

## Quebec in Fall: Birds & Whales Itinerary

[Link: Quebec in Fall: Birds & Whales](#)

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### Tour Overview

Fall is a fine time of year for birding and whale-watching, when autumnal colours cover the countryside in la Belle Province, Quebec!

Our Quebec tour begins in the provincial capital Quebec City, from which we explore Jacques Cartier National Park and Léon Provancher Marsh to get a first taste of Quebec birding. Heading east, we stop at the famed Cap Tourmente National Wildlife Area where we experience the spectacle of thousands of migrating Snow Geese and other waterfowl. We head north into Grands Jardins National Park to experience a near-alpine boreal forest, then down the north shore of the mighty St. Lawrence enjoying the fall scenery of the Charlevoix region. Reaching Tadoussac, we head out on the St. Lawrence in search of whales such as Humpback, Minke, Fin and especially Beluga.

We take the ferry across the St. Lawrence, looking for pelagic birds such as Razorbill, Northern Gannet, Common Eider, jaegers and kittiwakes. On the south shore we visit Parc Côtier Kiskotuk to search for waterfowl and shorebirds. Making our way back along the south shore of the St. Lawrence we visit several choice spots for more Snow Geese and other waterfowl, ending back in Quebec City.

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### Itinerary

#### Day 1: Arrival in Québec City



Québec City, a World Heritage City, is the beautiful capital of the province of Québec, situated on the St. Lawrence River. It will be our base for the start of our Quebec birding and whale tour. We will meet for dinner to discuss our upcoming birding adventure. Night in Quebec City, near the airport. We encourage you to arrive a day prior to the tour, to enjoy Old Quebec City on your own.

## Day 2: Jacques Cartier National Park and Léon-Provancher Marsh

We take a morning-trip to Jacques Cartier National Park and spend the afternoon at Léon Provancher Marsh along the St. Lawrence River. These two sites give us an excellent introduction to Quebec birding, and can produce a variety of fall migrants and waterfowl. Night in Quebec City.

## Day 3: Cap Tourmente National Wildlife Area



We begin our day with a stop at Beauport Bay, a globally significant International Bird Area where we'll scan the tidal mudflats for waterfowl and shorebirds. From there we'll make a brief stop at Montmorency Falls, the largest waterfall in the province. We then move to Cap Tourmente, and spend the day exploring the varied habitats of this important refuge; mixed-wood forests, ponds, fields, marshes (fresh and saltwater), and the St. Lawrence River. The highlight should be the southbound concentration of Greater Snow Geese, with daily counts exceeding 50,000 birds, although many other waterfowl are also expected. It's a spectacle not to be missed. Depending on the winds there is a chance for songbird and raptor migration as well. We then continue northeast along the scenic shoreline of the St. Lawrence River to Baie-Saint-Paul. Night in Baie-Saint-Paul.

## Day 4: Baie-Saint-Paul to La Malbaie



We'll spend most of the day in the Grand Jardins National Park looking for boreal specialties such as Spruce Grouse, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Canada Jay, Boreal Chickadee, several boreal warblers, and White-winged Crossbills, but also many hawks, Bald Eagle and occasionally a Golden Eagle. We then explore the stunning coastal road between Baie-Saint-Paul and La Malbaie, stopping along the shore to look for migrant shorebirds and passerines. Night in La Malbaie.

## Day 5: Travel to Tadoussac



We'll explore the superb Charlevoix landscape along the road to Tadoussac, stopping at various locations to look for forest, coastal and sea birds. Along the way, we'll keep an eye out for Harbour Seals, Gray Seals and Beluga Whales. If time permits we may finish our day at the Tadoussac Dunes, a part of Saguenay Fjord National Park that overlooks the St. Lawrence and is home to the Tadoussac Bird Observatory. Night at Tadoussac.

## Days 6 and 7: Tadoussac area



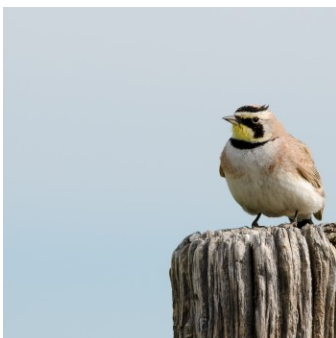
We'll spend the next two days in the Tadoussac area. The core of our visit will be two boat trips (weather permitting) in the Laurentian Channel offshore of the mouth of the Saguenay Fjord, one of Canada's premier whale-watching sites. Minke and Fin Whales are the main feature of these whale-watching cruises and resident Beluga Whales are often seen. With luck, a Blue Whale, a Humpback Whale or a pod of White-sided Dolphins could also be seen. The conditions that attract whales are also good for pelagic birds, and there should be numerous Black-legged Kittiwakes, and we'll watch for harassing jaegers. Razorbills and Black Guillemots are also a strong possibility. On land we'll explore trails in Saguenay Fjord National Park, which borders Saguenay Fjord, the longest in eastern Canada, and itself a Marine Park. Boreal forest predominates here, with migrant landbirds scattered among the residents. Species lists change each day, but we'll hope for Gray-cheeked Thrush, Fox Sparrow, Canada Jay, American Pipit, and boreal finches. Nights in Tadoussac.

## Day 8: Cross the St. Lawrence River by ferry - Saint-Simeon - Rivière du Loup



We'll cross the St. Lawrence on a commercial ferry, across the lower estuary, home of whales, porpoises and many sea birds. Once on the south side, we'll explore the extensive salt marshes of Parc Côtier Kiskotuk, including the famed Gros-Cacouna Marsh, where there will be a mix of migrant waterfowl and shorebirds, and possibly an elusive Nelson's Sparrow. Night in Rivière-du-Loup.

## Day 9: Travel Rivière-du-Loup to Québec



We'll spend the day investigating the south shoreline of the St. Lawrence River, with stops in Kamouraska, Montmagny and other locations where we'll look for migrating shorebirds and waterfowl. We'll check flocks of Black-bellied Plover for possible American Golden-Plover, and listen for Horned Larks among the landbirds. These areas are also good for birds of prey, including the occasional Golden Eagle, and the salt marshes also harbour some marsh birds, particularly Marsh Wrens and Swamp Sparrows. This is a coastal region of the Saint-Lawrence where Harbour Seals and Belugas are also seen. Night in Québec City.

## Day 10 - Departure

Our Quebec birding and whale tour ends today. Breakfast is available at the hotel, but you can leave anytime. You may have a chance to experience a little more of Québec City before reluctantly heading home.

## What to Expect

Most days on our Quebec birding and whale tour begin with breakfast at 6:30 - 7:00 a.m., followed at mid-day by a picnic lunch. Our schedule is flexible as it depends on driving times involved each day. Our longest drive will be from Riviere-du-Loup to Quebec City, a distance of 190 km; other daily distances will be much shorter.

Weather in late September and early October is usually pleasant, with warm days and cool nights. It is a good idea to bring footwear that is waterproof and rubber boots for shore and wetland areas. The whale-watching boat trips will be quite cool, so appropriate layered clothing, gloves and hat are recommended. The ferry is comfortable, with shelter and lots of seating space, but plan for warmer clothing if you want to observe from the outside decks.

Most trails and paths that we follow are moderately easy to navigate. Participants in good health should experience no problems with the terrain, as our pace will be leisurely. We should not encounter significant numbers of mosquitos or black flies at that time of year; however, you may wish to bring mosquito repellent in case of an exceptionally warm day—mosquitoes or black flies are not usually a problem anywhere except perhaps in sheltered trails. Each evening, the list of birds and other wildlife will be reviewed during dinner, and plans for the next day will be discussed.

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## What's Included

### Tour Price Includes

- All accommodation (Good quality)
- Breakfasts and lunches included
- Two whale-watching boat trips into the St. Lawrence River
- Ferry crossing across the St. Lawrence
- Guides (4 - 8 participants with one leader, 9 - 12 with two)
- Ground transportation (One or two 15-passenger vans)
- Park and entrance fees

### Tour Price Does Not Include

- Travel to and from start/end location
  - Travel Insurance
  - Items of a personal nature
  - Evening meals - you can expect these to be between \$45 - \$75 per night
  - Taxes (5% GST)
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