

Forillon

National Park of Canada

Pronounced “For - ee - yaw”

Climate

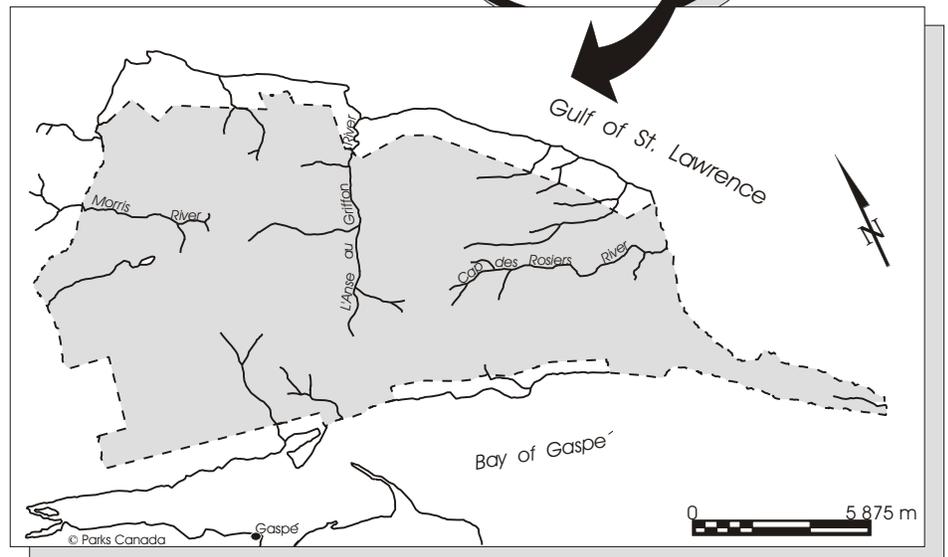
Forillon enjoys a fairly mild climate because of the moderating effects of the gulf. The average temperatures range from 17°C (July) to -10°C (Jan.). In general, precipitation is abundant in the park. The total yearly precipitation averages 100 mm. Within the park, distance from the sea, altitude, prevailing winds, and physical features produce markedly varied climatic conditions.

Geology

The park is situated in a sea cliff region that marks the northern end of the Appalachian mountain chain. The park is an ideal site for exploring geologic formations, of which ten distinct types are seen. Layers of marine sediments (limestone, sandstone) represent Ordovician, Silurian, and Devonian periods in geologic time. Perpendicular cliffs rise above the south shore, while a more rolling landscape exists in the northern half of the park.

Location

Forillon National Park is on a narrow, mountainous peninsula in southeastern Québec that extends into the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The park was established in 1970, and protects 244 km² of land, including a 0.16 km wide, 25 km long ribbon of marine water along the coast. The park protects a sample of the Notre-Dame and Megantic Mountains Natural Region, and its marine component represents the Gulf of St. Lawrence Natural Marine Region. Forillon is located in the Atlantic Maritime Ecozone.



Vegetation

Forillon's astonishing plant diversity is attributed to ten distinct ecosystems: forest, cliffs, alpine meadows, fallow field, dunes, lakes, streams, shores, and both freshwater and saltwater marshes. Forest represents 95% of the land, and includes both boreal and mixed trees, particularly yellow birch, white birch, maple, and fir. Some 69 plant communities have been identified, harboring almost 700 species. The alpine meadowlands within the park provide a home for 113 plant species that are usually found in arctic or alpine locations.

Wildlife

Though in essence a marine park, Forillon features a generous complement of land mammals, including white-tailed deer, moose, red fox, Canadian lynx, black bear, porcupine, mink, coyote, and snowshoe hare. In the adjacent waters, one can find whales and seals. Grey and harbour seals use the shorelines. Marine invertebrates such as mussels, sea urchins, crabs, and lobsters live in the shallow coastal waters. Birds, especially marine species, are plentiful on the peninsula, with over 245 species counted in the park. Species include gannets, cormorants, kittiwakes, gulls, razorbills, herons, and guillemots, as well as sparrows, warblers, jays, woodpeckers, thrushes, small penguins, and 26 different birds of prey. The most abundant raptors are northern harriers, kestrels, rough-legged hawks, and ospreys. Between the years 1988-1990, a cooperative venture with the Canadian Wildlife Service saw 29 peregrine falcons released in the park in an effort to re-establish this endangered species.



Activities

Public transportation is restricted to the northern and southern sectors of the park. Hiking, bicycle, ski, and horse trails are offered, as well as three campgrounds with a total of 367 sites, plus one group camp. In addition to camping, there are opportunities for picnics, fishing, diving, and swimming, as well as birdwatching and interpretive programs. There are two Visitor Centres within the park.

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