



Missing Cat Recovery Tips

When You've Lost Your Companion Animal

When a beloved companion animal strays from home it can be a traumatic experience for both you and your missing friend. The Whatcom Humane Society receives many lost cats, dogs, and other animals **daily** and we make every attempt to contact the owner if a pet is wearing identification. We want to reunite as many stray pets as possible with their guardians.

Please note: Due to the large volume of animals the Whatcom Humane Society receives each day, we cannot identify lost pets via phone, social media, or e-mail communication. You must visit the shelter and look for your missing pet.

Indoor Only Cats:

- **92%** of indoor only cats are found within a 5-home radius of where they went missing. They often find the first hiding place they can and hunker down in silence.
- Immediate searches should be near the home, garage/shed, yard and bushes, then broaden your search area.
- Check under cars, decks, garden supplies/equipment, etc. and since cats can fit into the smallest of spaces – leave no stone unturned!

Outdoor Access Cats:

- **84%** of outdoor access cats are found within a 5-home radius of where they went missing.
- Outdoor access cats will have a larger territory than indoor only cats thus your search area should be larger.
- Outdoor access cats that are pushed out of their normal territory will often exhibit similar behaviors of displaced indoor only cats and seek immediate hiding places.

General Tips:

- **Go to the Whatcom Humane Society and complete a Lost Cat Report.** Check the shelter frequently, each day during business hours if possible. If the pet has ID, the shelter will attempt to contact you, but collars can fall off and some microchips cannot be read by all scanners, so visiting the shelter frequently is important.
- **Check out the Petco Love Lost missing pet facial recognition page at lost.petcolove.org,** photos of stray cats brought to WHS are posted to the Petco Love Lost page. However, checking the shelter in person is still highly recommended in case there are technical issues with the website that we are unaware of.
- Post lost ads on Bellingham Craigslist in the Lost & Found section, social media pages like Lost Pets of Whatcom County (Facebook page), and online neighborhood groups at www.nextdoor.com.

General Tips Continued:

- Hang lost cat posters at highly trafficked areas is a great way to get the word out to your neighborhood that your pet is missing.
- Go door-to-door and deliver flyers to neighbors, speak with as many people in person as possible.
- While going door-to-door, ask neighbors if they would be willing to let you look under their deck, around their yard, or in their garage/shed.
- Displaced cats will often not come when called so do not assume your cat is not in the area solely because he/she did not respond when called.
- If your cat comes running when you use the can opener or shake a treat/food container, try making the noise while you are out searching for your pet. Be sure to pause and give your cat time to respond to the familiar sound.
- Using a flashlight to search, even in the daytime, will illuminate the reflective shine of your cat's eyes, enabling you to find him/her in places your eyes may not have been able to see otherwise.
- Shy, skittish, or displaced cats often exhibit behaviors most people relate to feral, or undomesticated cats so ask neighbors to contact you if your cat is sighted but does not approach willingly.
- If you have a garage, consider leaving it slightly open so your cat may find his way in.
- Place an item that smells familiar to your cat (a favorite toy, food bowl, blanket, pet bed, or unwashed article of your clothing) in a cardboard box. Place the box in an out-of-the-way, quiet spot in your yard or on your porch. Check it regularly, especially during the early morning hours.
- Do not rely on just one recovery method (lost pet fliers only) when searching for your pet, utilizing multiple search methods will give you the best chance at being reunited with your lost cat.
- Cat traps are effective and can be placed near the home where the pet went missing in a place that can be monitored regularly. **(Humane traps are available for rent through the Whatcom Humane Society for a \$50 deposit and daily fee, call for more information)**
- Pay-to-use websites such as www.petamberalert.com and www.findtoto.com offer assistance issuing mass lost pet notifications to people and businesses in your area.

Reunited...and it feels so good!

Each year in the United States millions of companion animals enter shelters as strays. There are many ways to prevent your four-footed friend from disappearing. These tips can help you beat the odds:

- Be a responsible pet guardian and keep your pet safely confined, leashed, or supervised at all times.
- Spay or neuter your pet. The most effective way to prevent your companion animal from disappearing is to have them spayed or neutered. This will curb their desire to roam.
- Identification is a lost pet's ticket home. Always keep a collar and ID tags on your cat and consider having them microchipped, a permanent form of identification. **(Microchipping is offered on a walk-in basis at the Whatcom Humane Society for \$30)**
- An accurate description of your pet is vital. Keep a record of your animal's size, with any distinguishing markings or characteristics, along with a current photo.
- Safe travel. If you must travel with your pet, use a leash or carrier at all times to keep him/her safe.

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