

De la Rosa capsizes and aborts the crossing of Admiralty Inlet

Heads and tails in the Arctic: a 2 °C capsize, a hard paddle back and bear detectors down
Nunavut (Canada) · July 26, 2026 · Expedition Day 9

Spanish explorer Antonio de la Rosa faced the toughest day of his Northwest Passage crossing this Sunday, July 26: a capsize into 2 °C water in the middle of an attempt to cross the mouth of Admiralty Inlet toward Cape Crauford. With the board overturned and his drysuit partially flooded, he kept a cold head, recovered the craft and gave up the crossing to paddle back to shore, reaching it safely after three and a half hours of continuous paddling. His GPS logged 64.7 km paddled on the day.

A day that began with ambition

The day started with an ambitious plan: reaching Cape Crauford by crossing the mouth of Admiralty Inlet in a single push of about 65 nm (approx. 120 km), with the option of pitching the tent on the board itself in mid-bay if fatigue demanded it. The first 16 nm (approx. 30 km) passed calmly. Then a light west breeze set in —the one the forecast expected to build— and, at the point before the crossing, with sun ahead and wind at his back, De la Rosa decided to go for it despite some doubts. Some 6 nm (approx. 10 km) offshore, the wind veered to the north, raised a side swell, and the tide was still ebbing against him. He chose to stop, wait for better timing and make a hot meal: a freeze-dried ration, a tea and some chocolate.

The capsize

As he stowed the stove, a bad shift of weight met a side wave and the board flipped. De la Rosa fell into the water with his drysuit lowered to his knees —he had it open because of the day's warmth, an overconfidence he readily admits— in water at 2 °C. The board stayed upside down and, at first, he could not right it. What followed was a cold-water survival response: he swam to the far side, climbed onto the overturned hull as if onto a small sailboat, flipped it back and steadied himself while the water drained through the scuppers. Soaked, with adrenaline masking the cold, he did the maths: Cape Crauford lay about 27 nm (approx. 50 km) away; the shore he had left, just 6.5 nm (approx. 12 km). He chose the safe option and paddled back for three and a half hours without stopping for a second, without eating or drinking, until he reached the beach. On landing, as the adrenaline faded, his body began to shake.

"The moment I set foot on the beach, within two minutes my body started shaking and I broke down — a mix of rage and the sheer joy of being alive."

Where he is and what comes next

His current shelter is the eastern shore of the mouth of Admiralty Inlet, on the Borden Peninsula: an arid, almost desert-like spot by the water, with no bears in the immediate surroundings. Admiralty Inlet opens north onto Lancaster Sound, the historic eastern gateway of the Northwest Passage; Cape Crauford, his target, is a headland on the opposite shore. The material toll is light except for one critical point: the only dry bag that took on water was the one holding his four acoustic bear-presence detectors, which are now out of service. De la Rosa has taken them apart to dry them and hopes to recover them before entering polar-bear territory. It is the main safety question ahead of resuming. Among the options he is weighing is heading to Arctic Bay, the inlet's only settlement, some 54 nm (approx. 100 km) to the south.

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Stage date	July 26, 2026 · Expedition Day 9
Stage distance	64.7 km paddled (inReach GPS) · crossing aborted
Expedition total	164.3 nm (304.2 km) · Day 9 included (64.7 km confirmed by GPS)
Current position	73.692°N · 82.924°W
Location	Mouth of Admiralty Inlet · eastern shore (Borden Peninsula)
Milestone	Admiralty Inlet crossing attempt aborted after capsize
Incident	Capsize into 2 °C water with drysuit partially open
Response	Board righted · return to shore, ~6.5 nm (approx. 12 km) in 3 h 30 min of paddling
Crossing target	Cape Crauford · ~27 nm (approx. 50 km) on the opposite shore
Gear affected	4 acoustic bear detectors soaked · drying
Communication	Garmin inReach Mini · voice dispatches + written note
Explorer's condition	■ Safe · exhausted · spirits firm
Next leg	Retry the crossing to Cape Crauford · option to reach Arctic Bay (~54 nm / 100 km)

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