

Nathan Eppink  
Chief of Marketing & Communications  
330-865-8040 x215  
neppink@summitmetroparks.org

Lindsay Smith  
Marketing/Communications Specialist  
330-865-8040 x207  
lsmith@summitmetroparks.org

### **TURKEYS A REGULAR SIGHT IN THE METRO PARKS**

Turkeys aren't just found on farms and Thanksgiving tables. Wild turkeys inhabit each of Ohio's 88 counties, and they are a common sight within Summit Metro Parks.

Turkeys may be most easily spotted at Liberty Park in Twinsburg, where visitors can not only see these birds but can enjoy learning and relaxing at the park district's new nature center (9999 Liberty Rd., Twinsburg). Summit Metro Parks biologist and University of Akron doctoral student Ryan Trimbath said the 3,000-acre park's mix of habitats – forest, fields and wetlands – in northeast Summit and northwest Portage counties appeal to the big birds.

Turkeys are seen there and in other parks year-round, Trimbath noted, because they do not migrate. Females, or hens, usually nest on the ground. Breeding starts in early spring and the young, called poults, stay with their mother until fall or the following spring.

The wild turkey is the largest game bird in North America, ranging from 3 to 4 feet tall and weighing up to 24 pounds. Farm-raised turkeys, the center of a typical Thanksgiving feast, are twice the size of wild turkeys and usually cannot fly because of their size.

Less than 100 years ago, Ohio didn't have any wild turkeys due to farming and loss of habitat. Turkeys were trapped in other states by the Ohio Division of Wildlife in the 1950s and reintroduced, first in the forests of southeast Ohio.

"Wild turkeys are a successful example of conservation and reintroduction efforts," Trimbath said.

The nature center at Liberty Park features indoor and outdoor displays that honor the site's natural and culture history. The center is open Wednesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday, noon to 5 p.m. Admission is always free.

For more information about Liberty Park, call 330-487-0493.

\* \* \* \* \*

Summit Metro Parks manages 14,100 acres, including 16 developed parks, several conservation areas and more than 125 miles of trails, with 22.4 miles of the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail. Annual attendance averages 5.2 million visitors.

-[summitmetroparks.org](http://summitmetroparks.org)-