



# EXPLORE THE FLATS

Nestled within the Owasco Flats is the Owasco Flats Nature Reserve. The reserve is approximately 470 acres in size and consists of floodplain forest and wetlands. The reserve is open to the public from dawn to dusk for hiking, biking, canoe/kayaking, fishing or quiet relaxation. Listen and watch for wildlife on the trails or in the sky.

## Boating

Explore the Inlet and Owasco Flats from the water! There are 3 places to launch a canoe/kayak at the Flats; one at the end of the Loop Road, off the Rt. 38 parking area (where railroad trail meets Inlet) and at South Shore Marina. The marina also rents boats. You can travel up the Inlet to the Rt. 38 bridge in Moravia. Watch out for downed trees and limbs and poison ivy!



Owasco Lake

Lake Trail

Parking Area

Canoe/Kayak Launch

Trailhead

## Fishing

Owasco Lake and Inlet provides fishing for lake trout, brown trout, rainbow trout, northern pike, walleye, smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, chain pickerel, rock bass, yellow perch, panfish, and bullheads. Bring your pole and bait and fish off the accessible fishing platform or along the trails. Don't forget to carry out all trash.



Entrance Firelane 1

South Shore Marina - Boat rentals and boat launch

Cattail Marsh

Emergent Wetlands

The Village of Moravia was originally the site of a Native American Village. Native settlers used the land to harvest hay and as fishing and hunting grounds up until 1879. During the 1800's, agriculture flourished and most of the flats were cleared, except the north end which was too wet to farm.

Emergent Wetlands

Inlet Trail

Access Road

Shrub Scrub Wetlands

## Wildlife

The Owasco Flats are home to all kinds of animals including deer, turkey, beavers, muskrats, birds (including waterfowl), amphibians and reptiles. Listen for sounds and observe wildlife (from a safe distance). In the winter, look for animal tracks and listen for birds.



## Birding

The reserve provides excellent habitat for migratory and domestic birds. The Owasco Flats is listed as an Important Bird Area (IBA) by the Audubon Society. You may see red-winged blackbirds or the secretive Virginia rail, the elusive cerulean warbler, a bald eagle, osprey, or wood duck flying overhead. The great horned owl can be heard calling in the valley at night.



Silver Maple/Ash Swamp

## Hiking

This loop trail meanders along the banks of the Owasco Inlet, then follows the abandoned Lehigh Valley Railroad bed to the access road and back to the trailhead. Walk the trail in spring, summer, or fall, snowshoe or cross country ski in winter! Remember to tread lightly and leave no trace behind.

Lehigh Valley Trail

New York State Route 38

Old Lehigh Valley Railroad Grade Built in 1869 to transport coal, passengers, ice, and other freight, it was abandoned in 1958.

Parking Area & Trailhead

Forested Wetlands

Fishing Access

## OWASCO FLATS



Photo by Bill Hecht

The Owasco Flats is an area that extends from the Village of Moravia to Owasco Lake and consists of agricultural lands, floodplain forests, shrub and emergent wetlands, and parts of Owasco Lake and the Owasco Inlet. The Flats are an important component of Owasco Lake watershed. Over half of the water entering into Owasco Lakes comes through the Owasco Inlet and its wetlands.

## OWASCO FLATS NATURE RESERVE

The Owasco Flats Nature Reserve, Inc. (OFNR) was formed by a group of local people in the 1980's, who worked to restore this natural area. In 1996, with help from Cayuga County and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, two main ditches that were constructed in the 1980s to drain the wetlands for development were plugged. In 2006, with help from Finger Lakes Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy and Ducks Unlimited, OFNR purchased 15 acres of undeveloped forested wetlands. Today The wetlands are restored and the native plants and animals have returned. The OFNR is a unique place to fish, hike, canoe, kayak, watch birds and other animals.

NORTH

Scale 0 100 200 Feet

LEGEND

- Hiking Trail - 1.6 Miles
- Inlet Trail - 0.2 Miles



## WATCH OUT for Poison Ivy

It is shown here as a 3 leaved, low growing ground plant found along the trail. But also look for a large hairy vine with large leaves that climb tree trunks and hang in the tree canopy. **Do not touch!**

Pannels by Art of the Wild

