COMITÉ ZIPGASPÉSIE | sensibilisation. concertation. action.

Activity guide

The wonderful world of the Banc des Américains marine protected area

Grade 1 and 2

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Presentation and objectives

Length: 60 minutes
Location: In-class
Grades: 1 and 2

Support material

- Underwater neighbours comic book
- PDF Presentation for Grade 1-2
- Memory game (online)

Theme

Discovering the Banc-des-Américains Marine Protected Area, its marine biodiversity, and the reasons for protecting its habitats.

General objective

Help students understand the diversity of marine life in the Banc-des-Américains marine protected area, and the importance of its protection.

Specific objectives

At the end of the workshop, students will be able to:

- Locate the Banc-des-Américains marine protected area and understand what a marine protected area is.
- Discover the diversity of marine species and the concept of biodiversity.
- Match different species to their habitats.
- Understand the importance of protecting marine environments.

Preparation

1. Download documents (comic book and PDF presentation)
2. Read comic book in class or at home.
3. Project the PDF presentation onto the screen or the interactive whiteboard (IWB).
4. Open the *Memory game* online platform.

Minute-by-minute schedule

Step	Time	Teacher's role	Students' role
Introduction	5 min	Introduce the theme and the Comité ZIP using the presentation	Listen and ask questions
Banc-des-Américains marine protected area	10 min	Present what is a marine protected area where the Banc-des-Américains is located	Listen and ask questions
Biodiversity and marine habitats	15 min	Present some of the species found in the Banc-des-Américains marine protected area	Listen and ask questions
Matching game	20 min	Distribute the memory game, explain instructions, supervise game	Taking turns handling and observing
Conclusion	10 min	Lead discussion	Sharing ideas and comments

Script

Introduction

Slides 1 to 3

Today, we are going to discover a special place in Gaspésie called the Banc-des-Américains marine protected area. It is a marine environment filled with different marine animals.

Before we begin, a few words about the Comité ZIP Gaspésie. It's a team that works to protect the sea and all its inhabitants. Today, thanks to their comic book and workshop, we are going to discover new animals and their underwater home!

Before we dive in, here's a few questions for you:

- How has ever seen the sea?
- Which animals can we find in the sea?

The sea is not just water. It is the home of many animals and plants, and each has a role to play. So, we are going to explore this magical world and understand why we need to take care of it.

- What did you think of the comic book's story?

(Take a moment to discuss with students.)

Now, let's dive in!

The Banc-des-Américains marine protected area

Slides 4 and 5

What is a marine protected area?

A marine protected area a place in the sea where people take care of the animals and their homes, such as rocky bottoms, seagrass beds, or beaches.

Why we protect?

Because it is a unique place, rich in marine life and essential for many species that come there to feed and reproduce. In this way, we help the species in this area have a healthy home.

Where is it?

(Slide 5)

Who here has been to Forillon National Park? And who has been to Bonaventure Island to see the northern gannets?

The Banc-des-Américains marine protected area is between Forillon National Park and Bonaventure island. *(see the map)* The zone covers 1,000 km^2, which is four times the size of Forillon National Park.

In the Banc-des-Américains marine protected area, there is a lot of life: fish, crabs, anemones, seaweed, and even seabirds.

Do you know why there are so many species in this place? The answer is under the water!

Beneath the surface, there is a hidden mountain and several underwater formations. This creates lots of different homes, perfect for hosting many animals and plants.

Biodiversity and marine habitats

Slides 6 to 10

What is biodiversity?

Slide 6

Biodiversity is a word that simply means ‘diversity of living things.’ In an area where there are lots of different animals and plants, we say there is high biodiversity.

Here are some species found in the Banc-des-Américains marine protected area.

Slide 7	
Plaice	- Flatfish - Bottom-dwelling fish - Prey: mollusks, small crustaceans - Fun fact: At birth, the flounder has an eye on each side, but after a while, both eyes end up on the right side, which allows it to lie flat on the sea floor.
Cod	- Bottom-dwelling fish - Prey: mollusks, crabs, fish (herring, capelin, sand eel, redfish) - Fun fact: The line on its side, called the lateral line, allows it to detect movements in the water caused by other animals, even when it cannot see them.
Atlantic wolffish	- Bottom-dwelling fish - Lives in crevices or caves - Prey: sea urchins, crustaceans, fish - Anecdote: When the wolffish stops using energy to swim, it sinks to the bottom "like a rock," because it doesn’t have a swim bladder (a sort of air sac) that allows it to stabilize itself in the water column.

Slide 8	
Starfish	- Echinoderm - Lives on rocky bottoms - Prey: mollusks, such as mussels or whelks - Anecdote: To eat, it grabs the mollusks with its sticky feet, then the starfish has to extend its stomach out of its mouth to digest its prey inside the shell.
Hermit crab	- Lives on sandy, muddy, or rocky bottoms - It is a detritivore-omnivore and feeds mainly on dead animals. - Fun fact: The hermit crab protects itself by living in empty shells. Its soft, curved abdomen allows it to slip in perfectly.
Sponge	- Lives on the sea floor - It is indeed an animal - Filter-feeding organism that feeds on suspended organisms in the water

Slide 9	
Frilled anemone	- Lives on rocky bottoms - Attaches to rocks using its suction foot - Prey: small crustaceans, zooplankton, worms - It uses its stinging (paralyzing) tentacles to capture its prey - Fun fact: To defend against predators, anemones can retract into themselves and thus resemble a rock
Sea cucumber	- Echinoderm - Lives on the sea floor - Prey: various types of plankton - Its sticky tentacles allow it to capture prey; it must “lick” its tentacles one by one to eat. - Fun fact: It breathes through its anus. And it has sticky feet like a starfish to move around and cling to the ground.
Green sea urchin	- Echinoderm - Lives on rocky bottoms where kelp grows (a seaweed also called sea lasagna) - Prey: Mainly algae; its green coloration actually comes from its diet. - Fun fact: It has 5 teeth that can move independently of each other.

Slide 10		
Phytoplankton	-	Lives suspended in water - It is a microalgae - Performs photosynthesis to survive - It is at the base of the food chain - It is microscopic
Northern gannet	-	Seabird - Prey: small fish (capelin, herring, sand eels, etc.) - Can reach up to 1 meter from wingtip to wingtip when spread. - Fun fact: It dives from high in the air to catch the fish it eats.
Humpback whale	-	Lives in open water (water column) - Prey: Krill and small fish (capelin, herring, sand lance, etc.) - Can grow up to 17 meters in length and weigh up to 40 tons - Dives usually last between 5 and 10 minutes but can last up to 30 minutes.

Marine habitats

Every animal has a home, which is called a habitat. It is the place where it can find food, hide and rest, for example. Each animal is well adapted to its habitat. For example, starfish and sea urchins have sticky feet to stay on the rocks, while fish have fins to swim well.

In the Banc-des-Américains marine protected area, there are several different habitats. Here are a few of them.

Rocky seabed

Slide 11

This is the habitat of anemones, sea urchins, starfish, and sea cucumbers. These animals have small sticky feet, which allows them to stay attached to the rocks. The rocks also serve as protection for them. Some fish, like the Atlantic wolffish, likes to hide in the holes and crevices of the rocks.

Open water

Slide 11

This is where fishes swim, such as cods. Cods need a lot of space to move around and search for their food.

Sandy seabed

Slide 12

Many animals live in or on the sand. They can bury themselves in it to hide and protect themselves.

Algae

Slide 12

Algae such as seaweed can serve as hiding places and food sources. Small fish and crabs take refuge there to escape predators and find food.

Activity: Memory game « Animals and habitats »

Slides 13 to 17

Link to the game

How to play:

1. All the students play together in front of the screen.
2. On each turn, a student or a small group chooses two cards to flip over.
3. If they form a correct pair (for example, starfish + rock):
    a. The cards remain visible
    b. The student explains why this animal lives in this habitat.
    Example: “The starfish lives on rocky bottoms because it can cling to them and move around.”
4. If it is not a pair, the cards are turned face down again
5. Continue playing until all the pairs have been found.

Reminder for the students: The goal is not just to find pairs, but above all to understand where animals live and why each habitat is important. Ready? Then let's start!

Conclusion

Slides 15 to 20

Congratulations everyone! You found all the pairs!

What did you learn today about animals and their habitats? And why is it important to protect their underwater homes? As we discovered, the Banc-des-Américains marine protected area is full of life. By protecting it, we help protect the sea and all its biodiversity.

Before we wrap up, do you have any last questions? *(Pause briefly for questions)* Thank you for your attention and your participation!

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