solo crossings in history—but the failure of the second portion of the trip he had originally planned haunted him.

In 2004, Foster returned to northern Labrador with his then girlfriend (now wife) Kristin Nelson. Launching from Kuujjuaq in Northern Quebec, the couple paddled the Ungava Bay coast—which has one of the largest tidal variances in the world—to the place Foster had boarded the oil tanker 23 years earlier. From this remote location, the couple completed the trip to Nain that Foster originally planned for 1981. They encountered more polar bears than people. The story of the two trips forms the backbone for *On Polar Tides*—Originally self-published as *Stepping Stones* in 2009—which offers an intimate and insightful view of Ungava and Labrador. The new, revised edition includes gripping recollections of the polar adventures and 54 color photographs.

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