



# WILDLIFE IN GATINEAU PARK



JUST 15 MINUTES  
FROM THE NATION'S CAPITAL,

Gatineau Park's 125 kilometres of hiking trails, 200 kilometres of ski trails and 356 square kilometres of exciting wilderness are waiting to be explored. Gatineau Park, which was created in 1938, is an integral part of the Capital's green spaces. The Park's hills, which peak at 390 metres, are part of the Canadian Shield, dating back to the Precambrian era. Indeed, they contain the oldest exposed rocks on earth.

The landscape of Gatineau Park is dotted with over 50 glacial lakes, which harbour a large variety of game fish. The forest cover consists mainly of deciduous trees, such as maple and oak; coniferous forest, dominated by spruce, white pine and Eastern hemlock, grows on about three percent of the territory.

The Park is internationally renowned for its rich biodiversity, which forms the basis of many scientific research projects. It contains a large number of rare plant and animal species.

Come and enjoy this magnificent wilderness and observe its exciting wildlife at close range.

## COYOTE

*Canis latrans*

Could you distinguish between the howl of a coyote pack and that of a timber wolf pack? Generally speaking, coyotes vocalize with a fast sequence of short, high-pitched barking sounds. Timber wolves usually howl in a harmonious and drawn-out chorus.

Perhaps you'll get lucky and hear the haunting howl of a pack of coyotes at twilight, their favourite hunting time. They are very efficient and patient hunters, often employing the pack hunting techniques used by wolves, their larger cousins. The favourite prey of the estimated 100 coyotes in the Park is white-tailed deer.



## BLACK BEAR

*Ursus americanus*

An estimated 200 bears live in the Park. They are excellent tree climbers. Look around and see if you can find a beech tree with claw marks in the bark. If you think you can outrun a bear, think again: bears can reach speeds of up to 50 kilometres per hour in only a few seconds. The black bear's diet consists mainly of vegetable matter, seasonally supplemented with small mammals, insects, amphibians and birds, and for gourmet dining, berries and apples.



Keep an eye out for bear tracks on muddy trail sections and around beaver ponds. You can see bears throughout the Park.



## TIMBER WOLF

*Canis lupus*

Timber wolves are highly intelligent and social animals. Persecuted by humans for no scientifically justifiable reason, they instinctively avoid human contact and tend to seek refuge in the most rugged and inaccessible wilderness regions. The wolves in Gatineau Park are no exception.

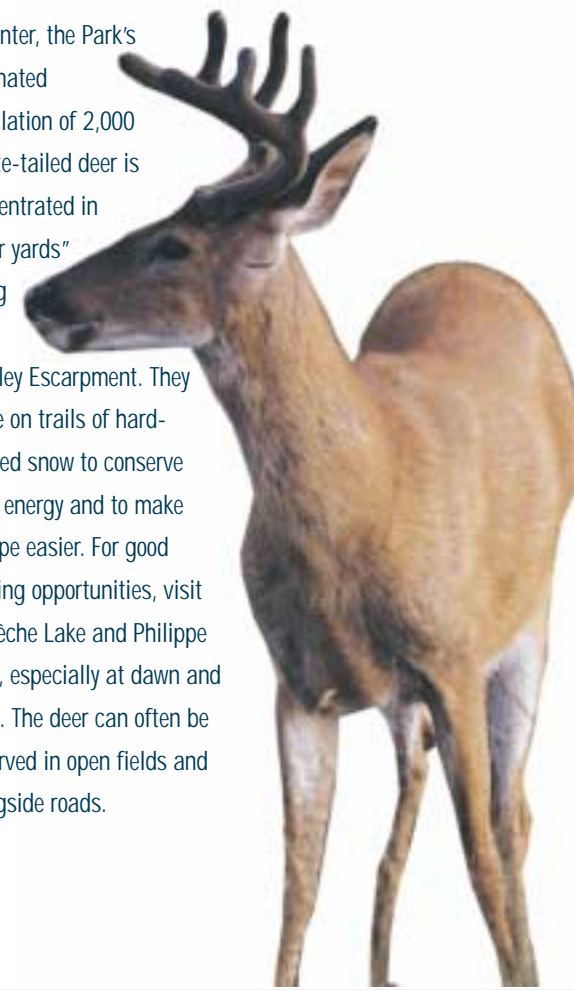
The Park is home to one or two timber wolf packs, consisting of about four wolves each. They live and hunt in the far northwest corner of the Park. But fear not — there hasn't been a single case of wild wolf attack on a human anywhere in North America. While it's highly unlikely that you'll ever actually see a wolf, you may be lucky enough to hear them howl. It's the ultimate wilderness experience.

White-tailed deers' movements are swift and graceful. Observe the white tail held upright like a lantern, serving as a warning signal and a beacon during flight. Try to spot a fawn during spring. Its speckled coat blends in perfectly with patches of sunlight, providing effective camouflage. In the fall, look for trees with rubbed bark, a sure sign of males trying to shed the protective velvet from their mature antlers.

## WHITE-TAILED DEER

*Odocoileus virginianus*

In winter, the Park's estimated population of 2,000 white-tailed deer is concentrated in "deer yards" along the Eardley Escarpment. They move on trails of hard-packed snow to conserve their energy and to make escape easier. For good viewing opportunities, visit La Pêche Lake and Philippe Lake, especially at dawn and dusk. The deer can often be observed in open fields and alongside roads.



## BEAVER

*Castor canadensis*

Can you manage in the water as well as one of the Park's 2,000 beavers? Can you reach a speed of seven kilometres an hour on the water's surface and remain submerged for 15 minutes? Superb architects, beavers build fabulous dams — their skill in regulating water levels would rival that of any team of engineers. And their lodges, with their wise use of space and their ingenious construction, could serve as model home designs. In just 10 minutes, these highly skilled lumberjacks can fell a birch with a trunk measuring 15 centimetres around. Visit one of the many beaver ponds along the Gatineau Parkway and catch these busy aquatic rodents in action — they are most active at dawn and dusk.

## GATINEAU PARK

Gatineau Park is a bird watcher's paradise, with a total of 220 species, 16 of them rare in Quebec and eight rare in Canada. Large predators, including bobcats and Canada lynx, have also chosen to live in the Park. Even the cantankerous wolverine is a permanent resident.

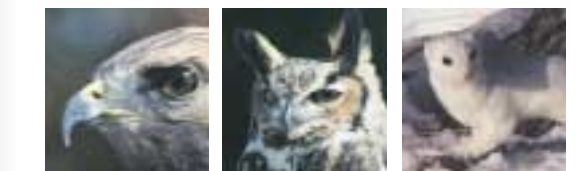
If you watch closely, you may spot a fisher or a mink hunting along the edge of a beaver pond. You may even observe an otter family at play!

Just a little reminder: always treat wild animals with common sense and respect. Be especially cautious with black bears. Never try to feed the bears or get too close to them, as they may feel threatened. Keep your distance from a mother and her cubs.


Never attempt to outrun, outswim or outclimb a bear; the animal might see it as a sign of weakness. If you do happen to see a bear on a trail, make loud noises and keep your distance.

Hunting is not permitted in the Park. For the rules and regulations pertaining to fishing and camping, please consult one of the brochures available at the Visitor Centre or ask the staff for the information you need.

Enjoy the scenic beauty of Gatineau Park, and embark on an exciting journey of discovery. After all, it's your Park!



For more information, call the Visitors Centre:  
(819) 827-2020



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