



## Self-Guided Spring Nest Box Walks

As nature awakens from its winter slumber, many animals turn their attention to breeding season. And while most birds prefer to do their nesting away from prying human eyes, some rely on manmade nest boxes to provide a safe spot to raise their families. Lake Metroparks is filled with nest boxes of all kinds, and here are just a few places to look for these nest box dwellers.

### Chagrin River Park

Chagrin River Park boasts possibly the best nest box viewing in Lake Metroparks. Adjacent to the Reeves Road parking lot is the largest colony of purple martin boxes in the park system. Three towers, each with 12 individual gourd-shaped nest boxes is home to a thriving colony of purple martins from spring through summer. Various bluebird boxes throughout the park are home to not only eastern bluebirds, but other strikingly blue native birds—tree swallows! Check kestrel boxes in the big field for nesting American kestrels (North America’s smallest falcons), while the wetland along Song Bird Loop Trail features nest boxes for mallard and wood ducks as well as prothonotary warblers. Don’t forget to check the wood duck boxes for the occasional eastern screech-owl!

### Penitentiary Glen Reservation

While the area behind Penitentiary Glen Nature Center hosts the second largest colony of purple martins in Lake Metroparks, don’t forget to explore the rest of the park. The open fields along Glen Meadow Loop, Red Fox Loop and Rabbit Run Loop are filled with around 40 active eastern bluebird boxes. The Nature Center pond and the two waterbodies off the Rabbit Run Trail are also home to mallard and wood duck nest boxes. There are also screech-owl boxes and bat boxes visible from points along nearly every trail.

### Hidden Lake

Hidden Lake has three areas to check out nest boxes. You can view eastern bluebirds and tree swallows at the bluebird boxes along Goldenrod Loop in the field along Kniffen Road; mallard and wood duck boxes on Hidden Lake Loop; and mallard and wood duck boxes as well as prothonotary warbler and purple martin nest boxes along Birder’s Loop surrounding the wetlands at the back of the park.

### Girdled Road Reservation

This park offers a large variety of nest boxes to spot across a lot of acreage. The Skok Meadow Loop features active bluebird boxes filled with eastern bluebirds and tree swallows and is also home to an American kestrel box that is usually home to a nesting pair. There are more bluebird boxes along the South Meadow Trail and mallard and wood duck boxes can be seen along the ponds and wetlands on the Green Darner Trail, Surveyor’s Woods Loop and Skok Meadow trails.

### Chagrin River Park

East entrance  
3100 Reeves Rd.  
Willoughby, Ohio 44094

West entrance  
1000 Rural Dr.  
Eastlake, Ohio 44095

South entrance  
37699 Erie Rd.  
Willoughby, Ohio 44094

- Brambleside Loop Trail
- Riverwood Trail
- Song Bird Loop Trail
- Woodland Run Trail

### Girdled Road Reservation

North Entrance  
12840 Girdled Rd.

South Entrance  
12926 Radcliffe Rd.

Skok Meadow  
12415 Concord Hambden Rd.  
Concord Twp., Ohio 44077

- Surveyor’s Woods Loop Trail
- Skok Meadow Loop Trail
- South Meadow Trail
- Green Darner Trail

### Hidden Lake

North entrance  
6850 Kniffen Rd.  
Leroy Twp., Ohio 44077

South entrance  
7024 Kniffen Rd.  
Leroy Twp., Ohio 44077

- Goldenrod Loop Trail
- Hidden Lake Loop Trail
- Birder’s Loop Trail

### Penitentiary Glen Reservation

8668 Kirtland-Chardon Rd.  
Kirtland, Ohio 44094

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



**Purple martin**

**Purple martin** nest boxes come in two styles: condo and gourd (gourds are preferred by purple martins). You may also see tree swallows and house sparrows in purple martin houses found at Chagrin River Park, Penitentiary Glen Reservation, Lake Erie Bluffs, Hidden Lake, Lakeshore Reservation and Lakefront Lodge.



**Bluebird**

In addition to **eastern bluebirds**, bluebird boxes can be home to tree swallows, black-capped chickadees, northern house wrens and house sparrows. Bluebird boxes are found in nearly every park including Penitentiary Glen Reservation, Hogback Ridge Park, Girdled Road Reservation, Chagrin River Park and Hidden Lake.



**Mallard**

These straw tubes are home to nesting **mallard ducks** and may occasionally be used by other duck species. They can be found parks with ponds or wetlands.



**Screech-owl**

**Screech-owl** boxes are scattered throughout the parks and are home to eastern screech-owls, squirrels, and occasionally wood ducks and other cavity nesters.



**Wood duck**

You may be surprised by how high some of the **wood duck** boxes are, but these ducks typically nest up to 50 feet off the ground. In addition to wood ducks, these boxes may house hooded mergansers, great crested flycatchers, tree swallows, eastern screech-owls and squirrels. These boxes are found in nearly every park with a body of water.



**Prothonotary warbler**

These tiny nest boxes look like little pipes and are home to **prothonotary warblers**. You can find these boxes in wetlands at Hidden Lake, Baker Road Park, Chagrin River Park and Arcola Creek Park.



**Kestrel**

These large nest boxes are similar to screech-owl boxes but are placed in open fields where **American kestrels** live and hunt while screech-owl boxes are in forested areas. Kestrel boxes are found at Chagrin River Park and Girdled Road Reservation.

*Ever spot a nest box and wonder what it's for? This is a guide of the different nest boxes found throughout Lake Metroparks and the types of animals you might see in them. Remember just because a box is designed for a specific species, that doesn't mean another species won't take up residence there!*



*Tree swallows on a bluebird box*

**Park maps and more information can be found at [goto.lakemetroparks.com/bingewalk](http://goto.lakemetroparks.com/bingewalk)**

