



Bingewalk your parks!

Self-Guided Fall Wildlife Walks—Nuts & Squirrels

Who doesn't like going for a walk in the fall? The cool crisp air, the beautiful colors—there's so much to enjoy! Fall is also the time to see nature at work preparing for the winter. One of the busiest critters during this time of year are squirrels. They spend the season collecting nuts to store for the winter. Lake County is home to six species of squirrel and many varieties of nuts! Below are a few parks to explore while you go nuts for squirrels this fall!

Penitentiary Glen Reservation

You'll find several different kinds of nuts and squirrels at this park. Look for numerous types of acorn-bearing oak trees, as well as at least two species of hickory. Some Ohio buckeyes can also be found here. Gorge Rim Loop Trail is a forested trail with plenty of these nuts and squirrels. While chipmunks and red squirrels are seen here, this is also one of the top parks to see the black color morph of the Eastern gray squirrel!

Veterans Park

While the diversity of nut-bearing trees may be limited to primarily oaks, that doesn't mean a lack of variety of nuts. Each species of oak produces a unique acorn. Veterans Park has four species of oak present including pin oak, which produces the smallest acorns in the area, and the bur oak which produces the largest. Numerous squirrel species can be seen bounding through this park.

Hogback Ridge Park

Hogback Ridge Park is situated along Mill Creek and the Grand River and the forest here is home to numerous oak species including white oak, as well as hickory and beech. Note the difference in the nut trees in the floodplain compared to the top of the ridge. Chipmunks, red squirrels and even groundhogs in the open meadow are just a few of the squirrels that can be seen here.

Pete's Pond Preserve

Pete's Pond Preserve is a beautiful place for a nature hike. The trail has acorns and hickories as well as black walnut trees. Eastern gray squirrels are the most common squirrel, but other species can be seen here as well.

Penitentiary Glen Reservation

8668 Kirtland-Chardon Rd.
Kirtland, Ohio 44094

- Red Fox Loop Trail
- Glen Meadow Loop Trail
- Rabbit Run Loop Trail
- Gorge Rim Loop Trail

Veterans Park

5730 Hopkins Rd.
Mentor, Ohio 44060

- Cardinal Loop Trail
- Lookout Trail
- Mallard Point Trail
- Swamp Forest Trail

Hogback Ridge Park

4700 Emerson Rd.
Madison Twp., Ohio 44057

- Meadow Rim Trail
- Hemlock Ridge Loop Trail
- Bluebell Valley Path

Pete's Pond Preserve

2255 Rockefeller Rd.
Wickliffe, Ohio 44092

- Carriage Lane Trail

Park maps and more information can be found at
goto.lakemetroparks.com/bingewalk



Fox squirrel

Fox squirrels are the largest tree squirrels. They can be identified by their warm brown coloration and golden belly.



Red squirrel

Red squirrels are the smallest tree squirrels. They are feisty and are a reddish brown with white bellies.



Buckeye

The **Ohio Buckeye** is the state tree. These smaller trees are known for their large brown buckeye nuts. The nuts are toxic raw (and don't contain chocolate or peanut butter).



Southern flying squirrel

Southern flying squirrels are the smallest squirrels in the area and sleep during the day, making them difficult to spot.



Hickory

With numerous species of **hickory** in the region, finding hickory nuts is an easy task. There are shagbark hickories, pignut hickories and bitternut hickories (the last of which smell like potpourri when rubbed).



Beech

While the **beech** population is in decline thanks to beech leaf disease, there are still plenty of nut-bearing beech trees around. These small nuts are protected by a spiked outer shell. Beech nuts are edible and used in a variety of foods.



Groundhog

The **groundhog**, or woodchuck, is the largest squirrel in the area. Groundhogs don't feed on nuts as often as other squirrels, opting for vegetation instead. Though not common, they occasionally climb trees.



Walnut

Walnuts, though not as common in the area as other nuts, are widespread, particularly along rivers. The nuts are the same as those bought in grocery stores.



Eastern chipmunk

The **Eastern chipmunk** is one of two ground squirrels in Lake County. The species is one of the most common mammals seen in the parks and local backyards. These small striped squirrels live underground but can climb trees.



Acorns

Every species of oak has its own unique **acorn**. From the tiny acorn of the pin oak to the near golf ball sized acorn with the fuzzy "hat" of the bur oak, acorns are the most abundant nut found in Lake County.



Eastern gray squirrel

Eastern gray squirrels are some of the most common squirrels seen in the area. They range in color from gray to brownish to all black!



Please keep in mind that while some of these nuts are edible, foraging in Lake Metroparks is prohibited without specific written permission from the Executive Director. No nuts or seeds can be removed from the parks.