**Tips for Finding Lost Pets**

**By Janice Frazier**

Don’t get discouraged, know it may take weeks to find your pet – the average is 3 weeks to find a lost cat, and doing all the tips increases your chances of return. With the use of this list one of our adopters was able to find their cat, in her case she was lucky it took only 10 days!

1. Contact adoption agency / person – they have advice and knowledge of specific pet that could help. In addition microchips also lead back to the adoption agency / person in addition to primary contacts so good they know.
2. Contact microchip company – they will record pet missing in system, and confirm you are on as contact – this is important as often people don’t transfer/register chips
3. Put out bed and for cat the litter tray – the familiar odors may bring them back (food is less likely to)
4. Walk the area looking for animal and tracks or other traces
5. Check Shelters, every 2 days minimum, daily if possible, and view their on-line postings daily.
6. Signs (simple and clear) up everywhere possible, particularly at main intersections (once search is over be sure to take signs down). Post at Starbucks, Laundromats, vets, pet stores, pet groomers, and near schools for at least a 2-mile radius. The more eyes looking the better.
7. Check at emergency vet offices
8. Talk to neighbors and everyone about the pet that is missing – and any identifying marks
9. Follow up on all leads even if slim, sometimes people don’t really know breeds or color designations so they may call a torbie a calico etc…
10. List on Petharbor, Petfinder, Tabby Tracker, other lost pet websites, Craigs List, newspapers AND review the found postings daily on those.
11. Contact local rescue groups – they often get in strays, and ask them to post the lost signs at their fairs.
12. Do Petharbor postcards (goes out to local radius from lost location)
13. Hire a tracker - best done in early stages, so scent is strong (in this case this was done, but data was not helpful)
14. For shy animals check bushes – especially important with cats
15. Notify local feral colony feeders in case pet joins colony for food (even dogs may do this)
16. Leave food and water out in suspect locations (especially if animal’s been missing for days) and sprinkle flour around bowls to identify paw prints of species feeding
17. Stake out locations and trap using all the familiar odor items (food, toys, blankets, etc.) you have, with the trap

If your pet is out any length of time, have a Veterinarian exam it. In warm weather if an animal is out more than a day, the animal could be dehydrated, and if much longer than a day, the Veterinarian may recommend other treatments as well. Always de-flea a pet if it is not currently on a de-fleaing schedule, as here in California fleas are a year round issue outside.

Don’t give up when your pet goes missing, it sometimes takes a long time to get them back, remember the average is 3 weeks, so that means some pets are taking much longer to be found/returned.