



Finding Your Lost Pet



When your beloved dog or cat strays from home, it can be a traumatic experience for both of you. Here are some tips that we hope will help you find your pet.

If you lose a pet:

1. **Immediately** put a dish of your pet's food on your porch, as well as a favorite blanket or toy so they can follow the scent home. This should also keep them from straying very far. Refill the dish if the food disappears to keep your pet near until you recover them.
2. **Search immediately** – most animals do not stray far during the first hours of getting lost. Call your pet's name often and loudly. Actively search your property and the surrounding area – don't assume they will come to you immediately. Most animals become very frightened, and will hide. Walk or drive through your neighborhood several times each day. Ask neighbors, people on the street, letter carriers and delivery people if they have seen your pet. Hand out a recent photograph of your pet and information on how you can be reached if your pet is found.
3. **Contact local animal shelters and animal control agencies.** File a lost pet report with every shelter within a 60-mile radius of your home and visit the nearest shelters daily, if possible. To find your local shelter go to www.pets911.com or check your phone book. If there is no shelter in your community, contact the local police department. Provide these agencies with an accurate description and a recent photograph of your pet. Notify the police if you believe your pet was stolen.
4. **“Advertise”:**
 - Make flyers with “LOST CAT / DOG” in big bold letter so it can be read by a driver from a lamp pole. Include a brief description, a picture if you have one, and your phone number. Consider offering a reward - say "Reward" on the flier but do not specify an amount. Ask to be called even if people just see your pet. Post the flyers in the surrounding area, at local veterinary offices, and pet stores (and anyplace else that will let you - grocery stores, community centers, traffic intersections). For outdoor flyers, you can enclose them in plastic sheet protectors (about \$5 for 50 at most office supply stores).
 - Post notices online at www.pets911.com and www.findtoto.com.
 - Place advertisements in newspapers and with radio stations. Include your pet's sex, age, weight, breed, color and any special markings. When describing your pet, leave out one identifying characteristic and ask the person who finds your pet to describe it. Most newspapers will run a lost ad for free.
5. **Visit the Shelter(s).** Register the pet as lost and to look around to see if your pet is there. Ask if someone has found a pet who matches the description of yours. Please note that the shelter is often full and shelter staff are exceptionally busy. Shelter staff will attempt to identify your lost pet, but do not rely on this - visit the shelter frequently. If the Shelter is closed, contact the local police to inform them of the loss. Someone who finds your pet may report it to the Police. The number for the Dearborn Police is (313) 943-2240.
6. **Set a humane trap.** If your lost pet is small enough to go into a trap. They are available online or you can rent one from your local shelter. Bait the trap with your pet's favorite food. Put a favorite towel or blanket on or in the trap. Your pet will be comforted by their own scent. Check the trap often. Some animals panic in the trap and you do not want your pet to hurt themselves. If you catch your pet, take the entire trap inside and then free your pet, otherwise your frightened pet may escape again. If you catch a cat or dog that is not yours, please take them in the trap to your local shelter or veterinarian. If you catch wildlife, please just carefully open the trap and release them. Traps also work if you know where your pet is, but they will not come to you.
7. **Be wary of pet-recovery scams.** When talking to a stranger who claims to have found your pet, ask him to describe the pet thoroughly before you offer any information. If he does not include the identifying characteristic you left out of the advertisements, he may not really have your pet. Be particularly wary of people who insist that you give or wire them money for the return of your pet.
8. **Don't give up hope.** Keep checking the Shelters and looking. Sometimes it takes a while. We've reunited dogs with owners after weeks and cats with owners after months. Animals who have been lost for months have been reunited with their owners.

Prevent Pet Loss. We have literature that can tell you steps to take to prevent pet loss, please pick it up at the shelter or online. In general, a pet—even an indoor pet—has a better chance of being returned if s/he always wears a collar and an ID tag with your name, address, and telephone number. The Friends For the Dearborn Animal Shelter strongly recommend a permanent method of identification for your pet – having them microchipped. Ask your veterinarian or come to one of the Shelter's low cost Microchip clinics to protect your pet, select “Services” on our web site or contact the shelter..

For any questions, contact the shelter at 313-943-2697 or friends@DearbornAnimals.org.