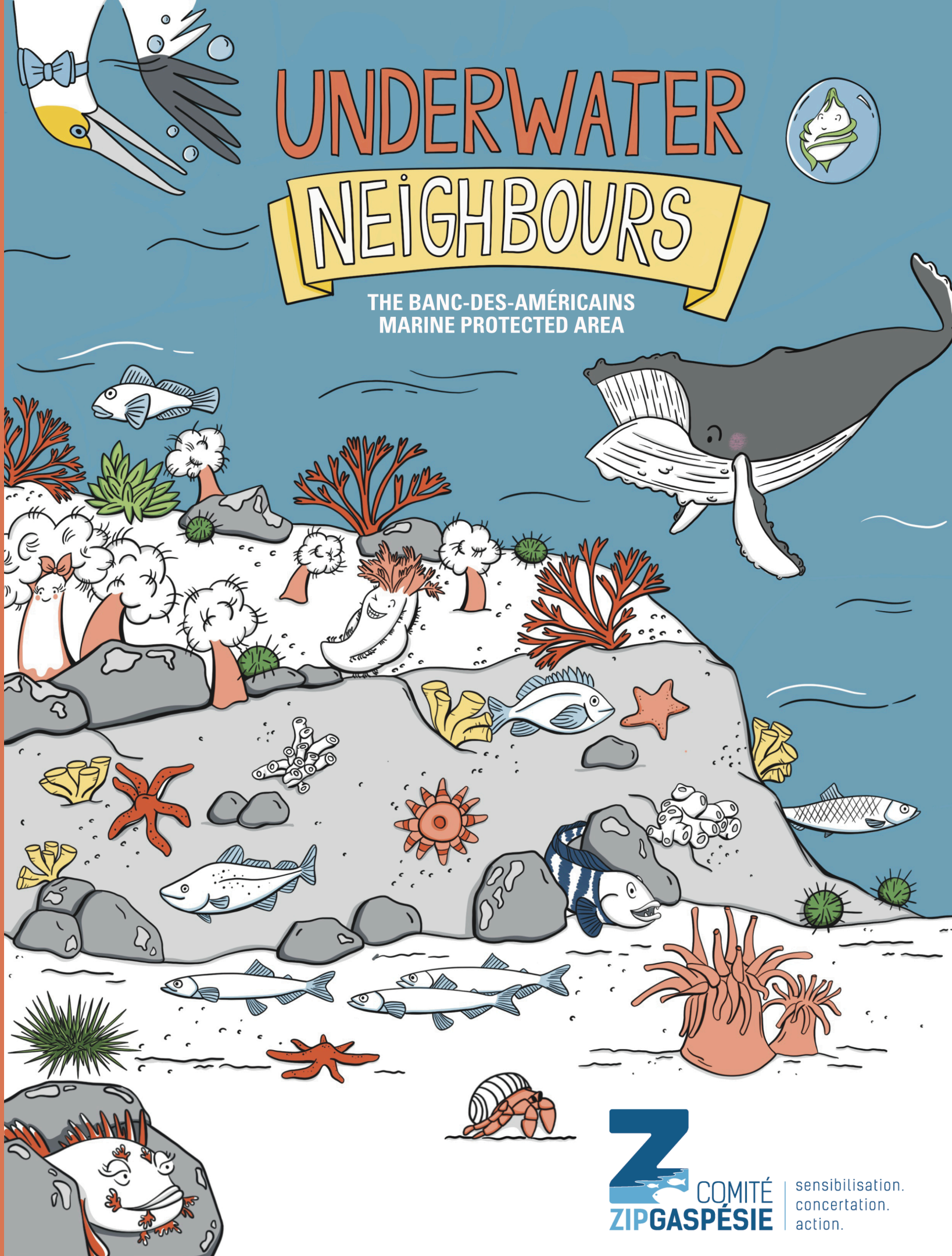


UNDERWATER

NEIGHBOURS

THE BANC-DES-AMÉRICAINS
MARINE PROTECTED AREA



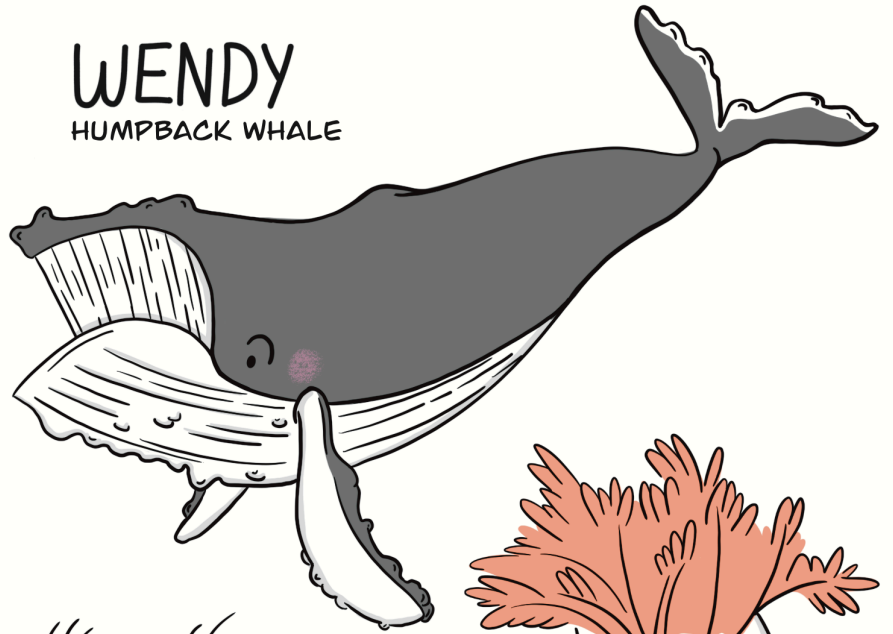
Z COMITÉ
ZIPGASPÉSIE

sensibilisation.
concertation.
action.

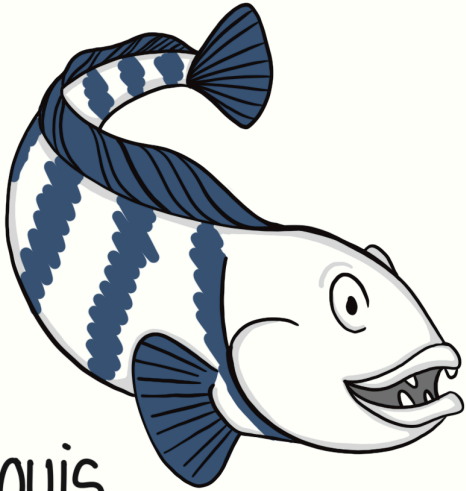
Created by **Comité ZIP Gaspésie**
Illustrated by **Fannie Desmarais**
Printed by **Imprimerie du Havre**
Translated by **Mariah McKenney, C. Tr.**

2026

WENDY
HUMPBACK WHALE



LOUIS
ATLANTIC WOLFFISH



FRED
SEA CUCUMBER



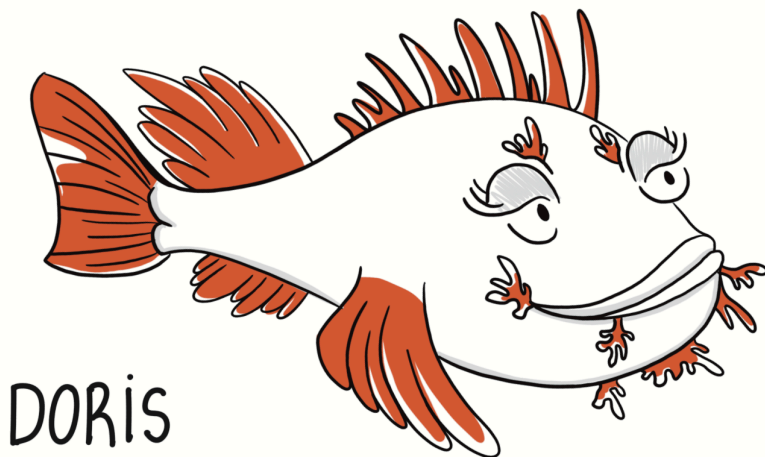
PHIL
NORTHERN GANNET



SIMONE
FRILLED ANEMONE



CAM
PHYTOPLANKTON



DORIS
SEA RAVEN

UNDERWATER NEIGHBOURS

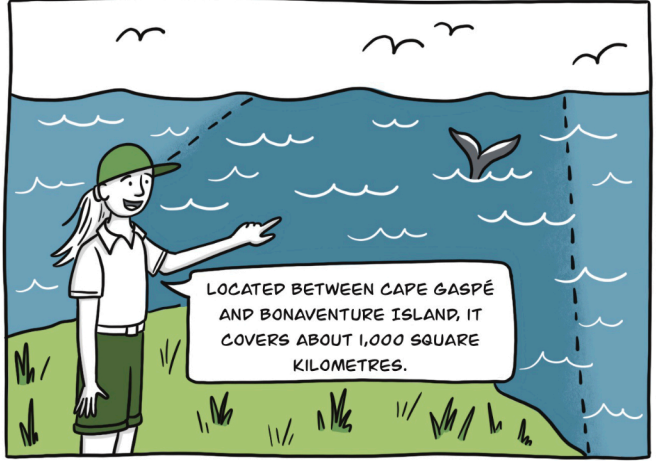
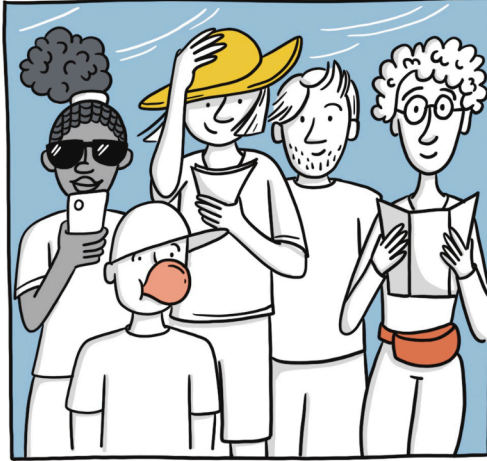
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THE BANC-DES-AMÉRICAINS MARINE PROTECTED AREA



YOU'RE LOOKING AT THE BANC-DES-AMÉRICAINS MARINE PROTECTED AREA.



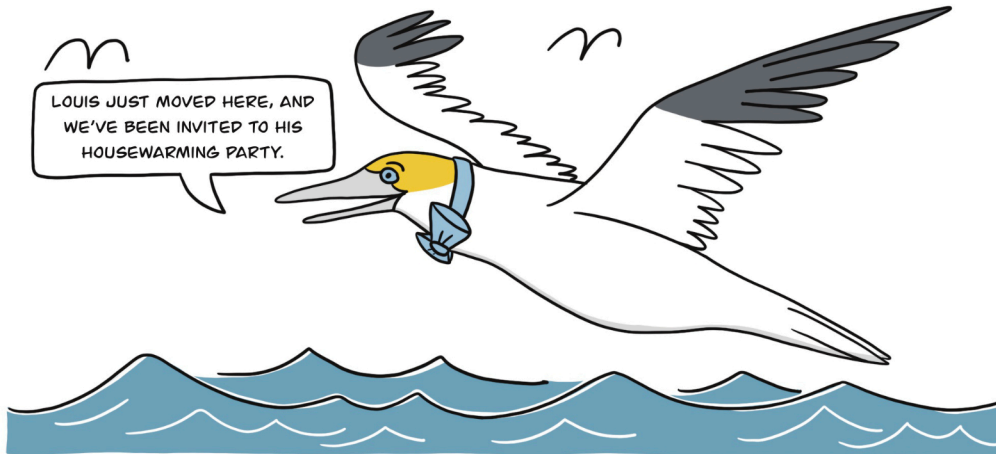
LOCATED BETWEEN CAPE GASPÉ AND BONAVENTURE ISLAND, IT COVERS ABOUT 1,000 SQUARE KILOMETRES.



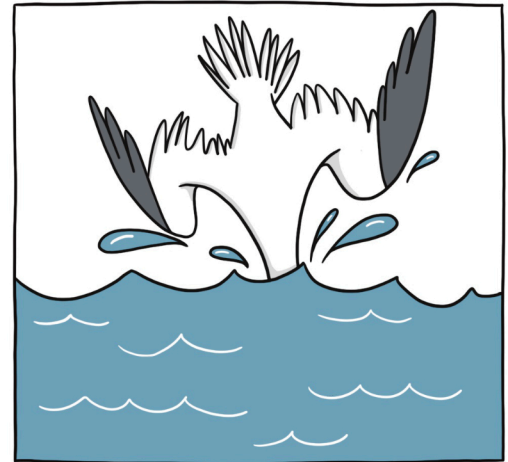
MANY SPECIES LIVE HERE, INCLUDING THE NORTHERN GANNET YOU'RE SEEING RIGHT NOW.



HI THERE!



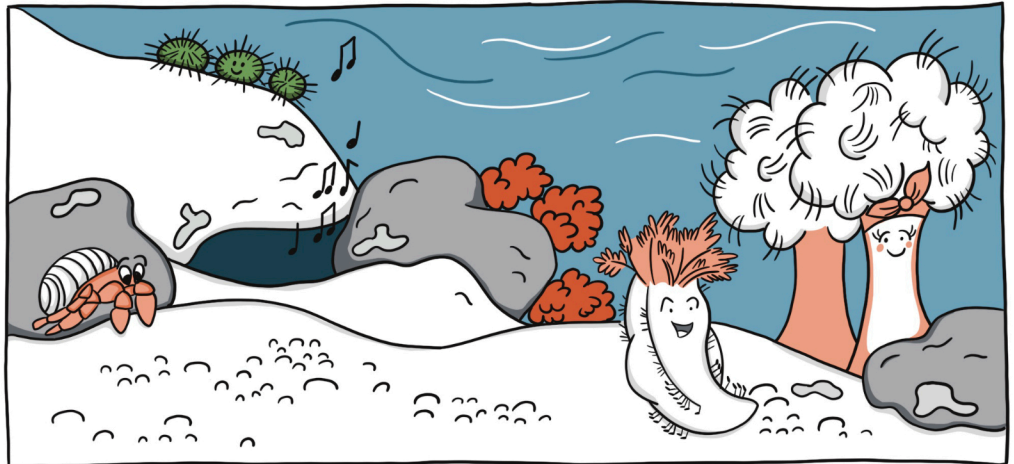
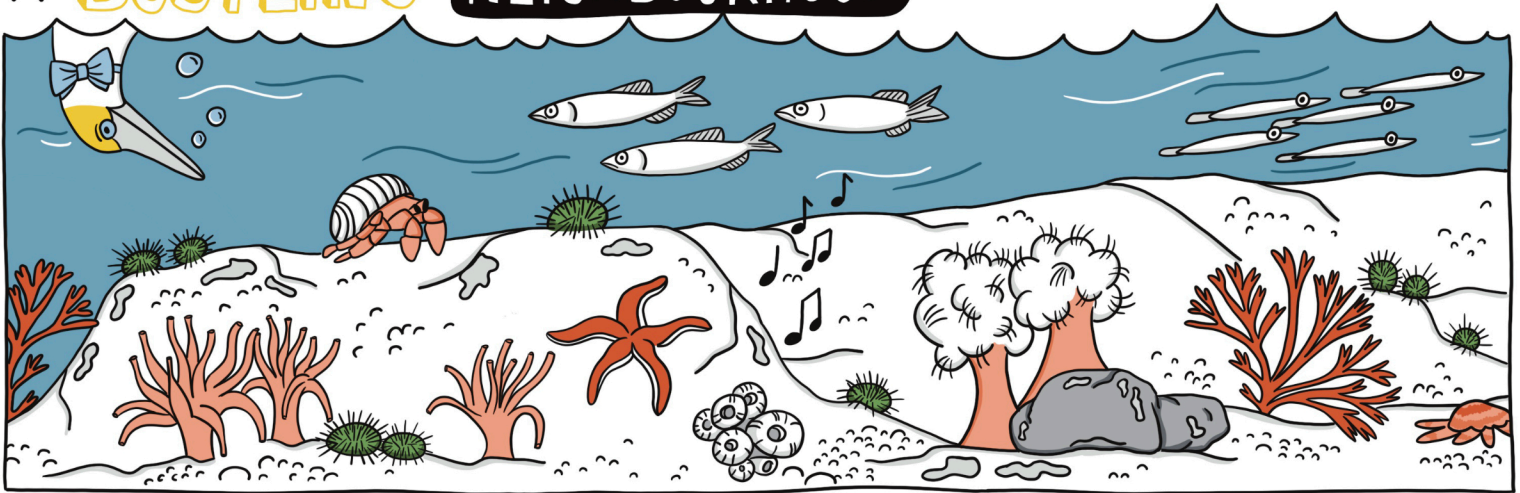
LOUIS JUST MOVED HERE, AND WE'VE BEEN INVITED TO HIS HOUSEWARMING PARTY.



Did you know that...

The Banc-des-Américains Marine Protected Area, a very special part of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, is home to many species of fish, invertebrates, and marine mammals. Follow Phil the **northern gannet** to meet some of them!

A BUSTLING NEIGHBOURHOOD



BIODIVERSITY

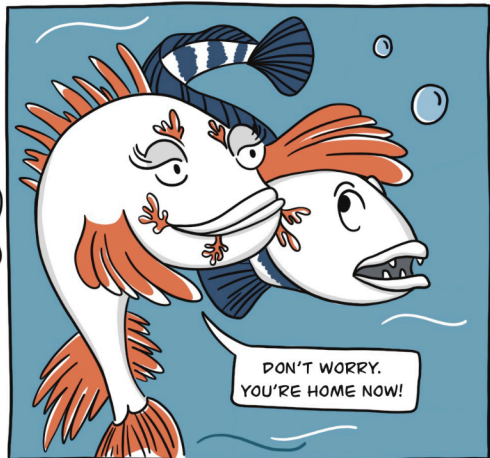
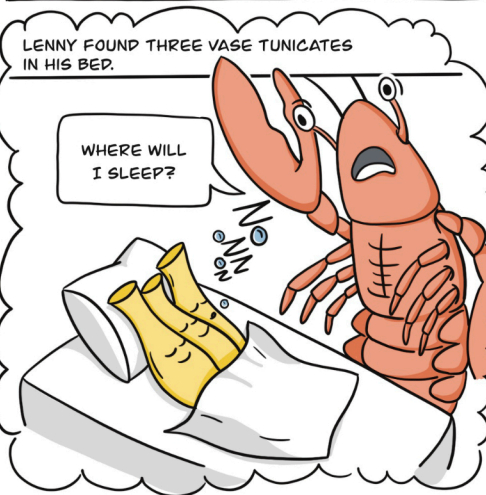
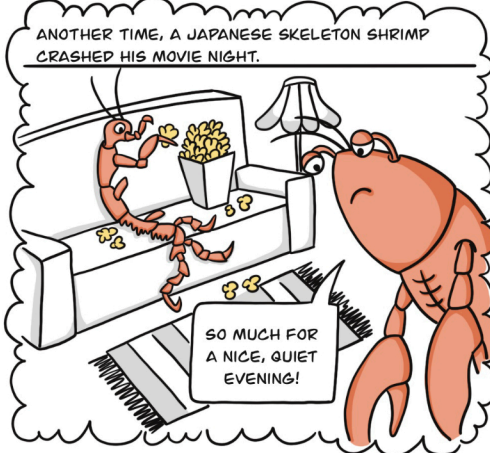
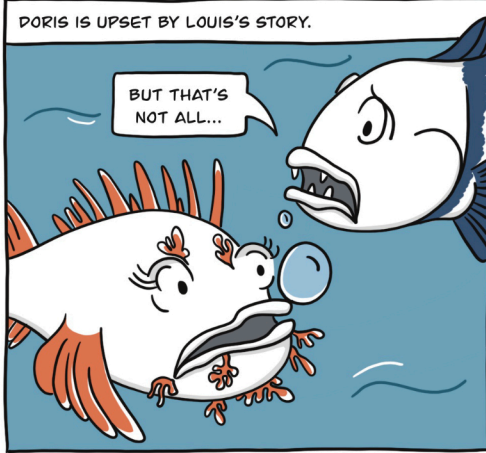
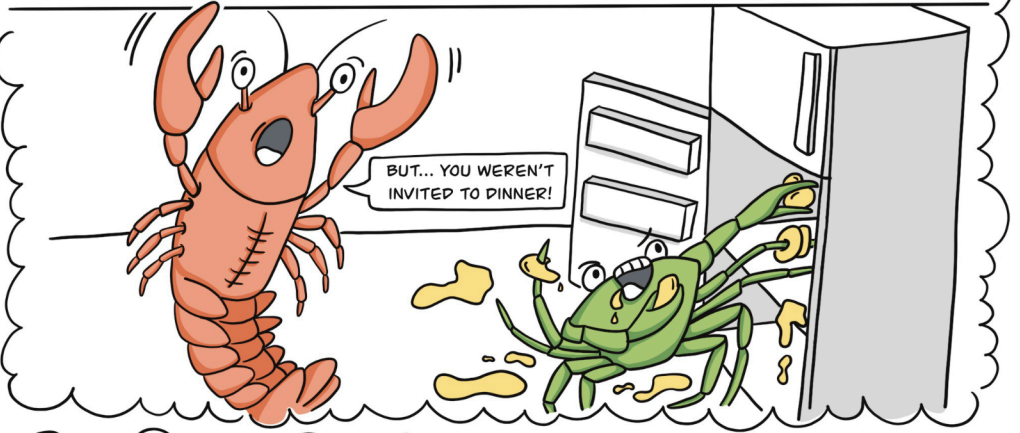
Did you know that...

The underwater rock formations in the Banc-des-Américains Marine Protected Area create diverse habitats, making it a hotspot for marine life. The shallow, rocky ridge provides shelter for animals like sea stars and anemones, and the deeper plains form a vast habitat for many fish species, such as rainbow smelt and capelin, and for crustaceans and molluscs. For many species, this marine protected area is an essential place for feeding, breeding, and migrating. It's also crucial for endangered species, such as the Atlantic wolffish, which shelters in the rocky crevices. Endangered species are animals or plants that could become extinct if nothing is done to protect them.

A FRESH START



ONE TIME, LENNY CAUGHT A EUROPEAN GREEN CRAB RAIDING HIS FRIDGE.



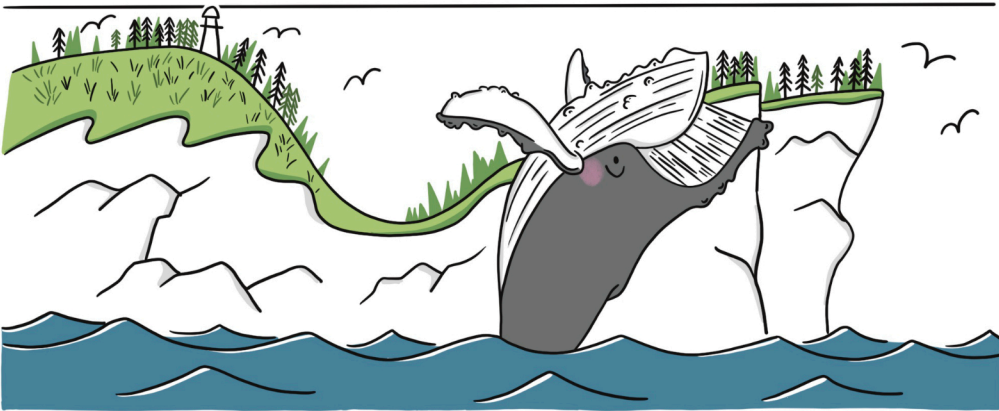
AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES

Did you know that...

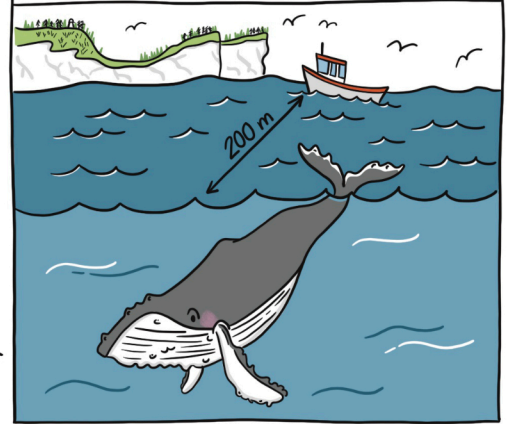
The European green crab, the Japanese skeleton shrimp, and the vase tunicate are some of the aquatic invasive species found in Québec. Aquatic invasive species are introduced to habitats where they don't usually live, often through human activities like boating. In these new environments, they have very few natural predators. These "invaders" are harmful to local species because they destroy their habitats and use up resources like food.

JOINING in the FUN

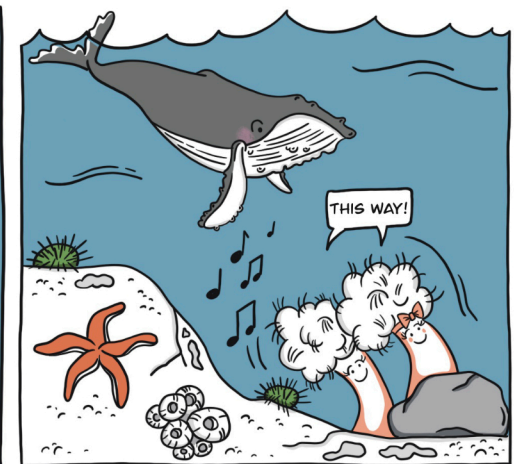
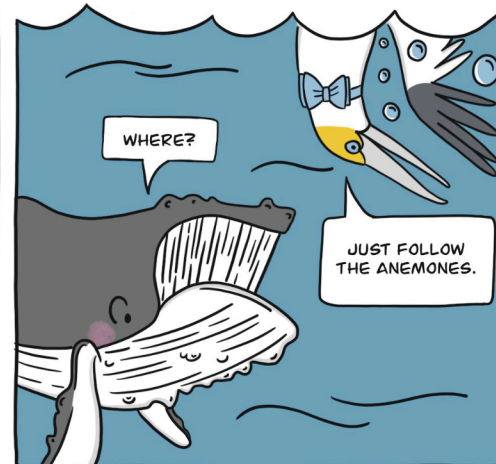
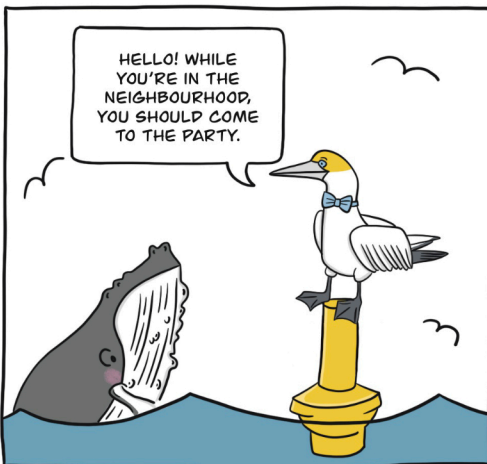
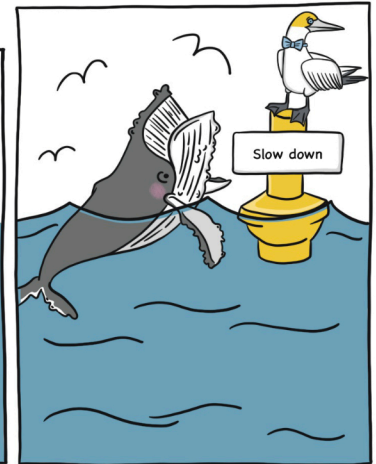
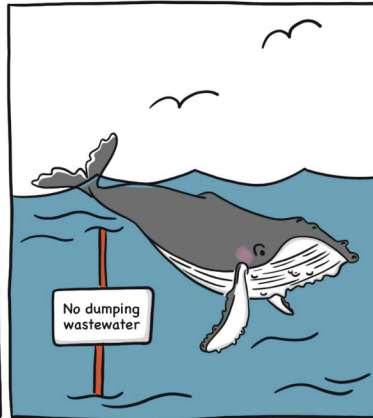
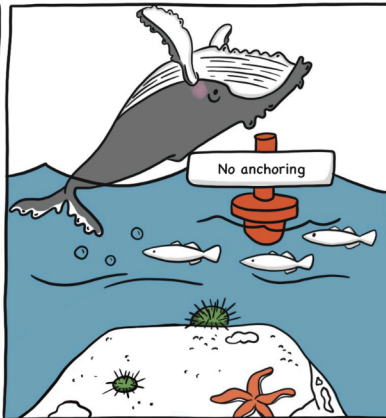
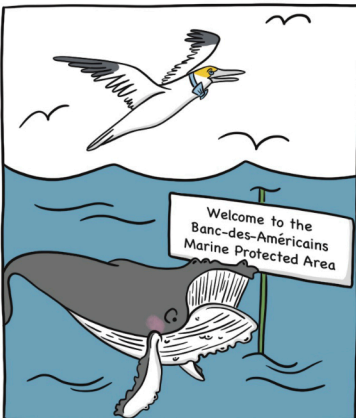
MEANWHILE, WENDY, A YOUNG WHALE, ARRIVES IN THE BANC-DES-AMÉRICAINS MARINE PROTECTED AREA...



HAPPY TO SEE EVERYONE HERE RESPECTING HER SPACE.



AS WENDY EXPLORES, SHE REALIZES HOW GREAT IT IS TO LIVE IN THE BANC-DES-AMÉRICAINS MARINE PROTECTED AREA.

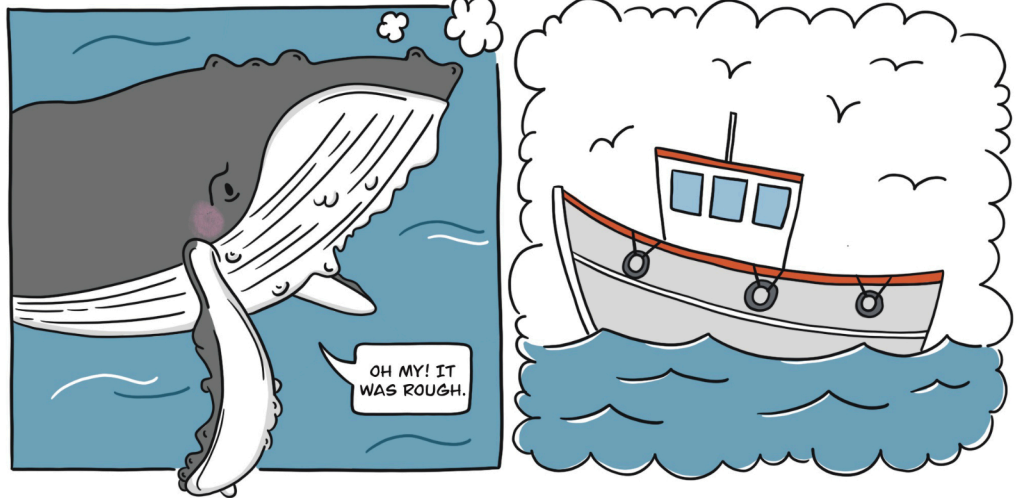
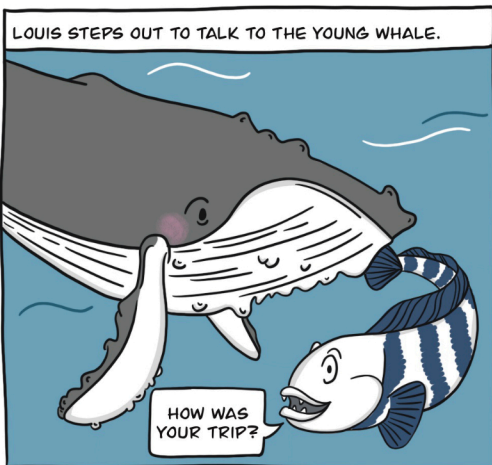
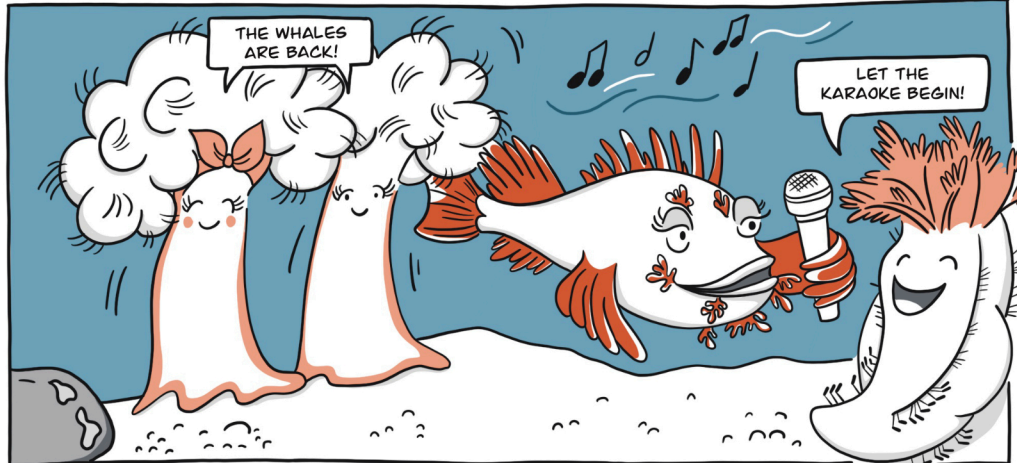
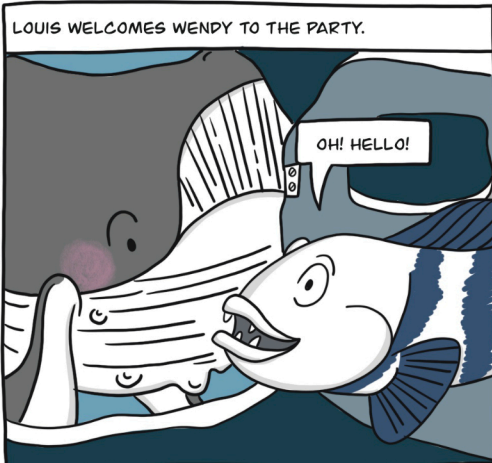
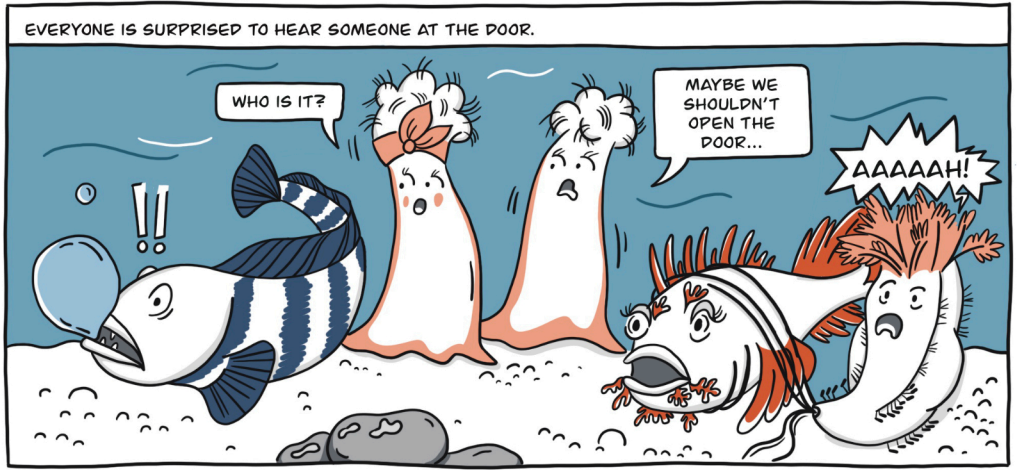
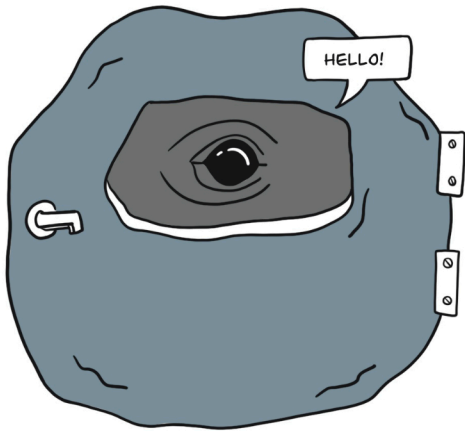


RULES AND GUIDELINES

Did you know that...

Human activity is regulated to protect the rich biodiversity in the Banc-des-Américains Marine Protected Area. For example, it's prohibited to anchor boats in the most fragile zone and to practise certain types of fishing in the marine protected area. Boats must also keep a safe distance from whales. Some activities, including research, education, tourism, and restoration, are permitted, but only with prior authorization.

The GREAT VOYAGE

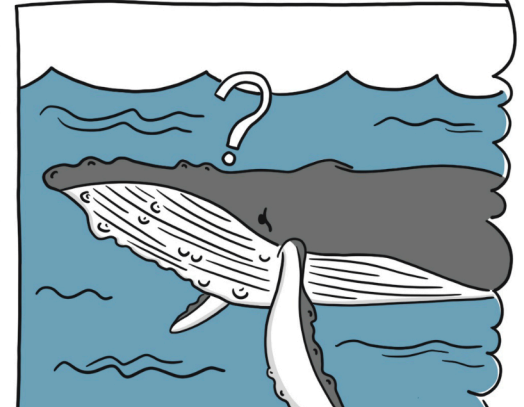
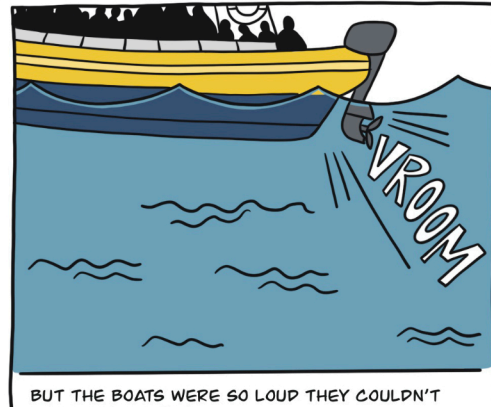
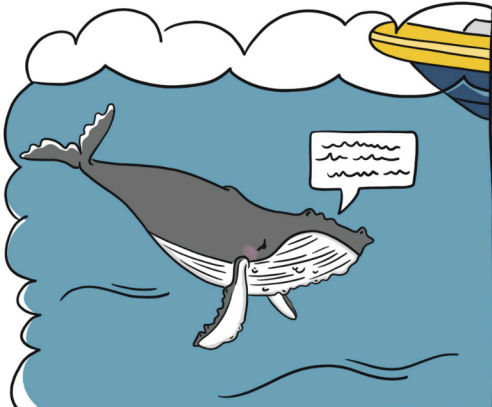
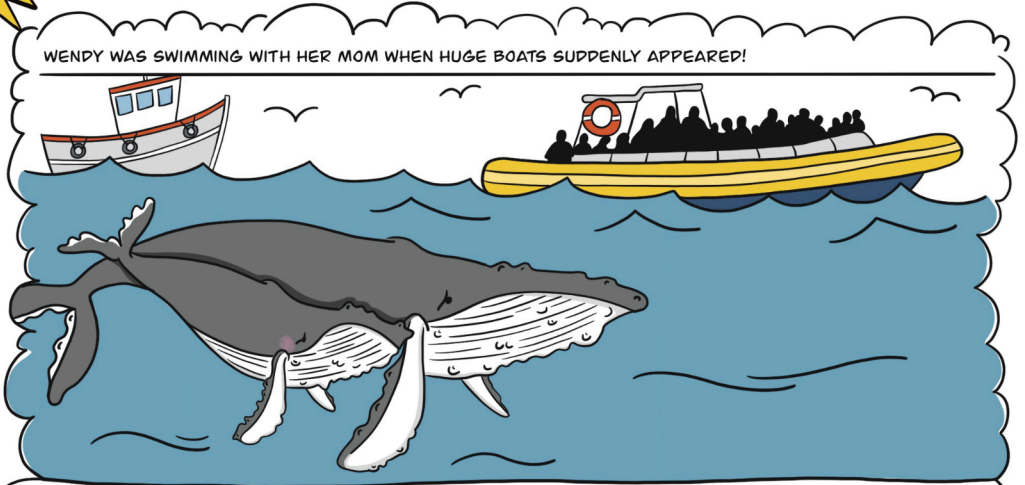
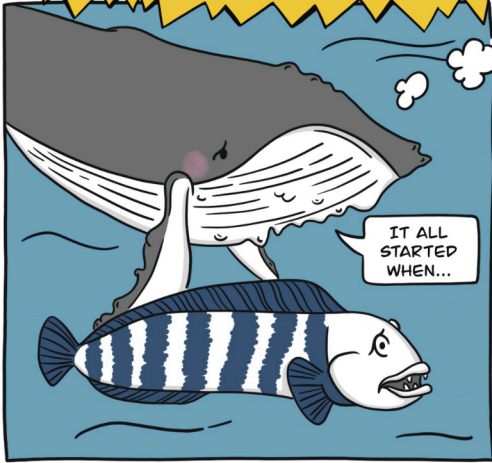


MIGRATION

Did you know that...

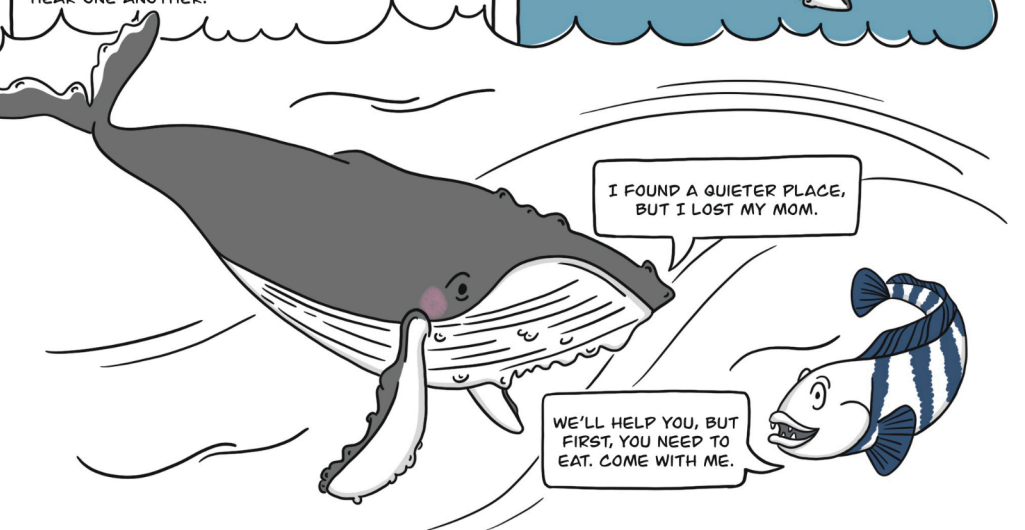
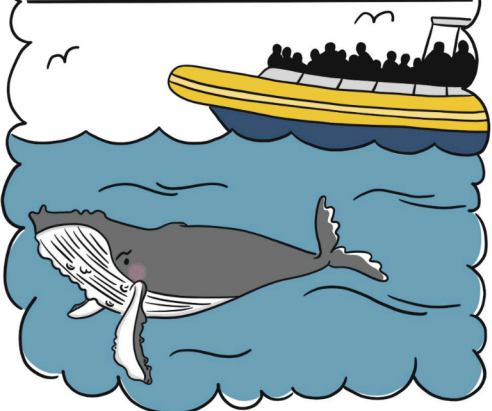
After a long migration from tropical waters, humpback whales gather in the Banc-des-Américains Marine Protected Area to replenish their fat stores. Sometimes travelling with their calves, which they protect and raise for up to two years, these ocean giants are incredible acrobats, jumping out of the water and splashing down with their tails held high in the air. Humpback whales feed on krill and small fish, such as herring and capelin, hunting alone or in groups using their diving and singing skills.

CACOPHONY



WENDY WAS WORRIED AND TRIED TO TALK TO HER MOM.

WENDY TRIED TO ESCAPE THE NOISE BUT WAS SEPARATED FROM HER MOM.

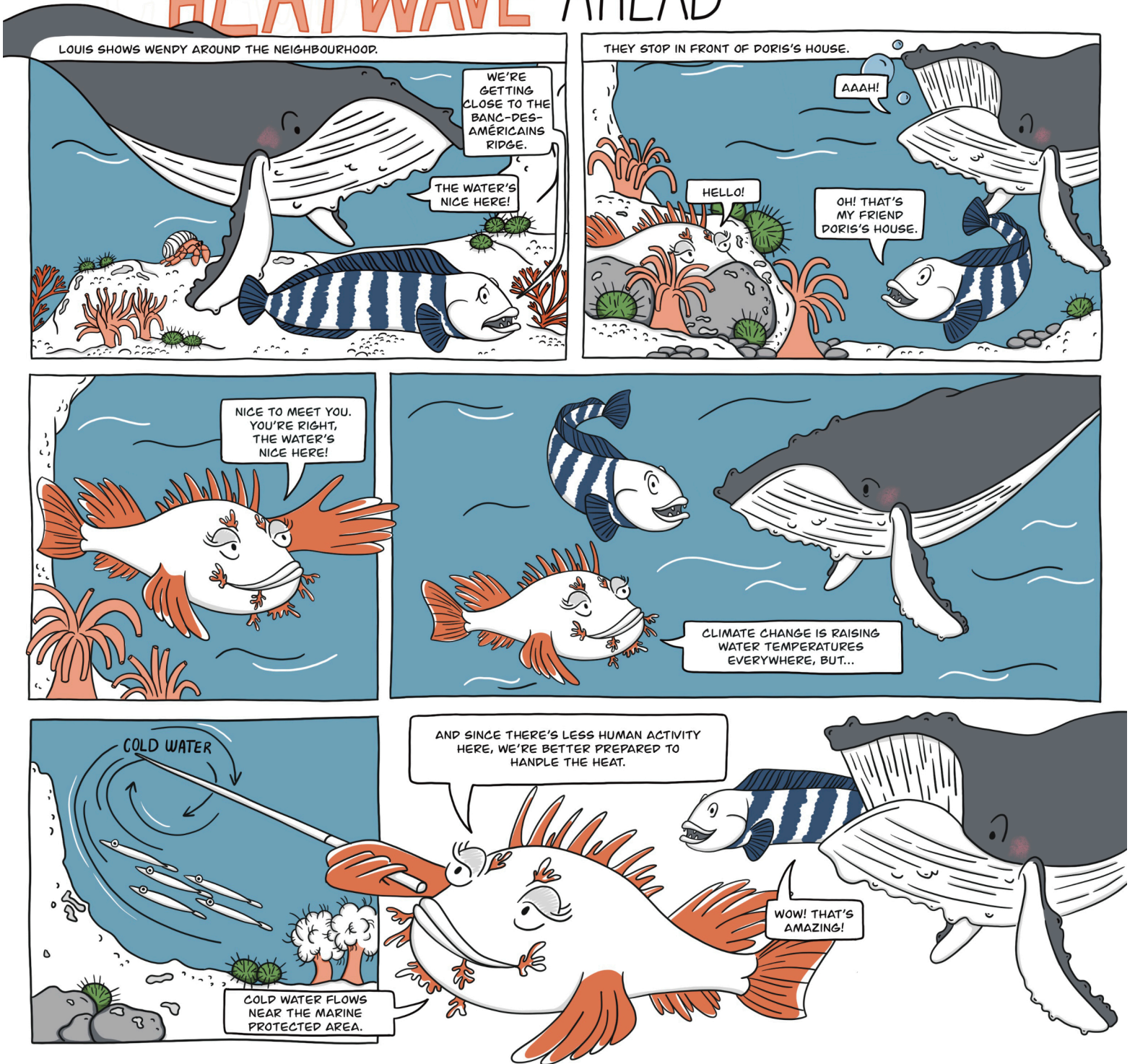


NOISE POLLUTION

Did you know that...

Although underwater noise pollution is invisible, it poses a real threat to marine mammals. Whales use complex songs to navigate, hunt, and communicate with their young. But the noise from boats makes it difficult for whales to communicate with one another. Noise travels five times faster underwater than through the air, sometimes covering thousands of kilometres. To protect whales from noise pollution, it's important to keep a safe distance from them.

HEATWAVE AHEAD



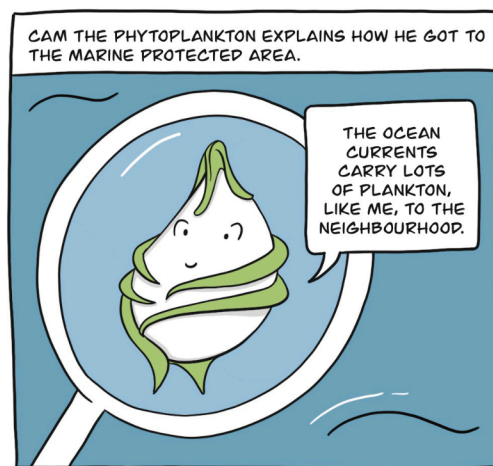
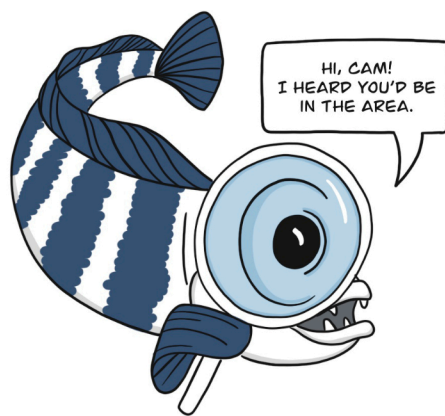
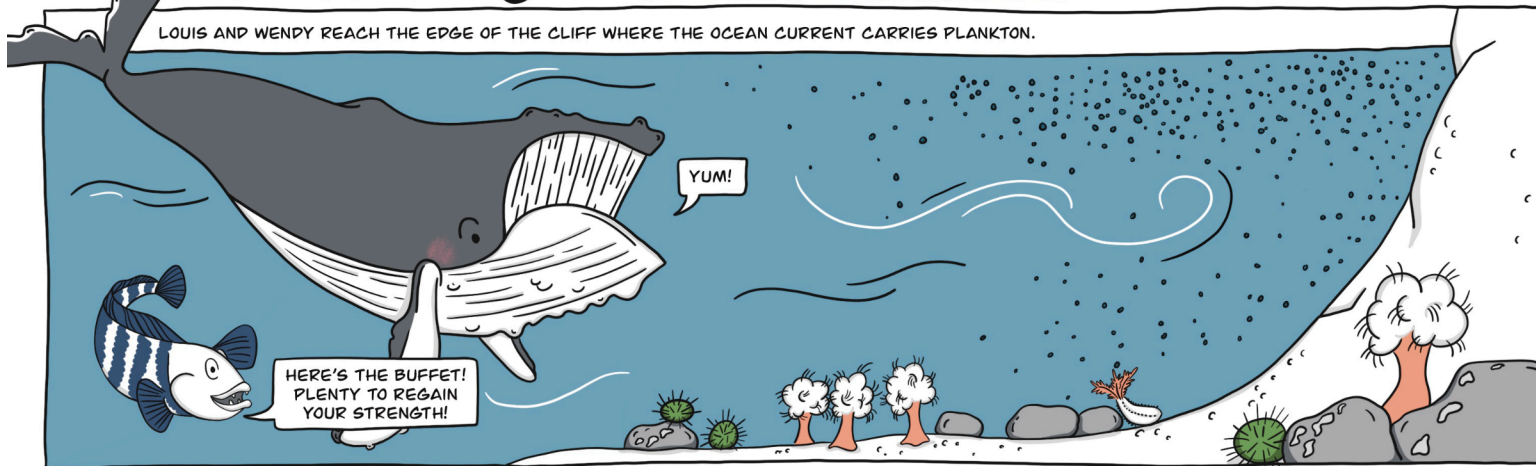
RISING WATER TEMPERATURES

Did you know that...

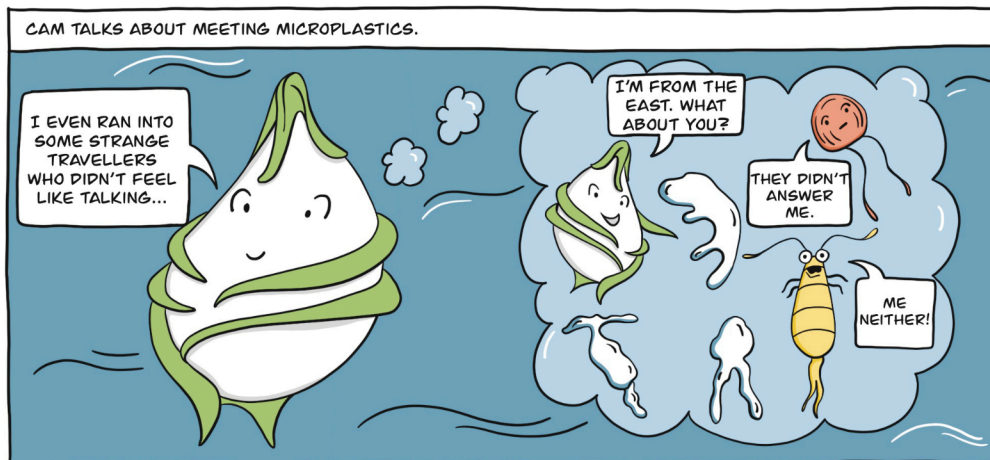
The oceans are getting warmer because of climate change. The water at the surface is very warm, but deeper down, the water stays cold. Because the layers have different temperatures, the water doesn't mix well, making it harder for oxygen and nutrients to flow between the bottom and the surface. Rising water temperatures may also force some species to leave if the conditions become too harsh. The Gaspé current brings cold, nutrient-rich water to the Banc-des-Américains Marine Protected Area, helping local species survive and flourish. But even with this beneficial current, the marine protected area still feels the effects of rising water temperatures. Fortunately, because human activity is regulated in the area, marine life is stronger and better able to cope with these changes.

STRANGE NEIGHBOURS

LOUIS AND WENDY REACH THE EDGE OF THE CLIFF WHERE THE OCEAN CURRENT CARRIES PLANKTON.



CAM TALKS ABOUT MEETING MICROPLASTICS.

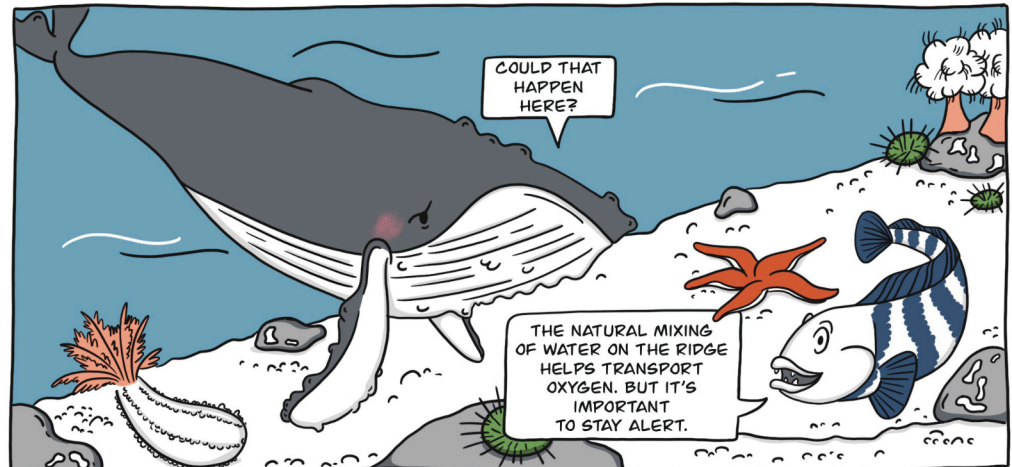
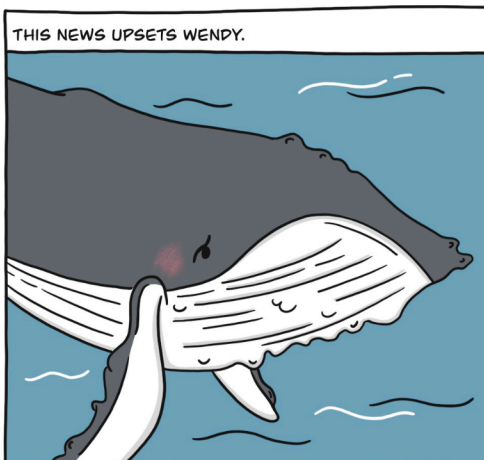
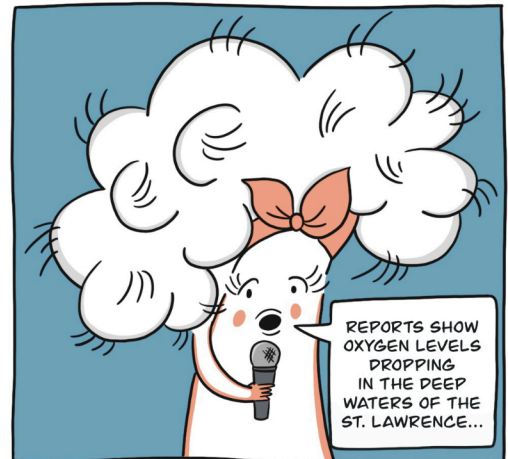
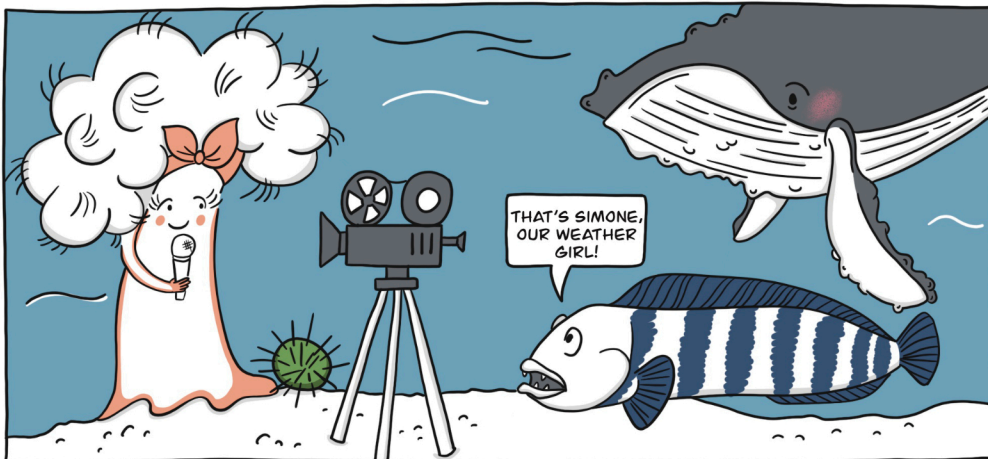
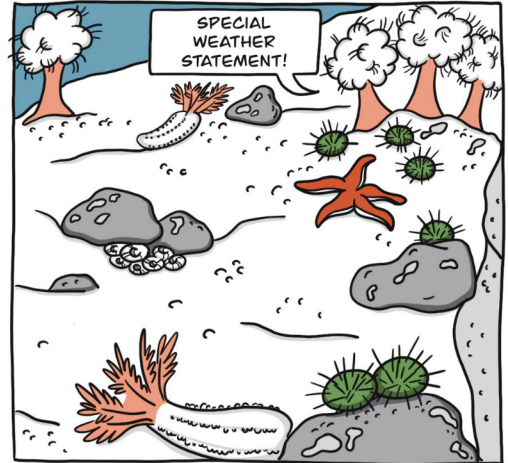
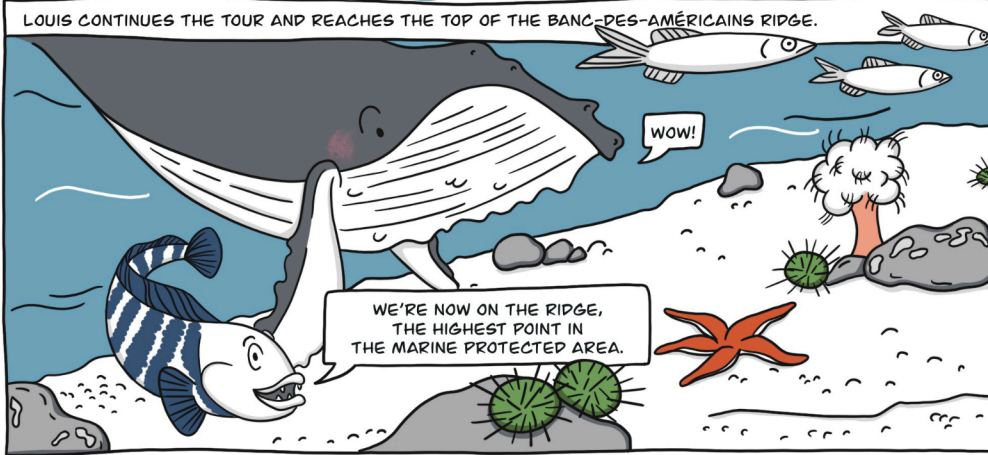


MICROPLASTICS

Did you know that...

The Banc-des-Américains Marine Protected Area is a special place where the rock formations and the Gaspé current cause lots of food to collect, including small and large plankton, especially krill, providing nourishment for many marine species. The ocean currents can also transport waste, such as microplastics. Tiny pieces of plastic that are sometimes invisible to the naked eye, microplastics are harmful to marine animals and ecosystems. We can protect marine environments by using less plastic, reusing items, and recycling properly so plastic doesn't end up in the sea. Every action counts!

OUT of BREATH

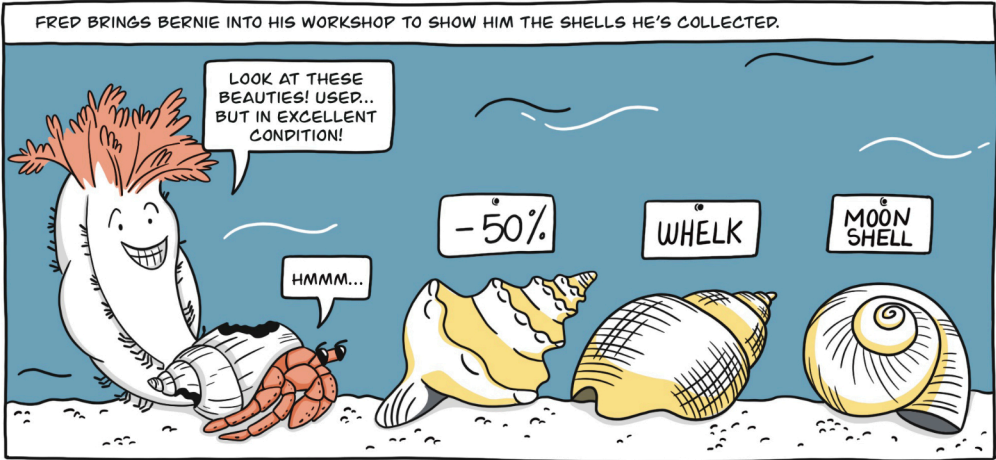
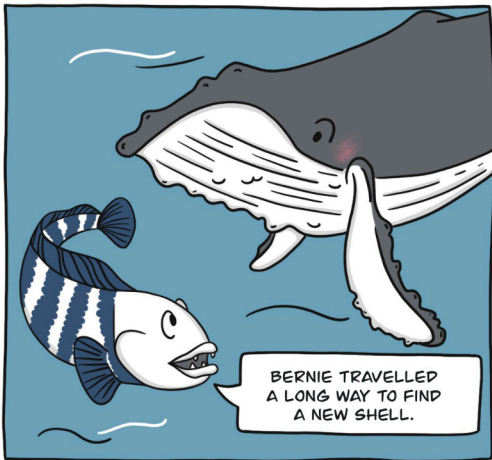
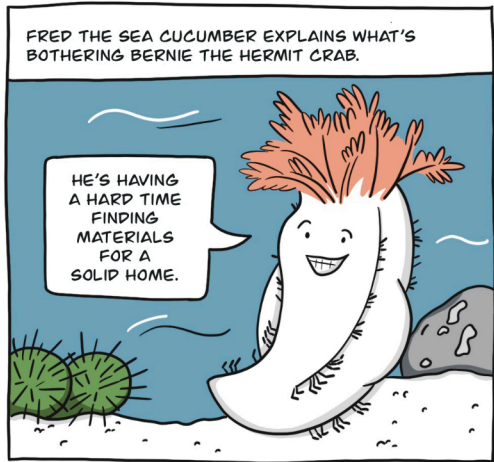
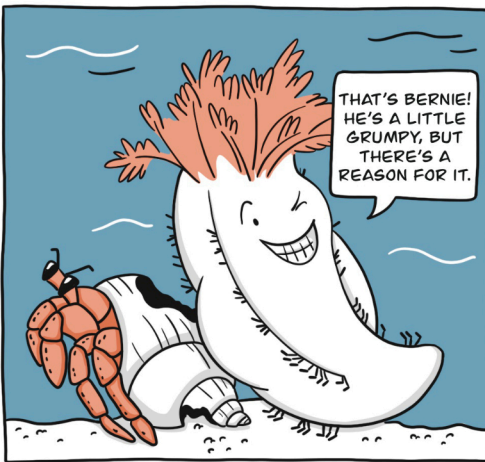
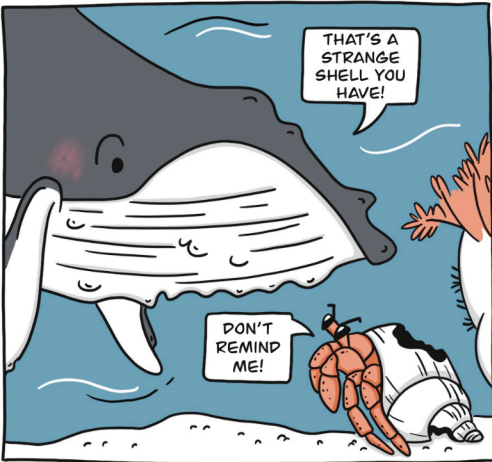
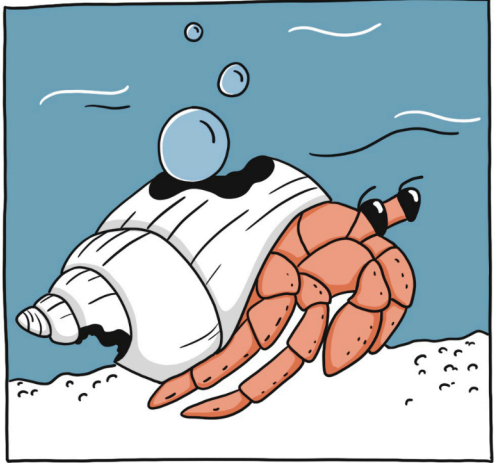
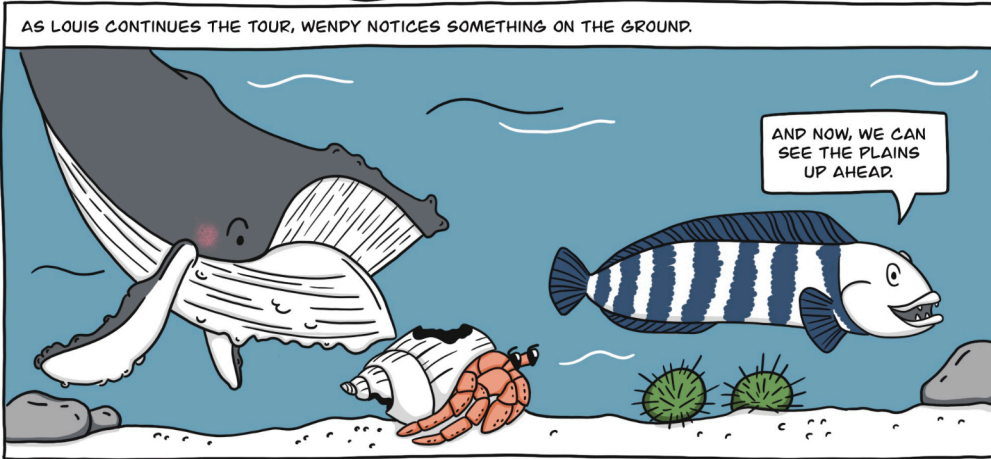


OXYGEN DECLINE

Did you know that...

Marine animals need oxygen in the water just like humans need air to breathe. If there isn't enough oxygen, some animals leave the area, and the ones that stay struggle to grow or reproduce. Sometimes this leads to "dead zones" where almost nothing can survive. Since the 1930s, this problem has been getting worse in the St. Lawrence. On the Banc-des-Américains Marine Protected Area ridge, the waves and currents mix the water and help circulate oxygen, but the deeper parts of the ocean are still affected. That's why it's important for scientists to monitor these changes.

SHELL TROUBLE



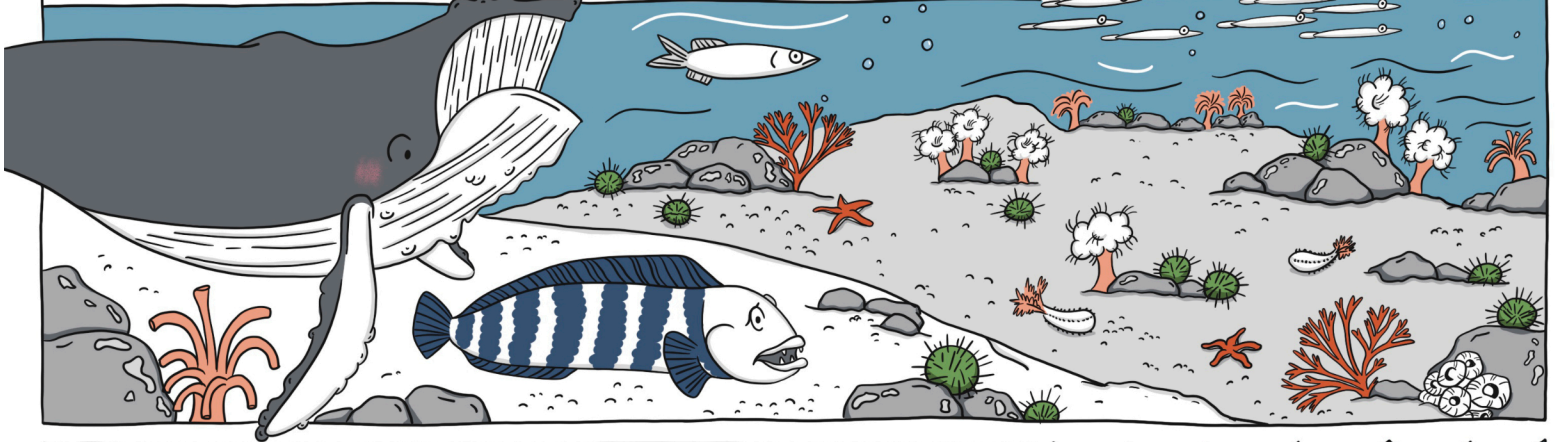
ACIDIFICATION

Did you know that...

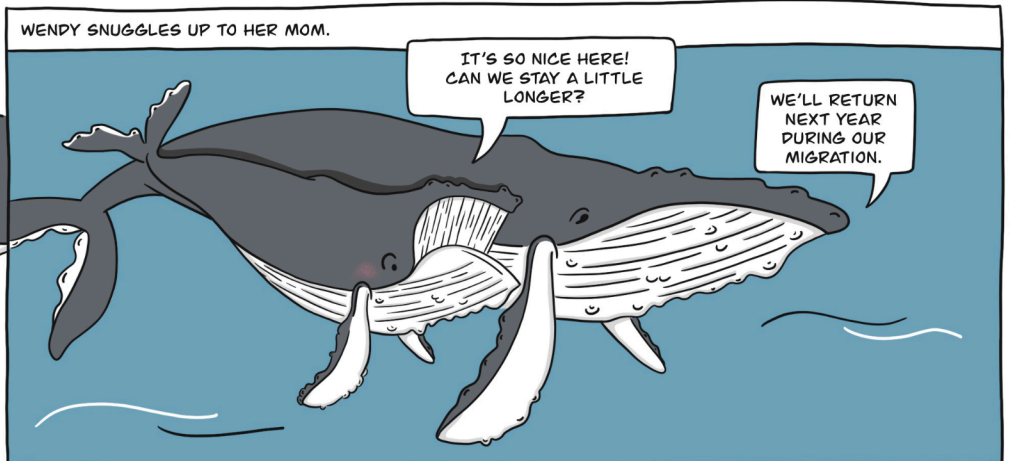
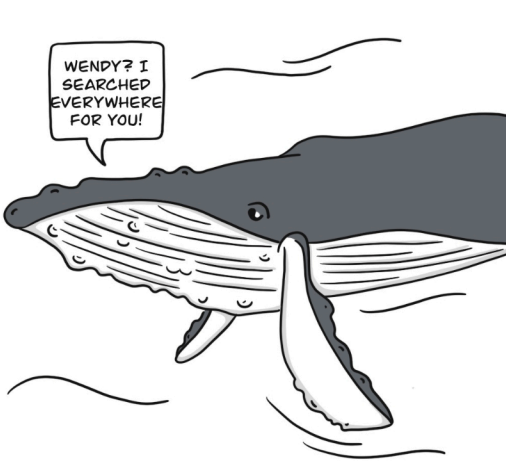
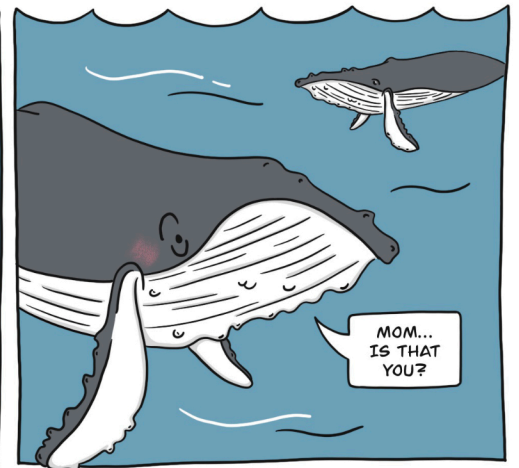
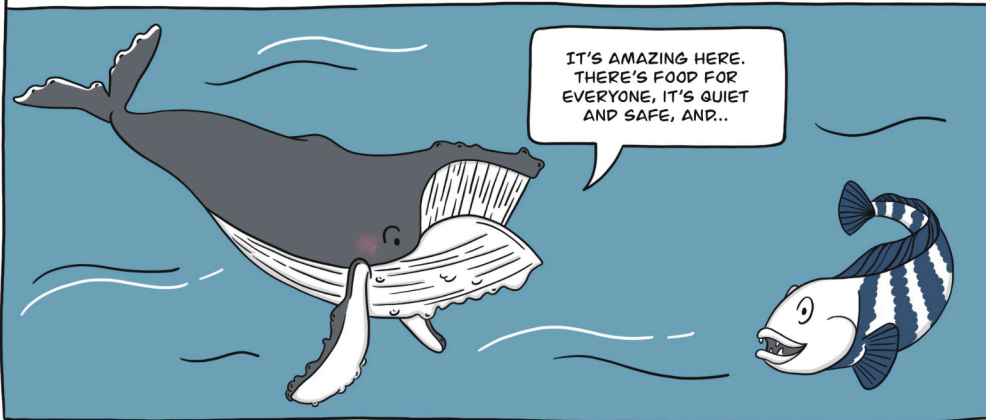
Many human activities release a gas called carbon dioxide, or CO₂, into the air, and the ocean absorbs some of it, causing the water to become more acidic. This acidification weakens the shells and skeletons of corals, molluscs, and crustaceans, making it harder for them to survive. For example, hermit crabs like Bernie, who rely on empty shells for protection, often struggle to find ones in good condition. Higher CO₂ levels can also alter the behaviour of certain fish, making them weaker and more vulnerable to predators. Although the Banc-des-Américains Marine Protected Area can't prevent this, it helps marine animals by protecting them from other human threats.

FEEDING FRENZY

LOUIS AND WENDY CONTINUE THEIR TOUR ALONG THE CLIFF, TAKING IN THE VIEW.



WENDY IS HAPPY SHE FOUND THE BANC-DES-AMÉRICAINS MARINE PROTECTED AREA.



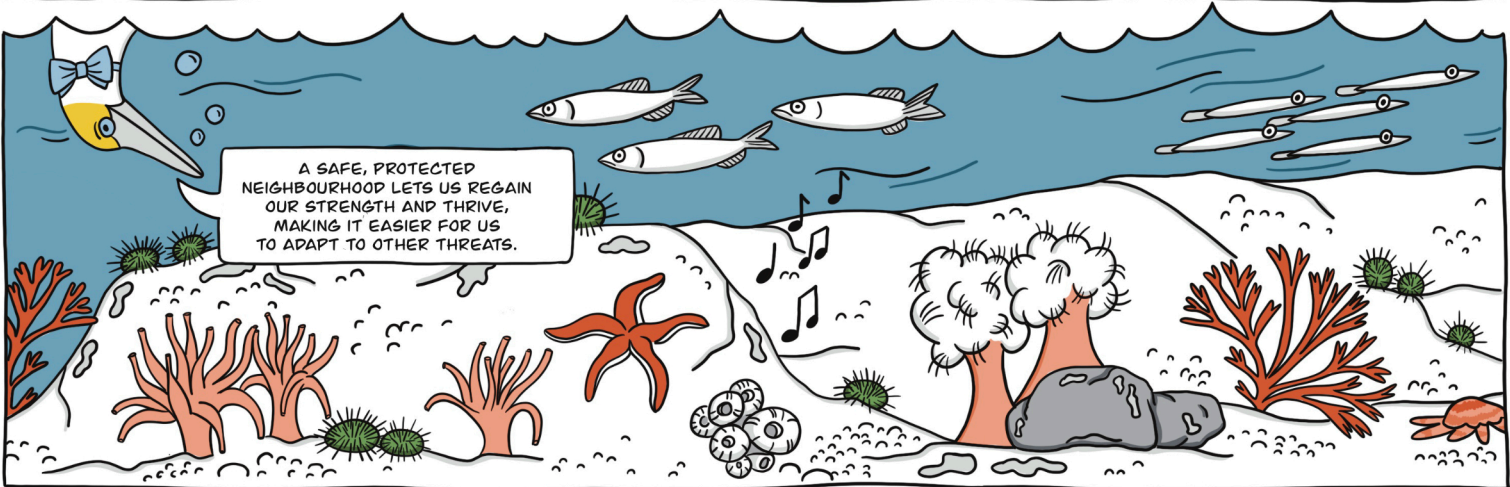
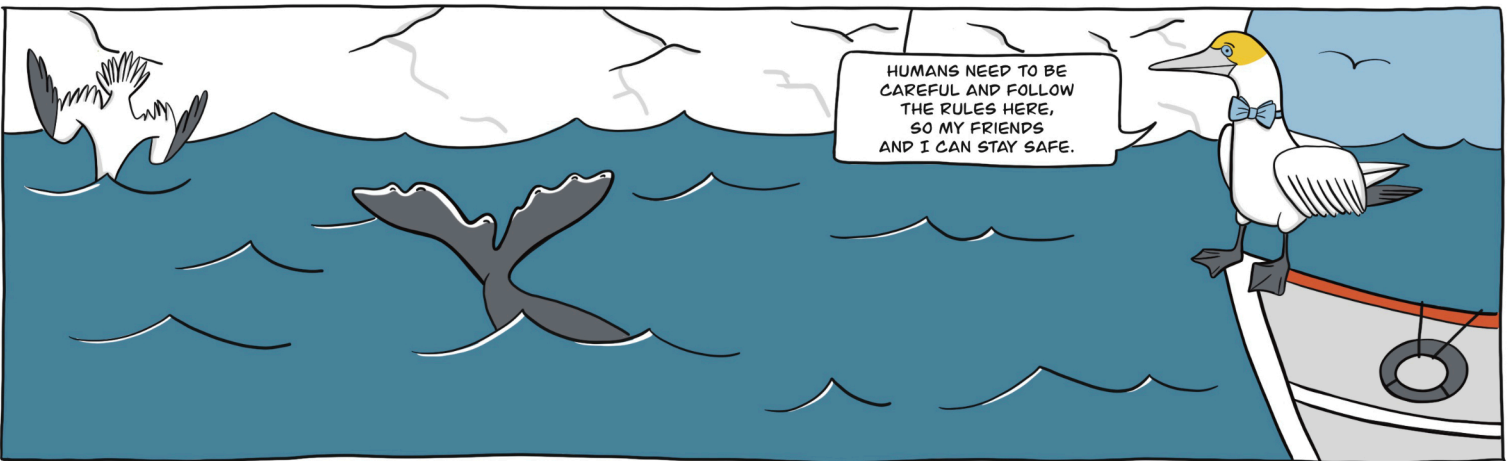
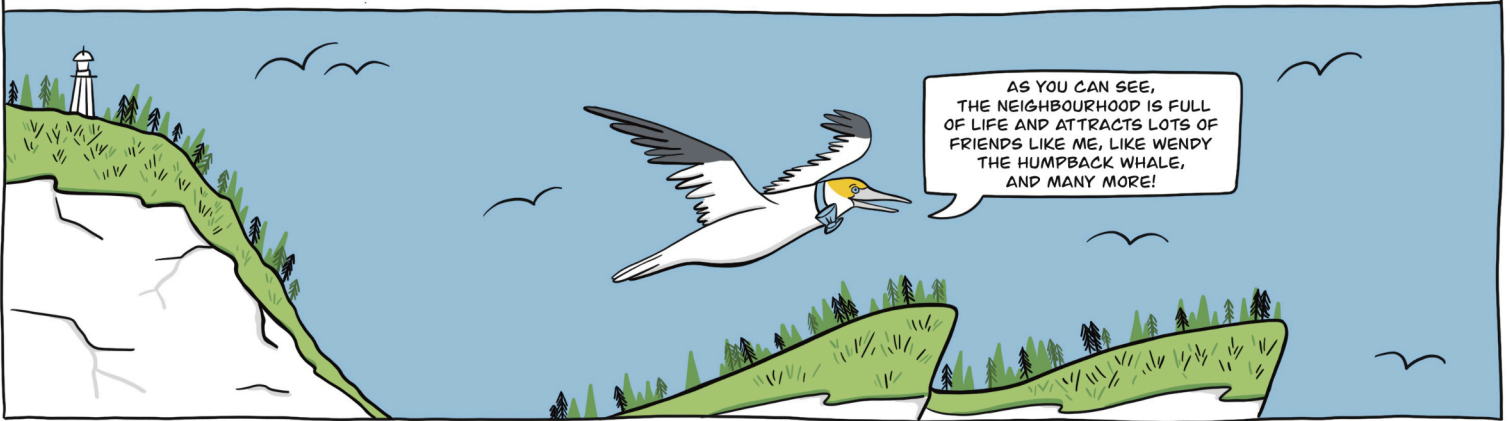
ABUNDANCE OF FOOD

Did you know that...

The Banc-des-Américains Marine Protected Area is an essential feeding ground for many marine species. Regulating human activity helps local and visiting wildlife feed and live in peace. In turn, this helps maintain greater biodiversity, which means there's a wider variety of plant and animal species.

All's Well that Ends Well

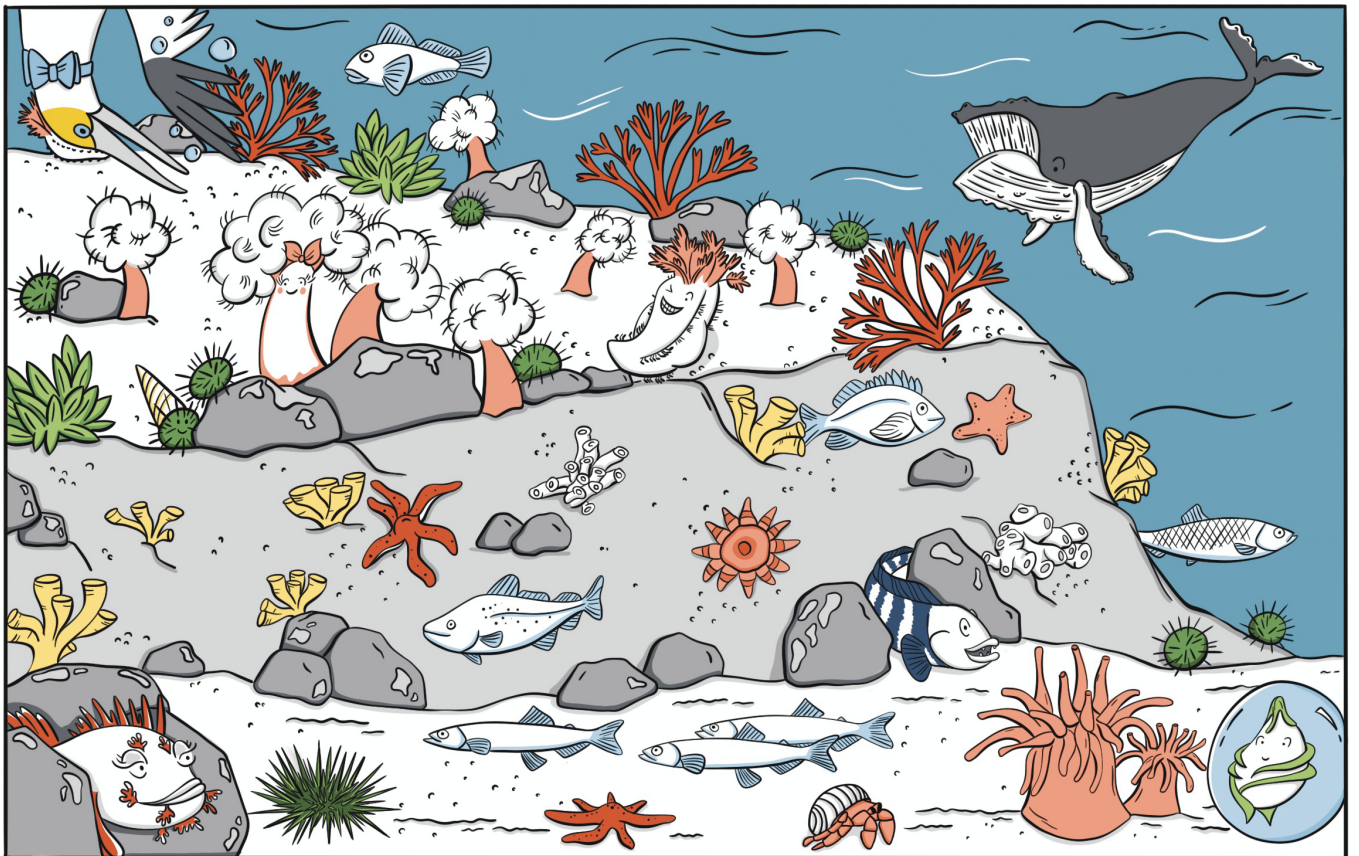
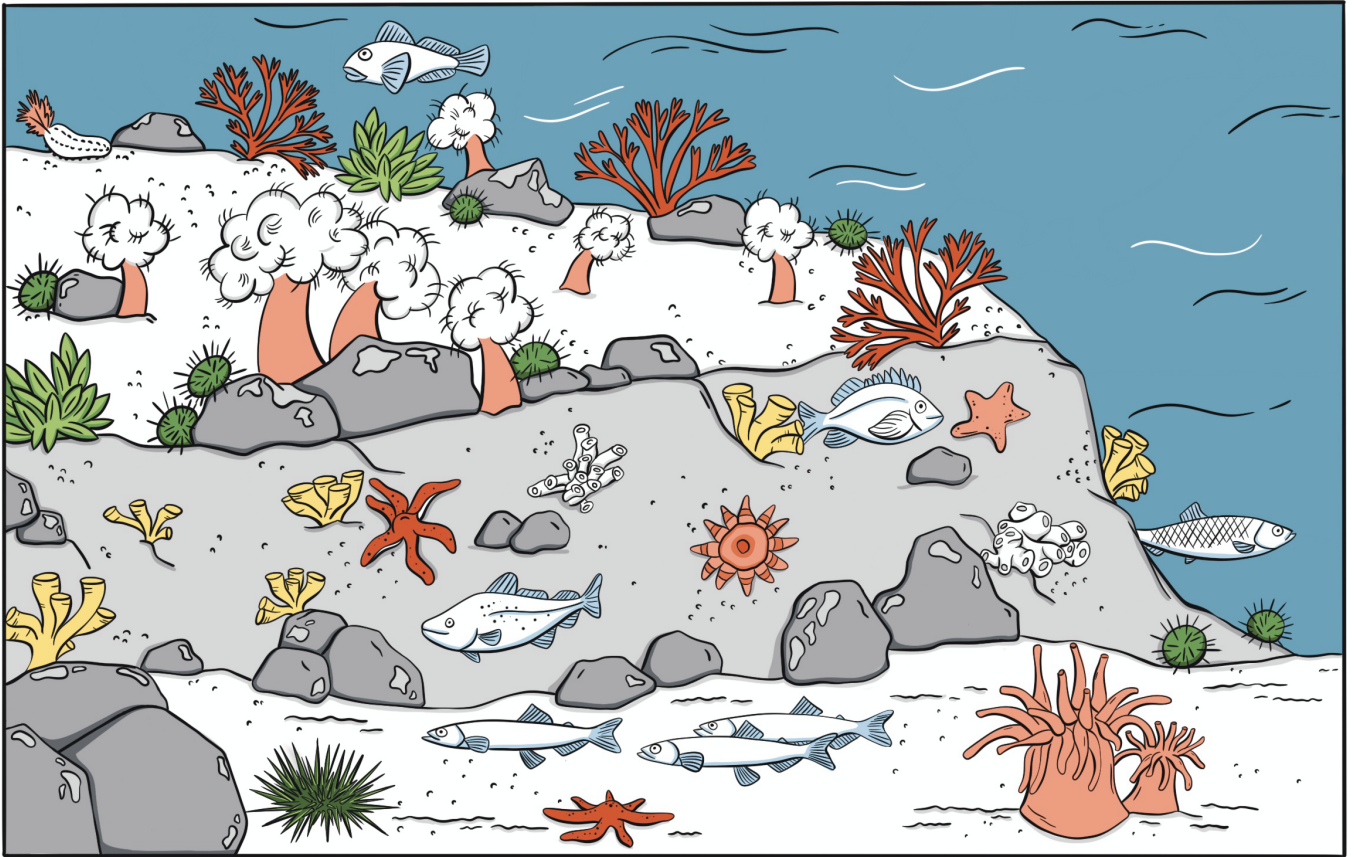
THE BANC-DES-AMÉRICAINS MARINE PROTECTED AREA IS AN IMPORTANT PLACE WHERE MARINE LIFE CAN THRIVE.



The End

WHO'S HIDING UNDER THE WATER?

Spot the nine differences!

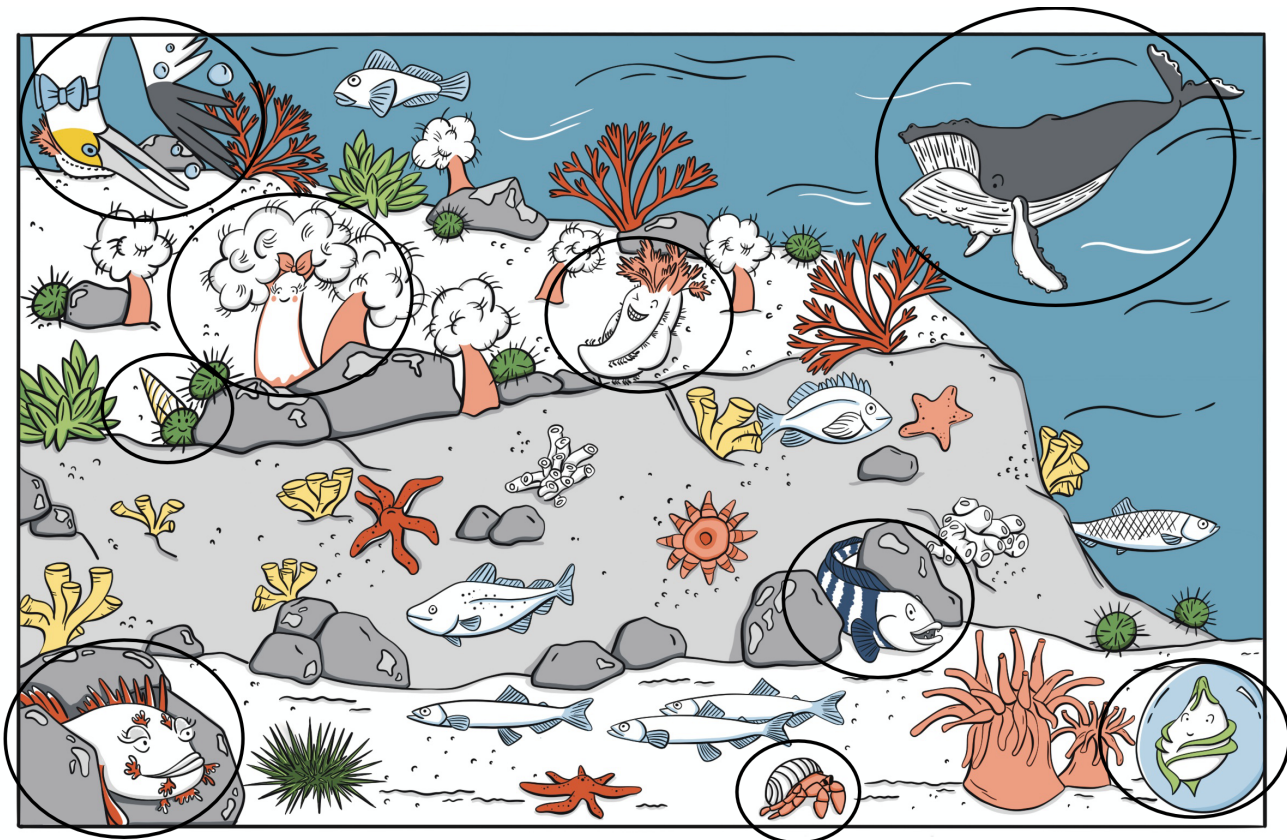
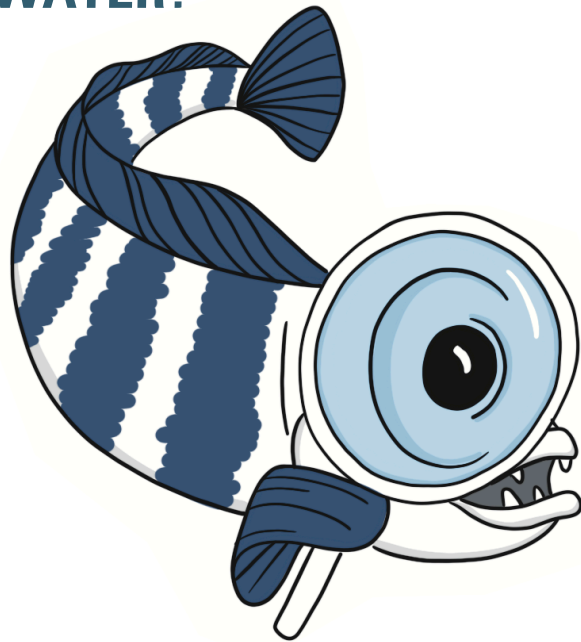


WHO'S HIDING UNDER THE WATER?

Spot the nine differences!

Clues:

1. Doris, the sea raven
2. Phil, the northern gannet
3. Cam, the phytoplankton
4. Louis, the Atlantic wolffish
5. Wendy, the humpback whale
6. Fred, the sea cucumber
7. Simone, the frilled anemone
8. A sea urchin wearing a hat
9. Bernie, the hermit crab



COMITÉ ZIP GASPÉSIE

Awareness. Consultation. Action.

Through consultations and community-based projects, Comité ZIP rallies the public to promote integrated management of the St. Lawrence. By acquiring and sharing knowledge and through its various actions, Comité ZIP plays a key role in the conservation, restoration, and development of Gaspésie's marine and coastal areas.



PARTNERS

We wish to thank all our partners who made this incredible project possible.

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DIVE INTO THE MYSTERIOUS WORLD OF
THE BANC-DES-AMÉRICAINS MARINE PROTECTED AREA!

MEET CURIOUS, ENDEARING CHARACTERS IN A MARINE AREA
TEEMING WITH LIFE, COLOURS, AND SURPRISES. AS THEY SWIM
ALONG AND MEET NEW FRIENDS, THEY DISCOVER THE BEAUTY
OF THEIR UNDERWATER NEIGHBOURHOOD AND LEARN ABOUT
THE IMPORTANCE OF PROTECTING IT. A FUN-FILLED,
SPLASH-TASTIC ADVENTURE AWAITS!



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