

# MARSH TRAIL LAKE ST. CLAIR METROPARK



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# MARSH TRAIL GUIDE STOPS

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## HIKE SUGGESTIONS

1. Look and listen for wildlife such as frogs, song birds, water fowl, squirrel chatter, muskrat, and deer within the different habitats you will walk through.
2. Look for tracks, scat, tree holes, nests, tunnels, and other signs of wildlife.





## 1. SWAMP HABITAT

A type of wetland ecosystem dominated by large trees and poorly drained water. Cottonwoods, fast-growing trees with water tolerant roots, dominate here. Be sure to look up for tree cavities, they just may be occupied.



## 2. VERNAL POOL

An ephemeral wetland characterized by seasonal flooding in a forested area. These waters generally dry up in the summer months and are usually absent of fish and turtles. Lacking these predators creates a perfect nursery for tadpoles and ducklings.



## 3. MIGRATION STATION

Lake St. Clair is known as a resting stop for migrating birds and provides food and shelter for them. During spring and summer, listen for the calls of yellow warblers and wrens. Then in the colder months, catch a glimpse of our winter residents such as cardinals and chickadees.



## 4. ECOLOGICAL SUCCESSION

For many years this area was mowed grass and picnic tables. We stopped mowing to allow for new growth! This is called succession; it has created new habitat and increased the space available for wildlife such as white-tailed deer. Look for small animal pathways.



## 5. CANALS

To increase water quality and habitat, bioswales were created within the park. Rainwater from the parking lot drains into the swales and flows down into canals that filter out chemicals before it ends up in Lake St. Clair! How many species can you spot in the swales?



## 6. POND LIFE

Ponds are packed full of life in and around the water! In the water, you can find fish, frogs, turtles and tiny animals known as macroinvertebrates. Out of the water, you may spot birds, snakes, muskrat, dragonflies, and even more! Are there any animals on those basking platforms today?



## 6B. CATTAILS & MANAGING A MARSH

Please see the interpretive signs for more information about cattails and how to manage for a healthy marsh.



## 7. EFFECTS OF MANAGEMENT

After management of the Phragmites, an invasive species, we now have a clear view of the marsh and swamp. This has allowed cattails, rarer marsh birds, and many other native wetland species to thrive! You might just catch a glimpse of these species at the base of the cattails.



## 8. MARSH BOARDWALK

If you continue down the trail you can explore Point Rosa Marsh boardwalk. Journey through one of the few remaining coastal wetlands on Lake St. Clair. Through the cattails, observe marsh life just feet away, such as red-wing blackbirds, marsh wrens, and nesting geese.



## 9. WHOOOO LIVES HERE?

A pair of Great Horned owls! This habitat provides all the food necessary for these silent birds of prey to survive like muskrat, rabbit, and skunk. Great horned owls do not migrate, making it easy to spot them in the trees during the colder months.



## 10. POISON IVY

See those vines up ahead? That's poison ivy! It is famously known for making our skin really itchy due to the urushiol oil the plant contains. However, it is much more than an itchy pest. As summer turns to fall, the vine produces berries that provide food for many bird species.



## 11. WETLANDS ARE WONDERFUL

One third of our endangered species call wetlands their home. It is a vital ecosystem that enhances water quality, controls erosion and provides the essentials for a variety of organisms to survive. How many organisms that live in a wetland can you name?



## 12. SMALL WONDERS

Up ahead is a meadow habitat, an open area with grasses and other non-woody plants. This area is home to spiders, meadow voles, mice, and katydids. Get a close-up view of a spider and its web, a bee collecting pollen, or a Red Admiral butterfly laying eggs on stinging nettle.

# TRAIL RULES:

1. Pets, running, jogging, bicycles, motorized vehicles, and horses are not permitted on the nature trails.
2. Walk slowly, quietly, and remain on trails.
3. All collecting is prohibited.
4. Picnicking is not allowed within the nature trail area.
5. Please leave all radios, toys, and sports equipment in your car.
6. Follow all park rules and regulations.

## Lake St. Clair Metropark

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