

I ♥ NY.

Nature Tourism



in
**BUFFALO
NIAGARA**

Inside you'll find

**Family Nature
Attractions**

**Audubon Niagara
Birding Trail**

GORGEous Gulls

Eco-Tourism Trail

Nature & Scenic Trails

DEVELOPED BY
BUFFALO
AUDUBON
SOCIETY

Photo courtesy Blaine Olmer and
Cornell Lab of Ornithology

FAMILY NATURE ATTRACTIONS

★ New York State Parks

Many of the best parks in New York are found in Western New York. Niagara Falls, Whirlpool and Joseph Davis State Parks highlight the Niagara River and its scenic gorge. Woodlawn Beach, Knox Farm, Beaver Island, Letchworth, Buckhorn, and other state parks offer family recreation and nature experiences. **716-278-1796**

① Penn Dixie Paleontological and Outdoor Education Center, Bristol Road, Hamburg

A true hands-on experience digging for 380-million-year-old Devonian fossils. Nature trails, astronomy pad. Saturday programs 9 - Noon and by appointment. **716-627-4560**

② Beaver Meadow Audubon Center, Welch Road and Route 77, North Java

324-acre wildlife preserve with eight miles of marked trails, year-round Visitors Center, and Gift Shop. Forest, field, and wetland habitats. **585-457-3228**

③ Botanical Gardens of Buffalo & Erie County and South Park Arboretum, 2655 South Park Avenue, Buffalo

Domed, Victorian glass conservatory on the grounds of 156-acre park designed by Frederick Law Olmsted. **716-696-3555**

④ Tift Nature Preserve, 1200 Fuhrmann Boulevard, Buffalo

264-acre preserve with six miles of trails, 3 ponds, and a marsh boardwalk for bird viewing and photography. Picnic tables and fishing available. **716-825-6397**

⑤ Dr. Victor Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve, 77 Honorine Drive, Depew

300-acre preserve with expanses of undisturbed ancient forest interspersed with ponds, marshes and swamps. Department of Environmental Conservation naturalists lead nature walks year-round. **716-851-7201**

⑥ Forest Lawn Cemetery, Delaware Avenue, Buffalo

Historic monuments of many well-known figures set amongst hills, lakes, and streams. The site is well-appreciated for its abundance of birdlife in the heart of an urban landscape. **716-885-1600**

⑦ Buffalo Zoological Gardens, Parkside Avenue, Delaware Park, Buffalo

23-acre zoo with indoor and outdoor habitats for 270 species of animals and birds. **716-837-3900**

⑧ Aquarium of Niagara, Niagara Falls

1500 live aquatic animals including sharks, electric eel, barracuda, harbor seals, Peruvian penguins, sturgeon and sea lions. **1-800-500-4609**

⑨ Niagara Gorge Discovery Center, Niagara Falls

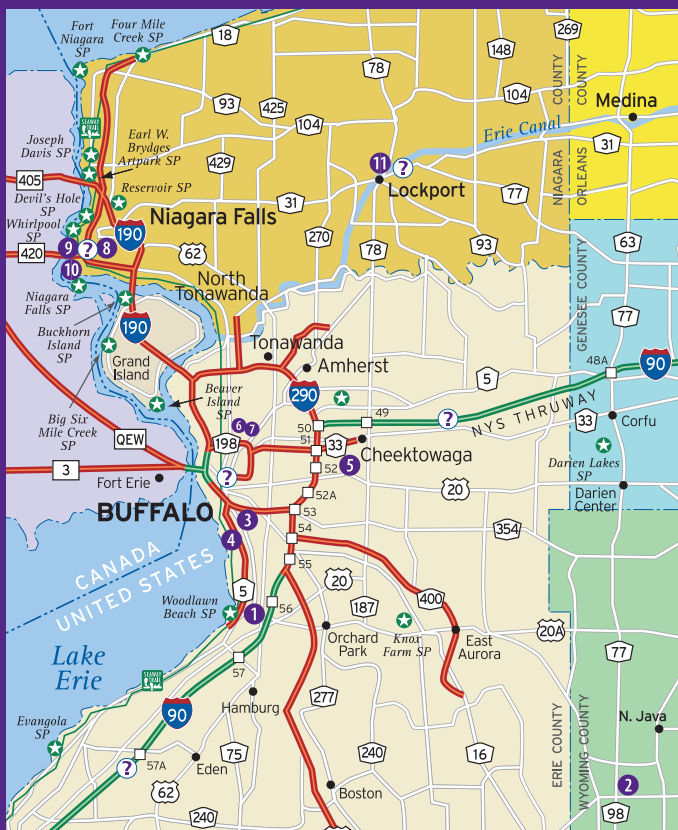
435 million years of geological history of the Niagara Gorge region and the 12,000 year history of the world-famous Falls are graphically depicted at the Center. Multi-media theatre show, interpretive staff, interactive exhibits, climbing wall and a Gorge Trailhead. **716-278-1796**

⑩ Maid of the Mist Boat Tours

World famous boat tour brings you to the base of the American and Horseshoe Falls. Spectacular views of the Falls and the gulls which frequent the area. **716-284-8897**

⑪ Lockport Locks & Erie Canal Cruises

Climb the Niagara escarpment by boat! The 363-mile waterway connects the Hudson River with the Niagara River and the Great Lakes, passing through historic communities and natural areas. **800-378-0352**



FAMILY NATURE ATTRACTIONS

- ★ New York State Parks
- ① Penn Dixie Paleontological and Outdoor Education Center
- ② Beaver Meadow Audubon Center
- ③ Botanical Gardens of Buffalo & Erie County and South Park Arboretum
- ④ Tifft Nature Preserve
- ⑤ Dr. Victor Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve
- ⑥ Forest Lawn Cemetery
- ⑦ Buffalo Zoological Gardens
- ⑧ Aquarium of Niagara
- ⑨ Niagara Gorge Discovery Center
- ⑩ Maid of the Mist Boat Tours
- ⑪ Lockport Locks & Erie Canal Cruises
- ⑦ Visitor Information Center

AUDUBON NIAGARA BIRDING TRAIL SOUTH



Photo courtesy Isidore Jeklin and Cornell Lab of Ornithology

1 Woodlawn Beach State Park, Route 5, Hamburg

This park has a mile-long sand beach where two creeks flow into Lake Erie. Great views of local gulls, migrating shorebirds, and other birds that inhabit the woodland and freshwater dunes. Wooded wetlands boardwalk trail, Nature Center and nature exhibits. Transition zone to the Niagara River Important Bird Area (IBA). [716-826-8895](tel:716-826-8895)

2 Tift Nature Preserve, 1200 Fuhrmann Boulevard, Buffalo

The 264-acre Buffalo Museum of Science preserve and nature center is on a primary migration route for waterfowl, warblers and passerines. 75 acre cattail marsh, ponds, woodlands, thickets, and grassy fields. This Important Bird Area has 264 recorded bird species, 66 breeding. [716-825-6397](tel:716-825-6397)

3 Times Beach Nature Preserve and South Buffalo Harbor, Fuhrmann Boulevard, South Buffalo

219 species of birds have been recorded at Times Beach, a former disposal area for Buffalo Harbor dredged material. Lakeshore, shallows, mud flats, marshy areas, woodland, and shrubs attract waterfowl, gulls, terns, shorebirds, marsh birds, and a large variety of migrating songbirds. Adjacent to the U.S. Coast Guard station, this 50 acre site is undeveloped and has no public facilities.

4 Beaver Island State Park/East River Nature Trail, Grand Island

Riverside trail along East Branch of Niagara River borders emergent marshes and woods; overlooks Strawberry Island and Motor Island heron rookery. Tundra swans, wigeon, canvasback, teal, scaup, owls, and shrikes can be seen in winter. Warblers and other migrants can be seen in spring. [716-773-3271](tel:716-773-3271)

5 Buckhorn Island State Park, Grand Island

Bordered by the Niagara River, Buckhorn encompasses the northern tip of Grand Island. There is a large marsh and several miles of riparian habitat with a mixture of upland woods. Herons, marshbirds, wintering waterfowl and swans (and in the spring, warblers). There is an Eagle Overlook along the west channel of the Niagara River just north of Long Road with a boat launch for canoes and kayaks and access to Buckhorn marshes and trails. The West River Parkway is a seven mile scenic route with wildlife observation pull-offs.

6 Robert Moses Parkway Waterfowl Viewing Area

Wintering waterfowl are often observed along the scenic Robert Moses Parkway that parallels the Niagara River, between the north Grand Island Bridge and Niagara Falls. The waterfowl overlook, created by the NYSDOT, NYSDEC, NY Power Authority, and NYS Parks, has a parking area off the eastbound lane. Waterfowl, sometimes numbering in excess of 10,000, include canvasbacks, scaup, redheads and mergansers.



AUDUBON NIAGARA BIRDING TRAIL SOUTH

- 1 Woodlawn Beach State Park
 - 2 Tift Nature Preserve
 - 3 Times Beach and South Buffalo Harbor
 - 4 Beaver Island State Park/East River Nature Trail
 - 5 Buckhorn Island State Park
 - 6 Robert Moses Parkway Waterfowl Viewing Area
 - 7 Visitor Information Center
- Trail Route

AUDUBON NIAGARA BIRDING TRAIL NORTH



Photo courtesy William P. McKeever

7 Niagara Falls, New York

America's tourist mecca offers more than just the Falls! While the Falls themselves are a great natural wonder and are not to be missed, the rest of Niagara Falls State Park, including Goat Island and the Observation Tower offers birdwatching opportunities above and below the Falls. The Upper River and Rapids area sustains gulls year-round. Whirlpool State Park, just 3.5 miles below the Falls marks the location where an ancient river gorge and extinct falls meets the Niagara River Gorge. Many species of gulls, some in globally significant numbers, can be found foraging at whirlpool eddies. The New York Power Authority visitor's center affords a commanding view of the Niagara Gorge. Rock ledges, open water, and adjacent wooded and other green areas attract nesting peregrine falcons, ducks, loons, gulls, purple sandpipers, belted kingfishers, chickadees, nuthatches and many others. Be on the lookout for ancient cedars clinging to the gorge walls.

8 Joseph Davis State Park, Route 18, Lewiston

An "aviary without walls." There are many unmarked trails and good viewing areas of the abundant bird life along the Niagara River Corridor. An Audubon Birds of Prey-themed nature center is being developed at or near the park to highlight this Important Bird Area. [716-278-1796](tel:716-278-1796)



9 Fort Niagara State Park, Route 18F, Youngstown

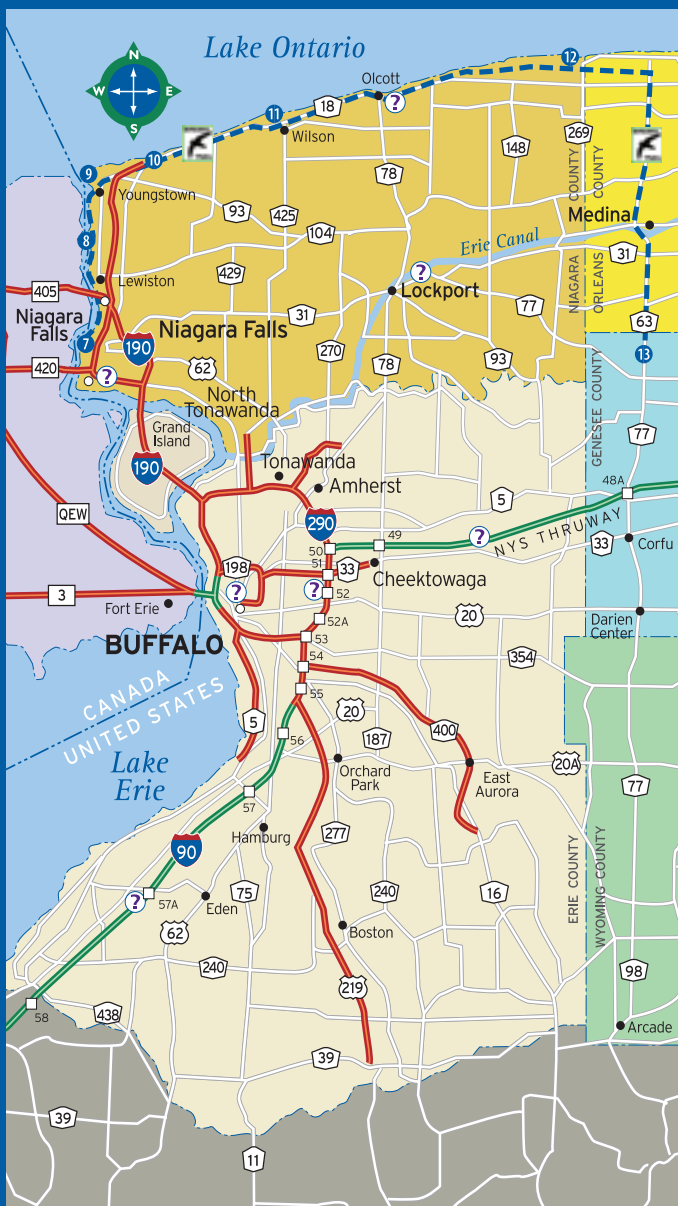
An historic Niagara Light and Old Fort Niagara provide a backdrop to large numbers of waterfowl and gulls. Birds congregate near the mouth of the Niagara River where it flows into Lake Ontario. The forest in the eastern portion of the park is often inundated with migrating land birds. Redheaded woodpeckers can be found amongst the old oaks. [716-745-7273](tel:716-745-7273)

10 Four Mile Creek State Park, 11 Wilson-Tuscarora State Park, 12 Golden Hill State Park

Found along New York's Seaway Trail, these parks provide views of Lake Ontario and its bird life. Golden Hill has nature trails as well as the historic Thirty Mile Point Lighthouse that offers a commanding view of the lake. [716-795-3885](tel:716-795-3885)

13 Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge, Tonawanda Wildlife Management Area, Oak Orchard Wildlife Management Area, Route 77, Alabama

Eagle watching is one of the most popular pastimes in the Iroquois Refuge. Over 250 bird species have been recorded there, including more than 10 species of ducks, great blue herons, American and least bitterns, and pied-billed grebes. There are overlooks, trails and fishing areas operated by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation. Audubon offers weekend programs (*Iroquois Observations!*) during spring and fall migrations. [585-948-5445](tel:585-948-5445)



AUDUBON NIAGARA BIRDING TRAIL NORTH

- ⑦ Niagara Falls, New York
 - ⑧ Joseph Davis State Park
 - ⑨ Fort Niagara State Park
 - ⑩ Four Mile Creek State Park
 - ⑪ Wilson-Tuscarora State Park
 - ⑫ Golden Hill State Park
 - ⑬ Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge, Tonawanda Wildlife Management Area, Oak Orchard Wildlife Management Area
 - ⑦ Visitor Information Center
- Trail Route

GORGEous GULLS

A highlight of the Audubon Niagara Birding Trail



Photo courtesy J. Surman and Cornell Lab of Ornithology

The Niagara River is the first site in North America to be identified bi-nationally as an **Important Bird Area (IBA)**. The binational IBA was dedicated by the National Audubon Society, Canadian Nature Federation, American Bird Conservancy, and Bird Studies Canada on December 11th, 1996.

The Mighty Niagara

A PARADISE FOR GULLS AND WATERFOWL

Take a trip to the Niagara River and see for yourself why this area has been designated a globally significant IBA. Looking down on the river from the heights in fall or winter, the air above the river's turbulent waters can be so white with wheeling and diving gulls, it's like a snow-storm on wing. During fall and winter, a staggering **100,000** gulls and **50,000** ducks can stopover on the river daily.

On a winter's day, as many as **10,000** Bonaparte's Gulls and **20,000** Herring Gulls can be seen. Up to **40,000** Bonaparte's Gulls have been seen on a single day as they take a critical rest stop along the Niagara on their long migration from the Canadian arctic and Alaska to the Atlantic coast.

IT'S FOR THE BIRDS

The Niagara River offers these huge populations both food and shelter. The roiling waters serve up a smorgasbord of small fish in the whirlpools, rapids, and upwellings. The river corridor also provides protection from the severity of winter storms that sweep across the Great Lakes. The result: The Niagara River Corridor is a mecca for Gulls, with 24 different species represented, nearly half of all species in the world.

WHY BIRDS?

Birds are an important measure of biodiversity. There are some **1400** bird species native to North America and healthy, diverse bird populations can tell us a lot about the health of the ecosystems in which they – and we – live. Bird populations reflect the impact of habitat alteration such as pollution, deforestation, forest fragmentation, overgrazing, loss of natural grasslands to agriculture, draining of wetlands, and urban development. By closely monitoring bird populations, we can keep our finger on the pulse of our ecosystems.



GORGEous GULLS along the Audubon Niagara Birding Trail

- ① Robert Moses Parkway Waterfowl Viewing Area
- ② Horseshoe Falls, Goat Island, and American Falls
- ③ The Whirlpool
- ④ NYS Power Authority Visitors Center **716-286-6661**
- ⑤ Lewiston Landing
- ⑥ Joseph Davis State Park
- ⑦ Fort Niagara State Park
- ⑦ Visitor Information Center

ECO-TOURISM TRAIL EAST



Photo courtesy Mary Livingston

1 Beaver Meadow Audubon Center, Route 77 & Welch Road, North Java

Beaver Meadow is where children and adults can connect with nature. The Visitors Center is open year-round, and the trails are always accessible. Includes a gift shop, nature interpretive displays, a children's discovery room, and an indoor bird observation area where feeder activities can be seen and heard. Buffalo Audubon's 324-acre preserve features eight miles of marked trails, forest, field and wetland habitats and colorful Hummingbird, Butterfly, Herb and Fern Gardens. Jenny Glen, a ½ mile circular boardwalk provides an outdoor experience for the physically challenged. Scheduled astronomical observatory programs. Snowshoeing and cross-country skiing in winter. Free Sunday afternoon Walks & Talks. Events are scheduled throughout the year. **585-457-3228**

2 Letchworth State Park, Route 36, Mount Morris, or off Route 19A, Castile

The Genesee River roars 17 miles through the "Grand Canyon of the East." Its 14,000 acres include nearly 600-foot cliffs, 30 waterfalls and lush forests, rich in native wildlife. Sixty-six miles of trails are available for foot, bicycle and horseback. There are 20 marked gorge trails, guided nature walks, a museum, picnic areas, rustic cabins, and camping facilities. Hot air balloon rides, white-water rafting available. Famous for fall foliage. **585-493-3600**

3 William B. Hoyt II Visitors Center and Mt. Morris Dam Recreation Area, Route 408 and Visitor Center Road, Mt. Morris

Interpretive center operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Gorge views, cultural history, seasonal events. **585-658-4790**

4 Genesee County Park and Forest Interpretive Center, 11095 Bethany Center Road, E. Bethany

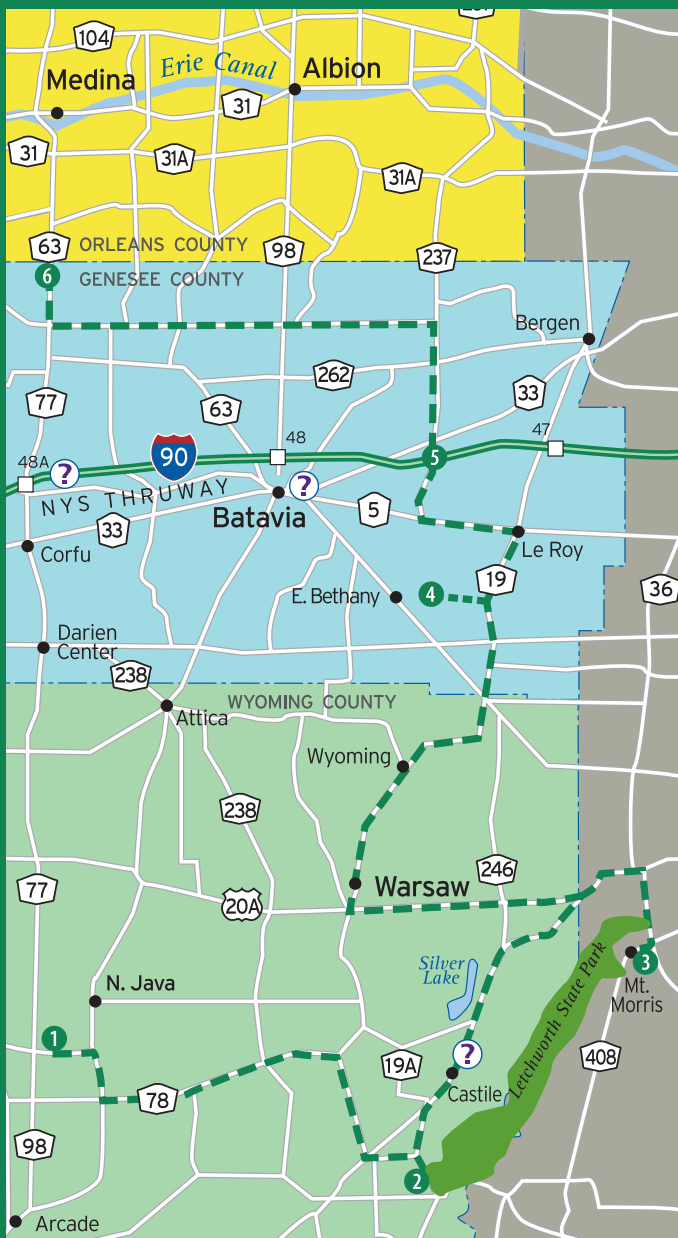
400 acres of forest and nature interpretive center. There is hiking, Braille and large print nature trails, pavilions, recreation facilities and a self-guided nature trail system. **585-344-1122**

5 Bergen Swamp, 6646 Hessenthaler Road, Byron

A National Natural History Landmark with a large variety of wildlife. A botanist's paradise in an unchanged habitat going back thousands of years. Managed by the Bergen Swamp Preservation Society, the 1,900 acre preserve is home to over 2,500 species of plants. Groups by reservation only. **585-548-7304**

6 Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge

Shore Birds and Waterfowl congregate at this recognized Important Bird Area. Buffalo Audubon provides free weekend family birding programs during spring and fall migrations. **585-948-5445**



ECO-TOURISM TRAIL EAST

- 1 Beaver Meadow Audubon Center
 - 2 Letchworth State Park
 - 3 William B. Hoyt II Visitors Center and Mt. Morris Dam Recreation Area
 - 4 Genesee County Park and Forest Interpretive Center
 - 5 Bergen Swamp
 - 6 Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge
 - ? Visitor Information Center
- Trail Route

ECO-TOURISM TRAIL WEST



Photo courtesy Botanical Gardens of Buffalo & Erie County

5 Knox Farm State Park, Buffalo Road, East Aurora

A former estate and working farm with old growth forest groves. The Audubon Society is partnering with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to manage the area for grassland bird species. Regularly scheduled interpretive nature education programs and hikes. **716-655-7200**

6 Charles E. Burchfield Nature & Art Center, 2001 Union Road at Clinton Street, West Seneca

Nature trails on 29 acres, amphitheater, gardens, children's adventure area, replicas of watercolors by Burchfield. Trails and Center open daily. **716-677-4843**

7 Botanical Gardens of Buffalo & Erie County and South Park Arboretum, 2655 South Park Avenue, Buffalo

Erie County's botanical conservatory is an oasis of green situated in Buffalo's 156-acre Frederick Law Olmsted-designed South Park. The Gardens feature the beautifully restored domes of a 12-room Victorian glass conservatory and 17 greenhouses. The Botanical Gardens and Erie County Parks offer visitors an up-close look at flowers, cacti and trees from around the world. The Erie County Parks Department also operates an extensive network of multi-use parks. **www.erie.gov/parks, 716-827-1584**

8 Dr. Victor Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve, 77 Honorine Drive, Depew

This 300-acre Dept. of Environmental Conservation preserve includes undisturbed ancient forest interspersed with ponds, marshes and swamps. Naturalists lead nature walks year-round. Call for schedule. **716-851-7201**

9 Buffalo Museum of Science, 1020 Humboldt Parkway, Buffalo

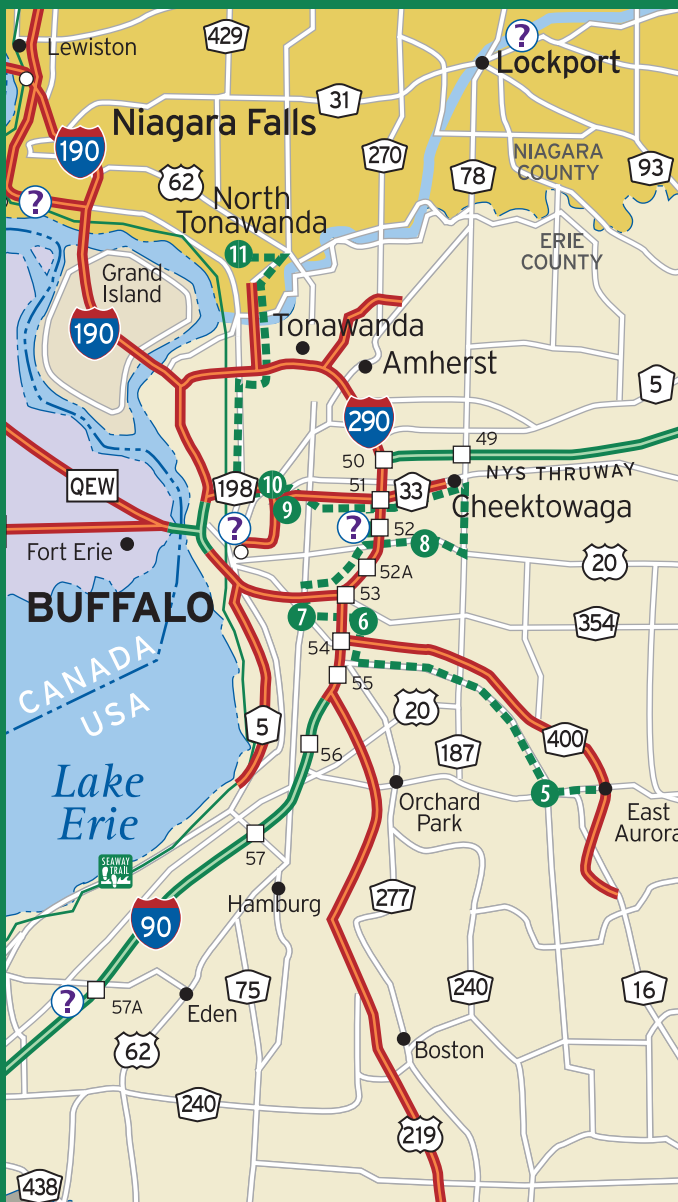
Offers exhibits on anthropology, archeology, astronomy, botany, entomology, geology, paleontology and zoology. There is also a children's discovery room, wildlife films, lectures, travel talks, nature walks, an astronomical observatory, and museum shop. **716-896-5200**

10 Buffalo Zoological Gardens, Parkside Avenue, Delaware Park, Buffalo

Indoor and outdoor displays of 270 species of animals and birds on 23.5 acres. Special features include a lion and tiger outdoor habitat, gorilla rain forest exhibit and a children's zoo. **716-837-3900**

11 North Tonawanda Audubon Nature Preserve

A 36-acre urban nature preserve, formerly known as the Klydel Wetlands, 1.5 miles from the Niagara River. Self-guided interpretive nature trails winding through a wooded wetland. Trailhead at Raymond and Birch Streets.



ECO-TOURISM TRAIL WEST

- 5 Knox Farm State Park
 - 6 Charles E. Burchfield Nature & Art Center
 - 7 Botanical Gardens of Buffalo & Erie County and South Park Arboretum
 - 8 Dr. Victor Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve
 - 9 Buffalo Museum of Science
 - 10 Buffalo Zoological Gardens
 - 11 North Tonawanda Audubon Nature Preserve
 - ? Visitor Information Center
- — — — — Trail Route

NATURE AND SCENIC TRAILS



① Audubon Niagara Birding Trail

This Audubon Society-designated Trail encompasses many of the best birding sites in the Buffalo-Niagara region and spans 115 miles from Woodlawn Beach State Park in the south to Fort Niagara State Park to the north to Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge in the east. **585-457-3228**

② Niagara Gorge Trail System

Extending from Niagara Falls State Park in Niagara Falls to Artpark in Lewiston, the trails provide public access to the Niagara Gorge and its many spectacular scenic attractions and historic sites. Interconnecting five state parks, these hiking trails parallel the course of the Niagara River.

716-278-1796

③ Seaway Trail (National Scenic Byway)

A 454 mile scenic route paralleling Lake Erie, the Niagara River, Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River, the Seaway Trail is a well-marked alternative to super highways that takes you to sophisticated cities, quaint villages, and dozens of family attractions, restaurants, and accommodations. Follows Rte. 18 along Lake Ontario, along River Road in Lewiston, and Route 104 and Main Street in Niagara Falls. South from Niagara Falls, the Trail follows Robert Moses Parkway to Rte. 265 through the Tonawandas to Buffalo and points south. **1-800-SEAWAYT**

④ Conservation Trail

A part of the 800-mile Finger Lakes Trail System, this hiking trail winds through Western New York. Beginning in Niagara Falls, the trail takes you south above the Niagara River on Grand Island, east to Pembroke, and south toward Allegany State Park. It winds through the countryside where it takes you to interesting natural features, parks, forests and villages along the way. **585-658-9320**

⑤ Erie Canal Heritage Trail

The Erie Canal Heritage Trail – part of the NYS Canalway Trail – spans approximately 90 miles between Lockport and Palmyra, following the route of the Erie Canal towpath. A National Recreation Trail, there are numerous access points at roadway intersections for hiking, biking, cross-country skiing. **1-800-4CANAL4**



NATURE AND SCENIC TRAILS

- 1 Audubon Niagara Birding Trail
- 2 Niagara Gorge Trail System
- 3 Seaway Trail
- 4 Conservation Trail
- 5 Erie Canal Heritage Trail
- ? Visitor Information Center

Our water resources are vital components of the natural environment. Did you know that work in waters and wetlands may require a permit? To learn more contact the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Buffalo District at (716) 879-4330 or www.lrb.usace.army.mil.

Nature *in* BUFFALO NIAGARA



NATURAL

wonders



nature

CENTERS



birds
AND OTHER

wildlife

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