

# Tips on Finding Lost Pets

*Provided by NAFA*

## What To Do First

The first thing you should do when you discover that your pet is absent is secure your house and yard. This may seem a little like locking the barn after the horse is gone, but I assure you that this is not the case. Oftentimes, your pet may be simply be hiding under a sofa or behind a flower bed. I had a neighbor who thought they had lost their small dog. She got so excited that she ran out of the house and left the rear door open. While she was conducting a search two blocks down the street, her dog, who had been asleep in the closet, walked out the open door and began heading off in the opposite direction

## Contact Animal Shelters

Immediately call all animal control and shelter agencies in your area and file a report. Pets can travel a lot farther than you might think so take this into consideration. Some police agencies can also be helpful especially in a small community where there may not be animal protection services available. **CALL MORE THAN ONCE** – Shelters have many workers and everyone is very busy, so call every other day for the first week or so then then weekly. **AS SOON AS YOU CAN, VISIT ALL THE SHELTERS TO MAKE A VISUAL CHECK FOR YOUR PET.**

## Search the Area

Walk, drive, bike, jog through your neighborhood everyday, more than once. Tell your mailperson, newspaper delivery person, anyone who travels throughout the area to be on the lookout. Sunrise and sunset are good times to find a lost pet. Take some open canned food with you or an especially smelly treat such as tuna fish. When a pet gets lost, it is usually frightened. A cat up a tree or under a car may not come when its name is called, but will respond to food. Use the word you usually employ to let your pet know it's dinner time. Mine is "breakfast" and it works every time – even at a distance the dogs come running.

## The Power of Scent

Place clothing, toys, litter box, whatever is familiar to the pet, outside in the yard where they might sense it.

## Posting Signs

Assuming that you have not been successful with your immediate search your next step is to start posting signs. Lets review a couple of rules that you should follow. First you should post the sign in manner that will provide it the most exposure. Look for street corners that get a lot of foot and auto traffic. You should try to post the sign near the road so that both pedestrian and motor traffic can view it.

**Utility Poles** Generally speaking, utility companies do not allow private messages to be posted on their poles. I have found that these utility companies are more tolerant when you post a LOST CAT or LOST DOG sign. It's worth a try.

Check the utility pole regularly as they have people who regularly clear the poles of signs. I just reposted my signs where they stayed for about a month before being removed again. (My turtle was lost for 6 weeks before being recovered. All of that time, he was in the adjacent neighbors' yard and was recovered by another neighbor who spotted him when mailing a letter).

**Trees** Before you post your Lost Dog or Lost Cat sign on a tree, ask the owner for permission and assure him that you will not nail the sign to the tree. I punched holes in the corners of your signs and included string in the Retrieval Kit to assist you in this circumstance.

**Veterinarian** Veterinarians almost always have bulletin boards where they allow people to post notices for lost or found animals or animals for sale. You should visit any veterinarians or animal hospitals in your immediate area and let the personnel know of your loss. Oftentimes, people will bring in an injured animal to a veterinarian posing as the owner. These folks don't return to claim the pet figuring it is in good hands. The veterinarian will be more than happy to locate the owner to recover his expenses.

**Grocery Store Bulletin Boards** Most grocery stores also have bulletin boards available to their customers and it has been proven that most people use the grocery store closest to their home. Just be sure to follow the rules and check with the manager first. Large grocery stores may limit the size of your notice to a 3 x 5 card. If this is the case, cut one of the enclosed signs into a 3 x 5 size leaving a red border at the top. Mark LOST DOG or LOST CAT in bold letters at the top and complete the description in smaller print.

**Pet Shops** People who notice that a pet may be lost usually have pets of their own and may therefore, frequent a pet store. Use the pet shop bulletin board, if they have one or ask the owner to place your sign in their window.

### **Advertise!**

It pays to advertise. In fact, the first thing many people do when they find a lost animal that is unidentified is check the Lost & Found column in their local paper. Pets can wander great distances in their confusion and the finder may not have seen any of your signs.

**Newspapers** If you live in a large city, you may want to advertise in the city newspaper. As stated earlier, your pet may have wandered quite a distance. Local newspapers are not received by everyone, but they are cheaper and most likely cover the area where your pet was lost. Be sure to look in the Found column of the local newspapers yourself. Many newspapers offer free ads in their found columns. If someone has found your pet, they may choose to advertise to locate the owner.

**School Papers** Some school newspapers accept advertising. If this is the case in the area where you lost your pet, do consider advertising in the school newspaper. Not only will you be giving money to a good cause but children are very observant and are a good source for recovering your pet.

Offer an award if possible. (To protect yourself from pet-recovery scams, leave out one of your pet's identifying characteristics so you have a method of verifying that the caller really has found your pet.)

### **Be wary of pet recovery scams!**

When describing your pet, leave out one identifying characteristic. When talking about your pet to strangers, offer no information, ask many questions, and carefully answer questions posed to you. Be wary of people who insist that you wire them money for them to return your pet.

### **Don't give up!**

Don't give up your search - even when you have little hope left. Animals who have been lost for months have been reunited with their owners.

### **Be Prepared!**

A pet (even an indoor pet) has a better chance of being returned if he/she always wears a collar and an ID tag with current information. Make sure your pet's collar is in good shape and the ID tag and current rabies tag are securely attached.

### **Prepare Your Pet!**

Take your dog (on lead) for a walk around the neighborhood. Pick several different paths out and back so your pet knows the way home. Be sure to praise and be excited when you reach your front door. Obedience train your dog. An obedience trained dog is easier to catch both for you and others.

Northeast Arkansans for Animals  
870-932-1955 or email – [wanddat@fastdata.net](mailto:wanddat@fastdata.net).

