



3. STUDENT INFORMATION CARD: GATINEAU PARK

Gatineau Park is the National Capital Region's conservation park. The largest green space in the region, the park occupies an area of more than 361 square kilometres and is a place of rich and unique biodiversity. It is a destination popular with outdoor enthusiasts to engage in recreational activities that respect the environment.

Land and waters of Gatineau Park

The park is located on the Canadian Shield, a Precambrian rock mass that was formed at least one billion years ago. Tectonic shifting and glaciers formed the rolling hills, flatlands, bare rock, and steep escarpments visible in the park today. The Eardley Escarpment marks the dividing line between the Canadian Shield and the St. Lawrence Lowlands.

There are more than 50 lakes in Gatineau Park, including Pink Lake, one of only 58 known meromictic lakes in North America. As well as lakes, streams, and rivers, the park has several wetland areas.

Valued ecosystems

- La Pêche Lake
- Eardley Plateau
- Eardley Escarpment
- Pink Lake Plateau
- Three-lake chain – Philippe, Harrington (Lac Mousseau), and Meech lakes

Wildlife

The park supports a broad diversity of wildlife, including thousands of invertebrates, about 10 species of reptiles and 15 species of amphibians. There are more than 50 mammal species, including the white-tailed deer, beaver, black bear, and fisher. Nearly 230 bird species have been observed in the park.

Plants

Gatineau Park has a wealth of plant species not found anywhere else in Quebec. It is home to approximately 1,000 vascular plant species and 50 species of trees.

Species at risk

About 90 plant and 50 animal species in the park are at risk in Quebec and/or Canada. This includes:

- One of Quebec's largest wild leek populations
- 80 per cent of Quebec's population of rare eastern red cedars
- Least bitterns
- One of Quebec's only known Blanding's turtle populations

The park is also home to Quebec's only known population of the rare juniper hairstreak butterfly.

Scientific research

The Park's diverse ecosystems and proximity to an urban area make it an ideal research location. The scientific reports and data from this research help Gatineau Park biologists plan the short- and long-term protection of species, habitats, and ecosystems.