



La Mauricie National Park of Canada

🌐 Location

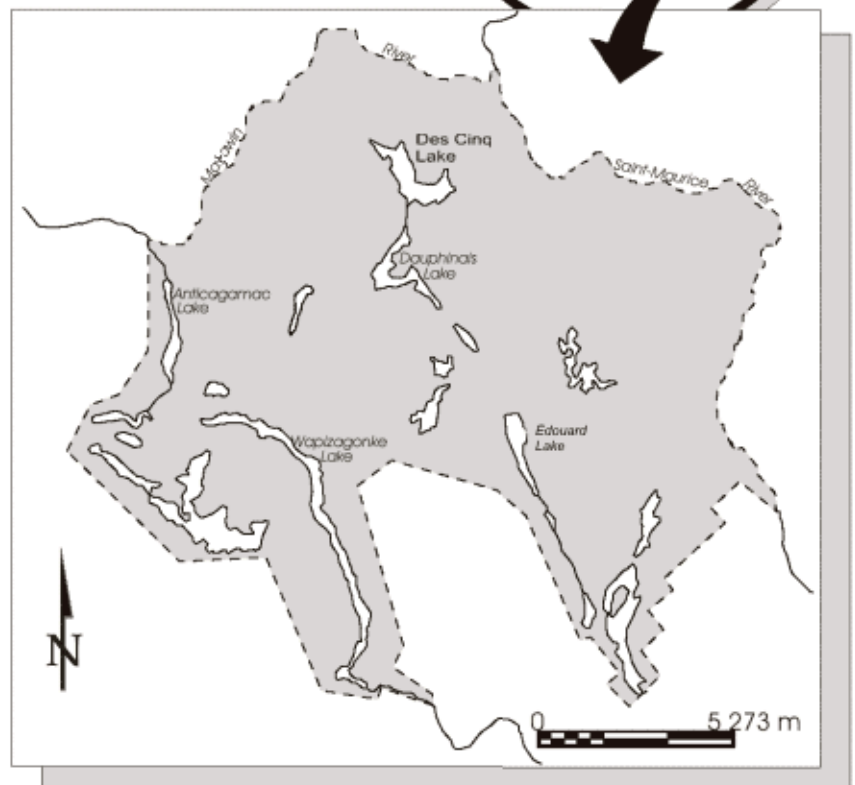
La Mauricie National Park, with an area of 536 km², was created in 1970 to preserve a representative sample of the Great Lakes–St. Lawrence Precambrian Region. Located specifically at the southern limit of the Canadian Shield, it represents the southern Laurentians, a chain of mountains that extends from the Great Lakes to Labrador. Situated in the heart of Quebec, the park is approximately 65 km north of Trois-Rivières and 180 km northeast of Montréal in the Boreal Shield Ecozone. Its northern boundary is the Matawin River and the Saint-Maurice River defines its eastern edge.

☁️ Climate

The park's climate is humid continental with hot summers, severe winters and without a dry season. The annual average temperature varies from 4.4 to 2.8°C from south to north with the average temperature for January, the coldest month, varying from -12.2 to -15°C, while July's ranges from 21.1 to 18.3°C. Total annual precipitation varies from 91.5 to 94 cm. The annual accumulation of snow varies between 254 and 280 cm.

🗨️ Geology

The park is a vast plateau of undulating hills, dissected by a large network of valleys, lakes, brooks and waterfalls. It is located in the youngest area of the Canadian Shield (Grenville province) which dates back approximately one billion years. Its bedrock is composed of metamorphic rock--gneiss, amphibolites and granulites. Continental glaciations have reshaped the landscape, leaving behind eskers, kettles, erratic blocks, till and sand beaches. The south-east part of the national park was once covered by the Champlain Sea, which formed clay marine terraces along the edge of the Saint-Maurice.



Vegetation

The transition between the forest of the Boreal Shield Ecozone and that of the Mixedwood Plains Ecozone typifies the forest covering 93% of the park. Roughly thirty species of trees form several forest communities distributed according to latitude, topography and soil type. The composition of the dominant communities shows clearly that the park is in the Sugar Maple-Yellow Birch domain. Moving from south to north, stands of fir replace stands of maple in certain locations, indicating that the boreal forest is not far away. Forest fires, windfalls, insect infestations and forestry harvesting are responsible for most of the transition forest stands. This mixed forest is home to 440 vascular plant species, 85 mosses and 68 lichens. Among these, over 70 are considered rare and of special interest.

Wildlife

The park is habitat to 50 or so mammal species, such as moose, black bear, beaver and Eastern wolf, this last classified a species of special concern by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC). More than 205 species of birds have been observed in the park. The area also shelters 25 to 30 pairs of common loons, which is the park's emblem. Despite its northern latitude, the park protects six reptile and 14 amphibian species. It also encompasses part of the territory of the largest and most northerly population of wood turtles, which are on COSEWIC's list. Of the 24 species of fish inventoried in the park's interior waters, only four are indigenous, including the speckled trout.



Activities

The development of the park is built around a 63-kilometre panoramic parkway in the southern sector. There are two reception centres, one at each end. Four intensively developed centres are located on either side of the parkway (a service centre, two snack bars, a convenience store, three canoe rental facilities and five picnic areas). Spaced between these centres are 15 or so roadside rest areas and lookouts, three semi-serviced campgrounds (581 lots and three amphitheatres), a group campground and several activity start points. The park offers 30 km of multi-use trails, 80 km of ski trails, 200 km of hiking trails and 40 km of portages. The backcountry can be accessed by canoe or on foot to enjoy one of the 200 primitive campsites or visitors can choose to stay in the comfort of one of two heritage lodges. The park offers a program of educational activities along with several thematic exhibitions and interpretation trails.

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