

Tips for Finding Lost Animals

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Please note: Susan is no longer scheduling lost animal consultations

If your animal has gone missing, your concern (OK, panic) is a natural human emotion. The first thing to do is get some help - carrying this load isn't something to do alone! Try to keep your own energy balanced by getting adequate food, water and rest ... keeping a calm state will do more to help bring your animal home than you might think.

Coincidences & Connections

Your connection to your animal is your best resource. Even though it's hard to be relaxed, it really helps to take a "no worry break" a couple of times each day to call him home.

Your intentions will be a clear beacon. Ask for the highest good without being too specific... just asking for your animal to walk in the door doesn't set the intention for other kinds of "coincidental" reunions. I have heard too many stories of "coincidences" reuniting lost animals with their people to believe they are all "coincidences!"

Ads and flyers

Note: Some experts say a good flyer is the single best way people recover lost animals. For tips on what to put on you flyer - and leave off - please read the excellent article posted on www.petrescue.com "How to Find a Missing Pet."

Take out your newspaper ad and get flyers out right away. Hand flyers to everyone. Back when I did lost animal consultations I was amazed how long people sometimes waited to do the basics.

Give flyers to the UPS, floral and pizza delivery crews, mail carrier, postmaster, highway rest area staff and highway departments, police and animal control officers. Check the rescue facilities, petfinder.com, and email a flyer to your whole address book.

It takes a village to find an animal

Let everyone in your area know - knock on the door of every neighbor and hand them a flyer. Don't assume folks will check the police or the newspaper right away.

If you decide to consult an intuitive / pet psychic for help, a few words of advice... Be cautious about requests for a lot of money. Nobody is 100% accurate, and animals can give different people different messages. Even though it's the first question you'll want to ask, it's not possible to be 100% certain if an animal is alive or not.

An ounce of prevention

Training your animal to recall / come by shaking a noisy jar of treats is a great way to bring him to you even if he's out of sight. For a dog, wait until you hold the collar before giving the treat.

A collar & tag with your home & cell phone number is a beautiful thing. I don't put my animals' names on their tags - just mine. When you're traveling and staying somewhere for a few days, you may find a pet store to make an instant collar with the name & phone number of your campground or motel. Make sure the animal can slip the collar if he gets snagged.

Though there are questions about microchips, I chose to have my animal companions micro-chipped. I'd want a vet or animal shelter to know the animal is homed right away especially if he lost the collar. Some vets will scan a new patient - especially an adult - to see if the animal has a chip.

Finding your lost animal

I was trained in Wild Lands Search and Rescue as a volunteer in the Adirondack High Peaks. We learned things about searching for missing humans that can help with animals. The first thing to do: Set up a central place for info. With cell phones, this can be you. Start by covering the most tempting places not as thoroughly, and then retrace your steps with a more thorough approach going off paths and roads. Listen to the quiet voice within.

The chances of finding your animal are higher in the first few days, so get busy right away. Make up your flyer right away. Be creative and thorough. Consider going out with a group in sight of each other.

Your missing animal might not respond to your calls right away. Be patient & still. Listen for the sound of her voice: A distant meow and a human willing to wait patiently in the woods was the happy ending for a client who found her cat alive and well after she'd been missing in the woods over a month.

Children lost in the woods may hide and ignore the calls of searchers. They sometimes think what they did is bad. Children tend to go uphill, adults down. Humans tend to go in circles even if they don't think they are.

Think like an animal

Your animal may be following basic self protection instincts. Cats especially can become guarded, feral. So, in addition to driving a car down the street and calling, take your time. Enlist volunteers, and go on foot or bicycle.

Carry a jar of treats and shake it noisily as you go - especially helpful if you've practiced rewarding your animal with treats from the shaking-jar before. Woods search trick: Turn and look back at the area you just covered. Stop often and center yourself and "call" the animal with your strong intention, holding a picture of her in your mind's eye.

Horses are social animals. If your mare is in season and gets out, check who has a stallion in the area, even if he's "just a pony." (A true story ... :)

If the animal was bumped by a car, he may run to cover even if he's physically OK. Check wooded areas and large green areas thoroughly. Ask folks who walk in those areas if they've seen an animal matching your description either alone or with a person.

The last place you saw the animal is the "point last seen." Keep expanding the search area from that center point as more time passes. Animals can be really resourceful at getting food and water even if they were couch potatoes, so check dumpsters, garbage cans and other food sources. If you see food left outside, knock on the nearest door.

Trust your intuition

Trust your gut. If you get an unexplained impulse to turn left, or call someone out of the blue for help, follow your intuition. It's how animal communicators (and you are one, too!) get results.

We found our lost puppy years ago by knocking on a neighbor's door. The lights were on late at night and it "seemed" odd. The dog had slipped away up the road (these were the days before leashes in wooded areas) and they'd taken him in. They felt sorry for him - he was a Lab and managed to convince them he hadn't eaten in a week! We'd reported him missing to police, radio etc, but they hadn't checked yet.

Lost & found

When you find your animal, retrace your steps. Take down your flyers and notify and thank everyone you contacted for help. This positive energy helps future lost animals and keeps people focused on animals who are still missing.

If you don't find your animal, please find comfort in knowing that each being has a journey and an intelligence to follow his highest good. We may not always have the answer to these mysteries.

Though your heart may feel heavy now, your animal will always be there, in your heart, thankful for the love you shared. When the time is right, consider healing your heart by opening it to another animal companion.

Good luck and blessings to you and your animal family for a happy reunion!

Online resources & registries for lost animals:

Pet Finder Classifieds - <http://www.petfinder.com/classifieds/classifiedhop.html>

Free National US registry for household pets, post a lost or found pet here. Search for your lost pet, ads expire in 14 days.

Pets911 - <http://www.1888pets911.org/index.php>

National lost & found registry, links, shelter listings, volunteer opportunities, more.

HORSES: NetPosse - www.NetPosse.com

International registry for lost & stolen horses & other equines, trailers & tack, resources & education.

Article: "How to find a lost cat or dog" (suggestions can help with other species)

<http://www.petrescue.com/library/find-pet.htm>

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