

A brief summary of the mammals seen on a trip to Quebec State, August 2013.

Steve Babbs

stevebabbs@stevebabbs.com

general comments

We flew, to Montreal, with Air Transat, from Gatwick airport, London. For UK visitors this would appear to be the airline to use. They are cheaper than any other airlines I could find. I've used them on two trips to Canada and both times they were very punctual and they are direct. Allow lots of time to get in and out of Montreal airport; the traffic is grim!

Canada is an easy country to travel in. Although both here and in British Columbia we found Canada to be a more expensive country than the UK, at the present exchange rates.

Parcs have entrance fees. It may be worth buying a season/year pass, especially if staying in some. There are two park networks: Parcs Quebec, Parks Canada

We camped part from a couple of nights in motels to break up journeys.

Obviously the first language is French. English is reasonably widely spoken but many events/ talks are in French only and, surprisingly, so are a lot of the information boards.

Parc du Bic

Unfortunately, due to a problem, we only had one night here and a couple of hours at dusk and dawn to look for wildlife. I'd recommend more; it was a very pleasant place. It is meant to be a good site for fisher.

We got excellent views of a very tame white-tailed deer and two young. We also saw snowshoe hare and American red squirrel (a common species not mentioned again) and lots of grey seals.

Forillon NP

This would appear to be your best bet for blue whale. We got excellent views on our trip. We went with Croisieres Bai de Gaspe. We also saw humpback and white-sided dolphin is a possibility.

<http://www.baleines-forillon.com/intro.aspx>

Their website has a recent sighting chart.

minke whale was seen from Cap Gaspe

North American porcupine – 1 seen at the start of the trail to Cap Gaspe, 1 near the end.. This does seem to be the best place to see them. It is a very popular trail. We also saw one. One was also seen while we drove around the area after dusk

northern short-tailed shrew – one ran across the track at Le Castor

American beaver – Le Castor. We tried three evenings looking at the lake, with dam, to the left of the track. On the third night one was seen on the pool to the right, unfortunately the viewing is very limited and by the time we got one of the two spaces it was gone. On the fourth night I stopped at the pool just before the turning. Immediately I saw a beaver! We then got prolonged views of two beavers. If you do try the pools past the car park, bring insect repellent.

red fox – seen several times while we drove around

Park national de la Gaspesie

reindeer -

Mont Jacques-Cartier

This is the publicised site for reindeer. I would not recommend it. There are lots of people and we saw one badly and distantly. I'd imagine if one came close to the path it would quickly move off. I did briefly see woodchuck at the bottom of the track.

Mount Albert

This is the site I'd recommend. Many fewer people and we saw 3. Two reasonably well and stunning views of another.

moose

1 seen from a layby on right of the Mount Albert to Mont Jacques-Cartier road (coming from Mount Albert)

2 seen very distantly, on the other side of the valley, from La Falaise view point, also on the right of the road

Superb views of two, down to about 1 metre, on the trail to the top of Mont Albert.

black bear seen very distantly, on the other side of the valley, from La Falaise view point

This is meant to be a very good area for black bear, we would seem to have been unluckily not to have seen more.

snowshoe hare – seen in campsite

eastern chipmunk – common

Trois Pistoles – Les Escoumins Ferry

c.10 belugas and a blue whale (very briefly) were seen from the ferry.

This ferry must be reserved. We reserved from the UK (by phone); it's much easier to ring toll free number from a pay phone on arrival in Canada – they are much more common than in the UK. We changed our booking, with no problem, at fairly short notice.

Tadoussac

Whale trip.

We booked with Otis. They were fine, but quite expensive. Other companies, operating from nearby spots were cheaper. We got stunning views of two humpbacks and brief views of 2 minke. We also saw a beluga distantly.

Beluga – commonly seen in the Saguenay river. The best views were at La Baie-Sainte-Marguerite. Also seen from Cap-du-Bon.

minke whale – quite a few were seen from Cap-du-Bon, often giving superb views.

porpoise – Cap-du-Bon was a good site for these

black bear - 3 adults, a juvenile and 4 cubs were seen on an organised trip to a baited hide. Rather zoo like, but certainly good views.