

# La Mauricie National Park of Canada

## Climate

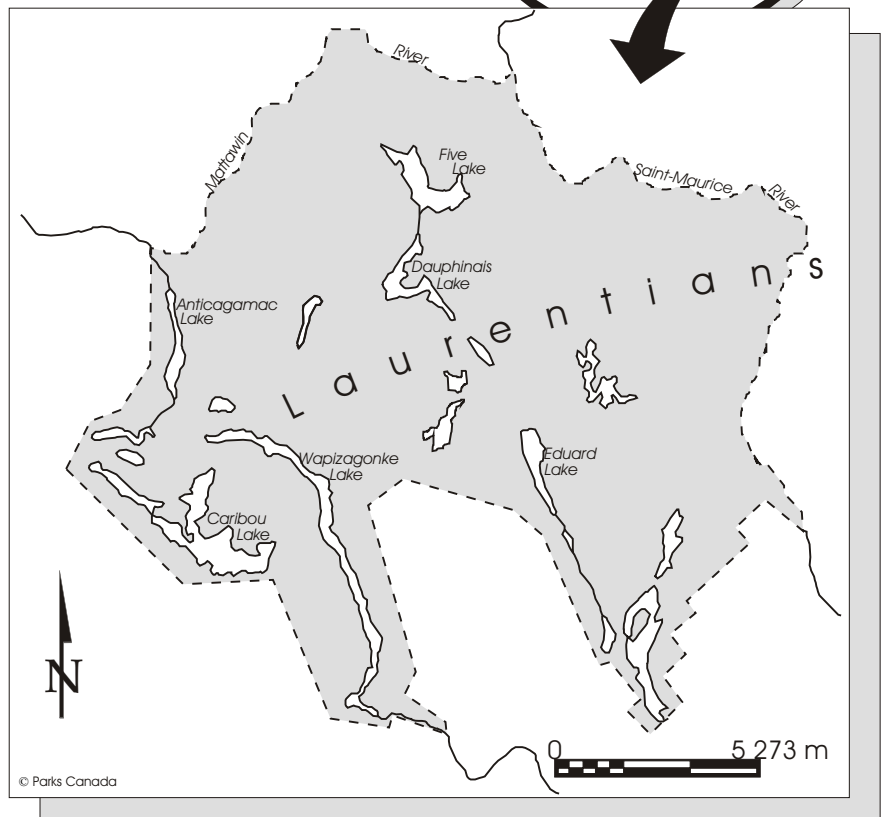
La Mauricie has a continental climate with hot summers and cold winters. There are no significantly large water bodies in the vicinity to moderate the climate. Average highs in July are 24-28°C, and average January minimum temperatures are about -18°C. Within the park, the average annual temperature varies considerably, with recorded averages of 4.4°C in the southern portion of the park, and 2.8°C in the northern part. Annual precipitation reaches 95 mm with abundant winter snowfall causing depth accumulations of 254 to 280 cm.

## Geology

The park lies within the Grenville province of the Canadian Shield, and consists of formations close to a billion years old. Numerous ice ages have worn down the peaks of these ancient mountains that are part of an extensive range, known as the Laurentians. These hills are speckled with over 150 lakes. The only major rivers are the Matawin and Saint-Maurice Rivers that border the park.

## Location

La Mauricie National Park is located in the heart of Québec about 65 km north of Trois-Rivières, and about 180 km northeast of Montreal. The park is about 536 km<sup>2</sup> in size. It was formally established in 1977, and originally set aside in 1970. La Mauricie, along with St. Lawrence Islands and part of Georgian Bay Islands National Parks, protects a sample of the Central Great Lakes - St. Lawrence Lowlands Natural Region. The park is also representative of the Canadian Shield and Québec's ancient and gently rolling Laurentian Mountains. The town of Shawinigan, where La Mauricie's headquarters are located, is 20 km south of the park itself. La Mauricie is located in the Boreal Shield Ecozone.



### **Vegetation**

La Mauricie is situated in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence forest region. Within the park, trees represent a transition zone between the broad-leaved trees further south and the boreal forests further north. Sugar maple and yellow birch are slowly replaced by balsam fir, pine, and spruce approaching the north end of the park. There are 30 tree species altogether in these largely mixed wood forests, undergrown with 440 species of vascular plants, 85 mosses, and 65 lichens. The regenerative effects of fire, past logging, and insect infestations have helped to diversify forest habitat by creating openings where increased light changed heat, sunlight, and moisture conditions. About 15 rare plants are monitored by the park.

### **Wildlife**

Over 40 species of mammals have been recorded in La Mauricie. These animals, like the forests they inhabit, are a mix of northern and southern species. Some, like white-tailed deer and the long-tailed weasel, as well as northern orioles, are at the northern limit of their respective ranges, while moose, wolf, least weasel, spruce grouse, and ravens reach their southern limit. There are over 180 species of birds that use the park environment, including 110 nesting species. Though there are over a dozen different birds of prey in the area, only broad-winged hawks and ospreys are seen regularly. There are also 19 species of reptiles and amphibians. Wood and painted turtles are found only in the southernmost parts of the park. Fish species number 28 in total, including brook and lake trout.



### **Activities**

The park offers various accommodations to visitors, including a group camp, 200 primitive campsites, two bed and breakfasts, and three partially developed campgrounds. In the surrounding area, there are private campgrounds, hotels, backcountry lodges, and cottages. Two visitor centres and three information booths are available, as well as a variety of interpretive programs to help visitors enjoy the park environment. Lookout stations and pull-offs exist on the scenic drive along the main road through the park. Popular recreation activities include picnicking, hiking, swimming, canoeing, and camping. A whole network of lakes, rivers, and trails is available to visitors.

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