

Come and discover the

NETWORK OF OBSERVATION SITES

along the Whale Route



A **unique** marine
mammal experience!





Links of interest...

To learn more about regional activities: ATR Manicouagan

www.tourismemanicouagan.com

For a wealth of information about marine mammals:

www.whales-online.net

www.romm.ca

A great example of a marine protected area: Saguenay–St. Lawrence Marine Park

www.parcmarin.qc.ca

Discover the Saguenay Fjord: Parc national du Saguenay

www.ParksQuebec.com

**To find out more about the management of marine mammal habitats:
Fisheries and Oceans Canada**

www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca

The gateway to the Upper North Shore: MRC de la Haute Côte-Nord

www.mrchcn.qc.ca

The waterway for small crafts along the estuary's north shore: Association de la Route bleue des baleines

www.sentiermaritime.ca

An organization dedicated to protecting, enhancing and restoring the north shore of the St. Lawrence Estuary: Comité ZIP de la rive nord de l'estuaire

www.zipnord.qc.ca



How can you help the whales?

By adopting the whale of your choice.

Find out more!

Blue whale: www.rorqual.com

Fin whale: www.gremm.org

Minke whale: www.ores.org

Beluga whale: www.inesl.org



Photo: Marc Loisele

Whale-watching sites for everyone!

From Tadoussac/Sacré-Coeur to Baie-Trinité, explore the Whale Route and discover the best sites to observe marine mammals from the shore. This is a unique opportunity to follow the movements of the whales and contemplate seals as they bask on the rocks.

Discover different facets of the St. Lawrence at each site and enjoy the wide range of activities on offer. Admission to these sites is often free or very reasonably priced. While you are there, be sure to soak up the beauty of the surrounding scenery!

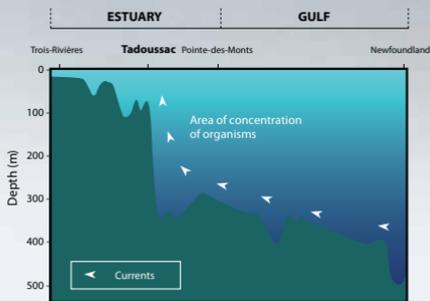


The St. Lawrence Estuary

Standing on the shores of the St. Lawrence Estuary, you are in one of the best places in the world to observe marine mammals. Why is this?

The St. Lawrence Estuary is characterized by a deep underwater valley that comes to an abrupt end at the mouth of the Saguenay Fjord, near Tadoussac. The cold, salt waters of the Atlantic Ocean flow up the St. Lawrence, bringing with them an impressive profusion of tiny organisms. These organisms rise towards the surface near the shore, providing vast food stores for whales and seals.

Diagram of the St. Lawrence Valley



Source: P. Brunet, 3rd comment, "Les grandes divisions du Saint-Laurent." *La revue de géographie de Montréal*, 24(3): 291-294. Modified by the Comité ZIP RNE.



Did you know that...

Rules exist to limit disturbance to whales and seals? If you are planning a sea outing, find out about the educational programs offered by the various companies and their policies with respect to the marine environment.

To learn more about the guidelines for marine mammal observation: www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca
www.parcmarin.qc.ca/1942_an.html

1



Mathieu Dupuis - SFPAQ



GPS: 48° 16' 35" N 69° 56' 17" W

Baie-Sainte-Marguerite Sector

The Baie-Sainte-Marguerite Sector is a great place to observe beluga whales. This area is part of magnificent parc national du Saguenay and is also a Saguenay–St. Lawrence Marine Park discovery site. This spot has something for everyone! To ensure you enjoy a great day, head off to this sector of the park with a back pack, a snack, a pair of binoculars and great deal of patience.

To get there (from Route 172 heading north):

- Turn left after the second bridge, 12 km beyond the village of Sacré-Coeur. Continue on for 1 km to the parking lot of the Beluga Interpretation and Visitors Centre.
- A 6.4-km hiking trail (round trip) leads to a lookout point (easy hiking).

Information:

www.ParksQuebec.com
418 272-1556 / 1 800 665-6527

2



Comité ZPR RNE



GPS: 48° 08' 19" N 69° 43' 05" W

Pointe-de-l'Islet trail

Located right next to the picturesque village of Tadoussac, Pointe-de-l'Islet is one of the highlights of parc national du Saguenay. Minke whales often surface within metres of the rocks. While they are diving, take the time to admire the scenery, everything from the fjord to ferries, seabirds and lighthouses. You can even watch the strong currents that stir the water! Get the most out of your experience by stopping in at the Marine Mammal Interpretation Centre (CIMM).

To get there (from Route 138 heading east):

- Enter the village of Tadoussac on Rue des Pionniers.
- Drive for 500 metres and turn right on Rue du Bord de l'Eau between the Desjardins credit union and the church.
- Take the wooden stairs at the end of this street. The loop trail is 0.8 km long and is an easy hike.
- The Marine Mammal Interpretation Centre (CIMM) is to the right of the trail on Rue de la Cale Sèche.

Information:

www.ParksQuebec.com
418 272-1556 / 1 800 665-6527

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With thanks to www.whales-online.net, which provided most of the site descriptions presented in this guide.

Did you know that...

Garbage, such as plastic bags, injures and kills marine mammals every year?

Thank you for respecting the Leave No Trace principles.
www.leaveontrace.ca



3



Marc Loiseleur



GPS: 48° 16' 20" N 69° 28' 12" W

Cap de Bon-Désir Interpretation and Observation Centre

This Parks Canada site welcomes nearly 30,000 visitors every summer. Cap de Bon-Désir offers interpretive activities for all ages. The practical layout of the site and frequent marine mammal sightings make it a great place for even the most demanding whale watcher. Cap de Bon-Désir is the place to be for a day jam-packed with amazing experiences.

To get there (from Route 138 heading east):

- The entrance to Cap de Bon-Désir is located about 6 km beyond the Les Bergeronnes viaduct. A large Parks Canada highway sign indicates the site.

Information:

www.marinepark.qc.ca
418 232-6751 / 1 888 773-8888

4



Marc Loiseleur



GPS: 48° 19' 14" N 69° 24' 55" W

Marine Environment Discovery Centre

Experience the St. Lawrence firsthand through the virtual *St. Lawrence Live* activity at the Parks Canada site. This interpretive activity gives you the opportunity to dive into the icy waters of the estuary without getting wet. Located near an underwater valley, the centre is a perfect spot to observe all the whales of the St. Lawrence. It is hard not to fall under the spell of this captivating site.

To get there (from Route 138 heading east):

- Turn right on Rue des Pilotes just before entering the village of Les Escoumins. The entrance to the site is about 500 metres further, on your left.

Information:

www.marinepark.qc.ca
418 233-4414 / 1 888 773-8888

NETWORK OF OBSERVATION SITES

along the Whale Route

Legend

-  Hiking
-  Picnic area
-  Admission fee
-  Cycling
-  Tourist welcome bureau
-  Marine mammal interpretation activities
-  Centre d'interprétation des mammifères marins (CIMM)
-  Lookout point
-  Observation site along the Whale Route
-  Saguenay–St. Lawrence Marine Park
-  Parc national du Saguenay





St. Lawrence River

Estimated driving time at 90 km/hour
(in minutes)

Sacré-Coeur to Tadoussac:	15
Tadoussac to Les Bergeronnes:	20
Les Bergeronnes to Les Escoumins:	15
Les Escoumins to Portneuf-sur-Mer:	35
Portneuf-sur-Mer to Colombier:	30
Colombier to Ragueneau:	30
Ragueneau to Baie-Comeau:	25
Baie-Comeau to Franquelin:	25
Franquelin to Godbout:	20
Godbout to Baie-Trinité:	30

Source: www.quebec511.gouv.qc.ca

ST. LAWRENCE RIVER





Can seal watching have a negative impact on seals?

That depends on you... By remaining at a distance and being discreet, you can avoid causing seals to flee, a reaction that could separate a pup from its mother.

5



© Mériscope



GPS: 48° 38' 29" N 69° 05' 12" W

Pointe des Fortin

Located at the mouth of the Portneuf River, Pointe des Fortin offers a breathtaking panoramic view. At the beginning of this point, a 208-step staircase gives you access to the Mériscope lookout. In the summer, the Mériscope research team offers visitors the opportunity to share in their passion for the whales. From this site, you can spot whale blows and sometimes even the backs of large whales in the distance. From the lookout, you will have a spectacular view of the sand bar and the estuary in all of its majesty.

To get there (from Route 138 heading east):

- Turn right onto the road to the marina after crossing the bridge over the Portneuf River.
- Drive through the campground to the end of the road where you will come to the beach and Pointe des Fortin.
- The Mériscope lookout is at the top of the stairs.

6



Charles Morin



GPS: 48° 49' 20" N 68° 52' 25" W

Cap Colombier

Cap Colombier is a relatively unknown site. To reach it, you must walk through an old-growth forest on a rustic trail. The rocky outcrop juts out into the St. Lawrence and is sure to please those seeking peace and quiet. This site is just the thing for adventurers and nature lovers.

To get there (from Route 138 heading east):

- About 20 km beyond Forestville, you will see road signs for Cap Colombier on your right. Be sure to take the second side road.
- Follow this dirt road to the turnaround point at the end.
- A 500-metre trail leads to the rocky cape; from there, follow the arrows along the 2.5-km hiking trail (intermediate hike).

Why is the St. Lawrence beluga whale endangered?

- A. It was once the subject of bounty hunting.
- B. Its health has been affected by pollution in the St. Lawrence.
- C. It is vulnerable to disturbance by boat traffic.
- D. All of the above.

Answer D. The commercial hunt for St. Lawrence beluga whales, which ended in 1979, seriously depleted the beluga population. Presently faced with other threats, it is having trouble recovering.



7



MARC LOISELLE



GPS: 49° 03' 43" N 68° 32' 57" W

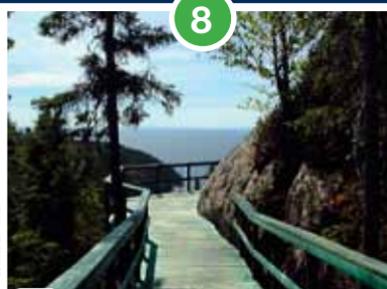
Ragueneau Archipelago

For those travelling as a family, a stop at the Ragueneau Archipelago is a must. The fish weir trail (Sentier de la Fascine) is particularly interesting with its observation tower. You may even be lucky enough to spot harbour seals sunning themselves on the rocks. There is something nearby for everyone, young and old: a playground, dinosaurs, interpretive panels, bird colonies, etc. The viewpoints are simply amazing!

To get there (from Route 138):

- Upon entering the village of Ragueneau, follow the signs to the wharf.
- Take the gravel road and park on the left, across from the playground.
- The fish weir trail is a 1-km loop (an easy hike, even with young children). The observation tower is midway along the loop.

8



COMTE ZIP RINE



GPS: 49° 14' 21" N 68° 08' 38" W

The Maritime Adventure Park

The Adrenalin Zone in the Jardin des Glaciers offers several observation sites overlooking the St. Lawrence Estuary, making it a great place for marine mammal sightings. This centre also offers a multitude of guided and self-guided activities and services such as zip lines, via ferrate, rappelling and sea kayaking. You will more than likely want to prolong your stay!

To get there (from Route 138 heading east):

- Follow the road signs east of Baie-Comeau to the Glacier Exploration Station (Station d'exploration glaciaire).
- Ask at the visitors centre about the various trails that lead to observation sites.

Information:
www.jardindesglaciers.ca
418 296-0182 / 1 877 296-0182



Did you know that...

Of the 13 species of whales that frequent the St. Lawrence, 6 have a protected status ranging from “species of special concern” to “endangered”?

Let’s help the whales so that they will always be a part of our world and our lives...

9



Karine Sward



GPS: 49° 17' 51" N 67° 50' 28" W

Pointe-à-la-Croix

Pointe-à-la-Croix is one of Côte-Nord’s best-kept secrets! To reach it you must hike or cycle along a wooded trail for 5.2 km. It is definitely worth the effort. Upon arriving at your destination, you will be rewarded by the sight of marine mammals swimming within metres of the rocks. This is truly a magical location!

To get there (from Route 138 heading east):

- Keep your eyes peeled because the entrance to this site is easy to miss. It is on your right, 4.6 km after the bridge over the Franquelin River, or 500 metres beyond kilometre post 806.
- Leave your car in the parking lot.
- Follow the signs to the top of the rocky point or find your way by the rock piles. Set aside several hours for the round trip of over 10 km (intermediate hike).

10



Gabriel Cormier



GPS: 49° 19' 09" N 67° 35' 48" W

Godbout Bay

Stop in Godbout and take in the magnificent beaches, the ambiance of a typical Côte-Nord village and the fishermen on the wharf. Godbout Bay is bounded by fishing spots and the village church. It is possible to observe a wide variety of cetacean species here, including minke, humpback, fin and blue whales, either near the shore or off in the distance.

To get there (from Route 138):

- Turn into the village of Godbout.
- Drive to the end of Rue Monseigneur-Labrie and then turn right onto Rue Pascal-Comeau. There are two rest stops along the way.

Please recycle this flyer after your stay or, better yet, give it to a friend to let them know about the network.



11



Marc Loiseleur



GPS: 49° 19' 35' N 67° 22' 09" W

12



Marc Loiseleur



GPS: 49° 21' 57" N 67° 20' 09" W

Pointe-des-Monts

Everyone who has ever visited this site agrees: Pointe-des-Monts is an enchanting place. Its beauty, its historic lighthouse and the incredible view of the St. Lawrence are more than worth a visit or even an overnight stay in the old lighthouse keeper's house. A word to the wise: don't sleep too soundly or you may miss the nocturnal sounds of the whales.

To get there (from Route 138 heading east):

- Before you get to Baie-Trinité, turn right on the road towards Pointe-des-Monts. The site is at the end of the road, about 11.5 km from the turnoff.

Information:

www.pharepointe-des-monts.com
418 939-2400

Shipwreck trail

Stop at one of the many rest areas along the shipwreck trail (Sentier des naufragés) to relax and enjoy the view. With a pair of binoculars, you may spot minke whales and other species blowing offshore. At the same time, you can learn about the fascinating history of the shipwrecks that lie in nearby coves. For those with the inclination, Anse de Sable (Sandy Cove) is also known to locals as "Lover's Cove".

To get there (from Route 138 heading east):

- Turn right on Rue Saint-Laurent just before the bridge over the Trinité River.
- Drive for 200 metres and then turn onto Rue Poulin and then Chemin de l'Anse-aux-Bouleaux.
- Continue for another 4 km to the Anse-de-Sable parking lot.
- A further 1 km will take you to the Anse-aux-Bouleaux parking lot.
- You can either walk or cycle the 4-km shipwreck trail to Steamship Cove and Hunter Cove (an easy hike).

Partners and associates:



Parc marin
du Saguenay-Saint-Laurent
Saguenay-Saint-Laurent
Marine Park



Parc national
du Saguenay
Protect and Discover.



SENTIER MARITIME
DU SAINT-LAURENT
Route bleue des îles/îles



Pêches et Océans
Canada

Fisheries and Oceans
Canada



Financial backers:

FONDATION



ALCOA



Canada¹⁰¹

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De la concertation vers l'action!

During your stay, if you see a dead marine mammal or one in difficulty:



To order the *Network of Observation Sites along the Whale Route* guide:

Association touristique régionale Manicouagan

www.tourismemanicouagan.com

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Baie-Comeau (Québec)
G4Z 2Z1

418 294-2876



Cover photo of whale: ORES, www.ores.org