



TRAILSIDE EYE SPY

Earn Fall Hiking Spree credit while looking for each item along the Towpath Trail, Wilbeth north to Summit Lake Nature Center, 392 W. Wilbeth Rd., Akron 44301

STAGHORN SUMAC

These beautiful clusters of fuzzy red berries are a buffet for birds and add visual interest to the fall landscape. Not just food for birds, people can make a pink lemonade drink from the berries by straining them through cheesecloth!



1.

AMERICAN COOT

Waterfowl are abundant around Summit Lake, especially in winter when this deep body of water naturally stays free of ice longer than most. American coots gather here in great numbers, recognized by the bright white shield on their face and their lobed, not webbed, feet.



6.

ROSE MALLOW

Notice the large seed pods dotting the water's edge, standing like sentinels awaiting the return of warmer weather. Next summer, look for the giant pink blossoms of rose mallow flowers, a native relative of the tropical hibiscus.



2.

RING-BILLED GULL

Who are you calling "seagull?" Often associated with oceanside scenes, many gulls are found in freshwater inland habitats. Several species of gull make their home at Summit Lake, including the most common ring-billed gull.



7.

FRUITING TREES

How many uniquely shaped and colored fruits can you find along your walk? Crab apples, cherries, dogwoods and more produce bountiful fruit that are dined on by resident birds throughout winter. Birds act as carriers of seed, helping to spread new trees far and wide.



3.

MUSKRAT

These mammals stay active year-round on Summit Lake. Their waterproof fur, webbed feet and propeller-like tail make them perfectly suited for aquatic life. Muskrat are elusive, but you can catch a glimpse of their homes along the bank – small huts made of cattails, resembling miniature beaver lodges.



8.

PHRAGMITES Towering high above the trail, phragmites, also known as giant reed, can grow 15 feet tall! Unfortunately, very few native Ohio wildlife species eat phragmites, a plant native to Asia, causing it to grow unchecked and smother nearby plants. Plant native species to keep greenspaces biodiverse!



4.

TAMARACK BOG

Long before Akron existed, Summit Lake was surrounded by tamaracks - coniferous trees that drop their needles annually. When the canal connected to the lake in the early 1800s, the water level dropped by several feet, causing the surrounding boggy areas to drain and the tamaracks to disappear.



9.

CENTENNIAL SIGN

Congratulations, you've just reached the turnaround point of your hike! Stop inside Summit Lake Nature Center then take a selfie with our centennial sign and share your photos, using #SMP100 to celebrate 100 years of Summit Metro Parks!



5.

Summit Metro Parks