



Photo: Alma Kismic



## PLAN YOUR VISIT

### BOATING SAFETY: PREPARING FOR A SAFE RETURN

1. Make sure you have the necessary skills for your boating activity. [Aventures Archipel](#) offers guided excursions.
2. Wear your PFD at all times and make sure you are visible. Depending on your activity, have the [mandatory boating safety equipment](#) regulated by Transport Canada.
3. The tidal range is significant in the area and can influence navigation and launching conditions, so check the tide schedule before heading out.
4. The average water temperature in the park area in summer varies between 5 and 10 °C. For your safety, wear a wetsuit.
5. The weather can change rapidly on the river. Pay close attention to forecasts and alerts.
6. Foggy conditions are common, so follow the shoreline and always keep it in sight.
7. Bring a water-resistant communication device or keep it in a waterproof bag to be able to call for help in the event of an emergency.
8. Go with another person or let someone know your itinerary and expected time of return.

### Report a search and rescue incident

Canadian Coast Guard: 1-800-463-4393



Île du Bic

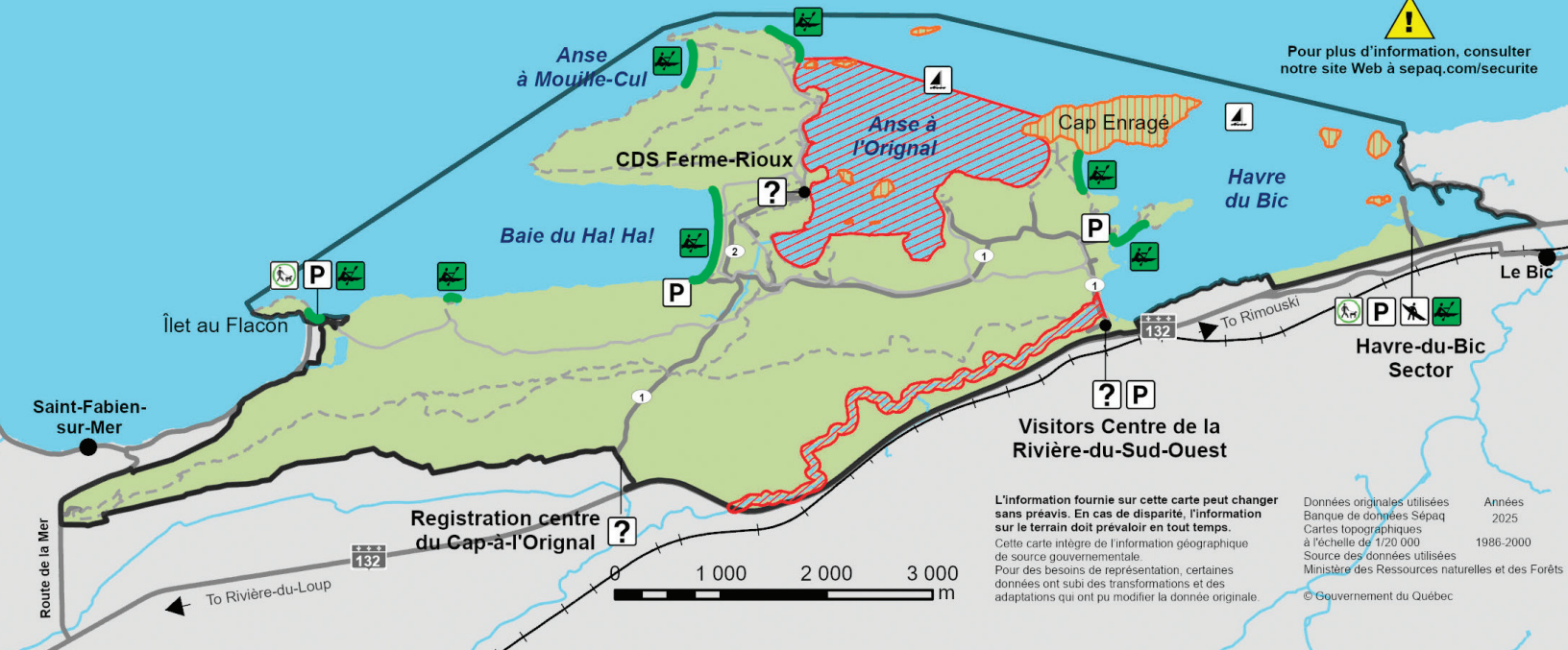


	Registration / Information		National park boundary
	Anchorage for sailboat		Road network
	Dogs allowed location		Bike path
	Nautical stopover		Trail
	Boat launch		Recommended docking area
	Parking lot		Preservation zone - Restricted navigation
			Preservation zone - Access prohibited

Fleuve Saint-Laurent

EN NATURE, MA SÉCURITÉ, C'EST MA RESPONSABILITÉ

Pour plus d'information, consulter notre site Web à [sepaq.com/securite](http://sepaq.com/securite)



L'information fournie sur cette carte peut changer sans préavis. En cas de disparité, l'information sur le terrain doit prévaloir en tout temps. Cette carte intègre de l'information géographique de source gouvernementale. Pour des besoins de représentation, certaines données ont subi des transformations et des adaptations qui ont pu modifier la donnée originale.

Données originales utilisées Banque de données Sépaq Cartes topographiques à l'échelle de 1:20 000 Source des données utilisées Ministère des Ressources naturelles et des Forêts © Gouvernement du Québec

### BOAT LAUNCHING

Watercraft are mainly launched in the Havre-du-Bic sector, where a launching ramp is available. Kayaks and paddleboards can also be launched from certain points where parking is available nearby. It is essential to access the water between the rising half tide and high tide, and plan to be back by the falling half tide.

### ANSE À L'ORIGINAL CONSERVATION AREA

Located in the heart of Parc national du Bic, Anse à l'Original is a critical habitat for marine wildlife, particularly seals and common eiders. To preserve this fragile ecosystem and ensure the tranquility of the species that live there, navigation is restricted. This measure is intended to reduce stress and disturbance caused by watercraft on marine wildlife during critical periods of their life cycles.

### SAILBOATS

Mooring areas are recommended for sailboats. Be sure to use these mooring areas to limit disturbance to marine wildlife. To dock at the park with your dinghy, use the recommended docking areas and be sure to comply with the regulations.

### PARK REGULATIONS

Knowing the regulations is essential to help protect Parc national du Bic.

1. Docking on islands or islets is prohibited, except in an emergency.
2. There is a mandatory fee to access the land portion of Parc national du Bic.
3. When you come ashore, stay on the walking paths and in the designed areas.
4. Take your trash with you and do not remove any natural elements.
5. Dogs are restricted to certain areas and must be kept on a leash. Refer to the [rules and regulations](#).
6. In order to minimize the impact on wildlife and visitors, recreational use of drones is not permitted.

Refer to the [full regulations](#) applicable in Quebec's national parks.

Photo: Mathieu Dupuis



# NAVIGATING WITH MARINE WILDLIFE

We ask that users of the St. Lawrence River be respectful and let marine wildlife move freely in their natural habitat. Remember that the animals are at home, and you are a guest.



Photo: JC Lemay

## MARINE MAMMAL REGULATIONS

At all times and regardless of the type of watercraft, it is **prohibited** to injure or disturb a marine mammal, including:

- Feeding or touching it
- Interacting or swimming with it
- Moving it, attracting it elsewhere or causing it to move
- Separating it from members of its group or going between a marine mammal and its young
- Positioning a boat in such a way as to trap it or the group it is in between a boat and the shore or between several boats

## EVERY ACTIVITY HAS AN IMPACT

Disturbances vary in nature and intensity according to the type of watercraft.

### Kayak and paddleboard

- The silent approach of these watercraft can startle wildlife and increase alertness.
- The risk of disturbance is greater in shallow coastal areas where marine wildlife rest and feed.

### Motorized watercraft

- High-speed navigation reduces an animal's reaction time and increases the risk of collisions that can lead to serious injury, disability or death.
- Motor noise is disturbing. Watch for changes in animal behaviour.

### Sailboats

- A sailing watercraft is less manoeuvrable. This makes it more complex and time consuming to move away from an animal, which prolongs the duration of the disturbance.
- Even if dinghies used to reach the shore are much smaller, they can create more disturbance than the sailboats themselves.



## LIMIT DISTURBANCE

To ensure their safety and tranquility, please observe the following rules when encountering seals, eiders and other animals:

- When a seal is resting on a haul-out site, keep a distance of at least **200 metres** (equivalent to two soccer fields) between you and the animal.
- When a seal is in the water, keep a distance of **100 metres** between you and the animal.
- Maintain a constant, low-speed trajectory so the animal can anticipate your movement and get around you. Avoid repeated stops, departures or changes in direction.

- If the animal surfaces near your paddle watercraft, keep your distance and do not try to get closer.
- If it surfaces near your motorized watercraft, put the engine in neutral until the animal has moved away or submerged itself.
- Avoid frightening the animal with loud noises or sudden movements. Do not tap your watercraft to lure it toward you.
- Use binoculars to get a closer look at the wildlife.

To learn more, visit <https://parcmarin.qc.ca/navigate/> and complete the online training on how to [operate your watercraft in whale habitat](#).



Harbour seal

Photo: J.C. Lemay



Female Common Eider with her ducklings



Male Common Eider

### **PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO WARNING SIGNS**

When disturbed, marine wildlife show alert behaviours, such as fleeing, jumping, vocalizations or changes in their normal movements. These reactions can have immediate and/or long-term consequences, affecting their health and survival in different ways:

#### **Seals**

- When disturbed or nervous, seals hauling out on the park’s boulders return to the water, delaying the moulting process, which is essential to their life cycle.
- Repeated disturbances lead to migration to alternative haul outs that are less frequented and sometimes less adapted to their development and needs.
- Disruption of interactions between young and their mothers can lead to separation. This separation exposes young to the risk of predation or to reduced availability of the mother’s milk, which is important for their development.

#### **Common Eider**

- Disturbances lead to the separation of ducklings in creches. Once isolated, they become vulnerable to predation by gulls, reducing their chances of survival.
- Heavy traffic hampers habitat quality, interferes with resting and decreases the time eiders spend feeding. Additionally, disturbances increase energy expenditure, as eiders have to find another environment rich in food resources.

Remember that you are not the only one to come across these marine wildlife, and each interaction amplifies the impact of the disturbance on the individual. These disturbances are in addition to other anthropogenic threats affecting the St. Lawrence River, such as habitat degradation, pollution and climate change.

## **YOUR COOPERATION IS IMPORTANT!**

By following the recommendations in this Navigation Guide, you are helping to maintain a tranquil environment that is essential to protecting the park’s seals and eiders.

