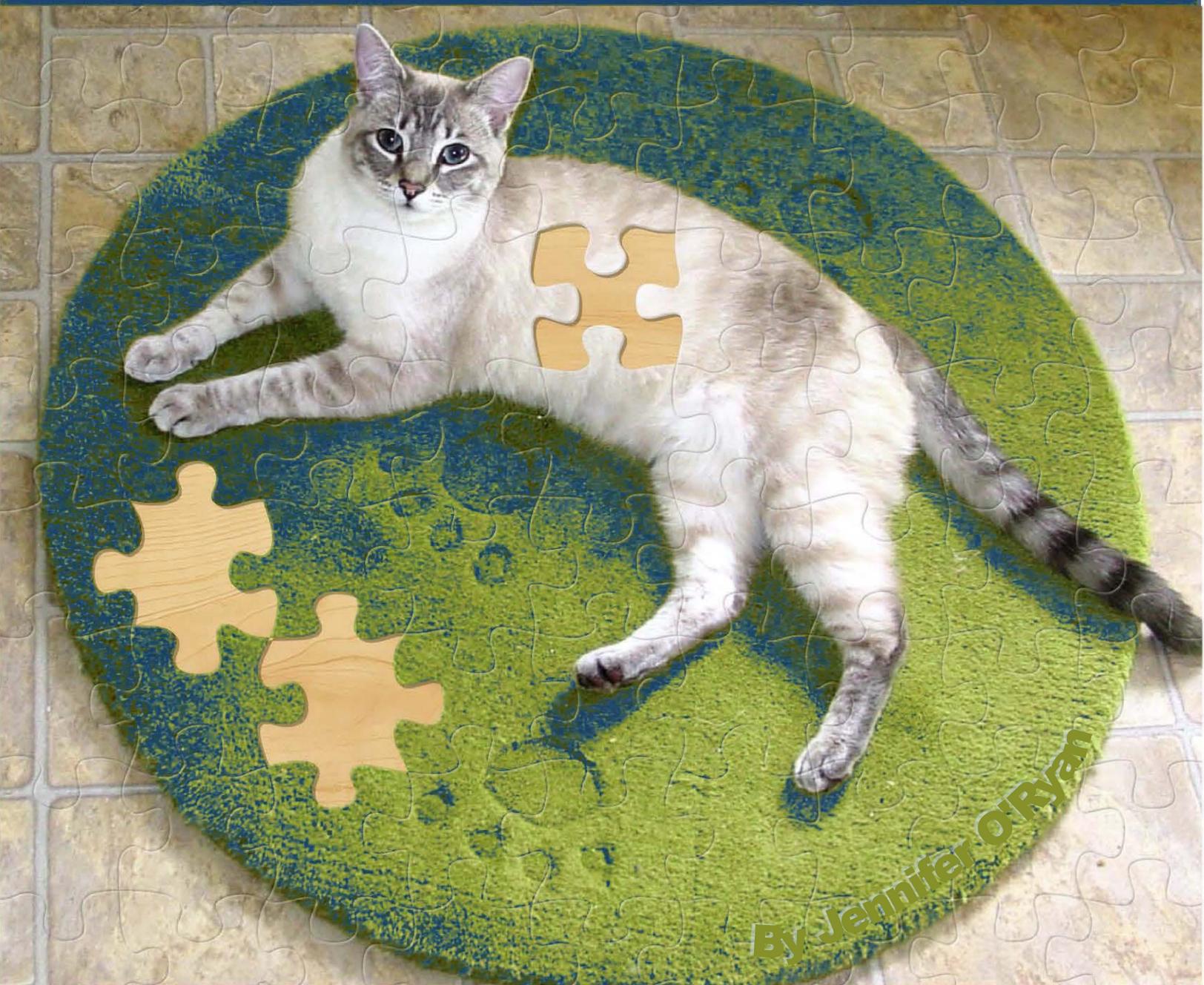


Missing

Crash Course in Finding a Lost Cat



By Jennifer O'Ryan

Introduction:

This “**Crash Course**” was created to provide a quick overview of the steps needed to recover your lost cat. When your cat is lost, nothing is more precious than time. We recommend that you begin implementing these steps right away. Don’t wait!

While this guide is all about finding your cat, we also want to tell you the three biggest mistakes people make when their cat is lost.

1. Waiting a few days to begin the search in the hopes that the cat will just come home.
2. Focusing on just one or two recovery methods.
3. Giving up. This is the biggest mistake of all! It is easy to get discouraged when your cat is missing. The stress and grief of not knowing leads many people to conclude that their cat was taken by a predator or stolen. The reality is cats usually take much longer to recover than dogs. In fact, if they aren’t found in the first week or two, it can sometimes take weeks or even months. Cats are survivors and masters of concealment. Don’t give up! Cats are often found many months after they are lost, but **only** if their owner is still looking.

*This version includes shelter and trap loan resources for the Puget Sound area in Washington State. If you wish to have one for your area, email CCCLostCat@gmail.com with the local resources you wish to have added and I will tailor one for your region.



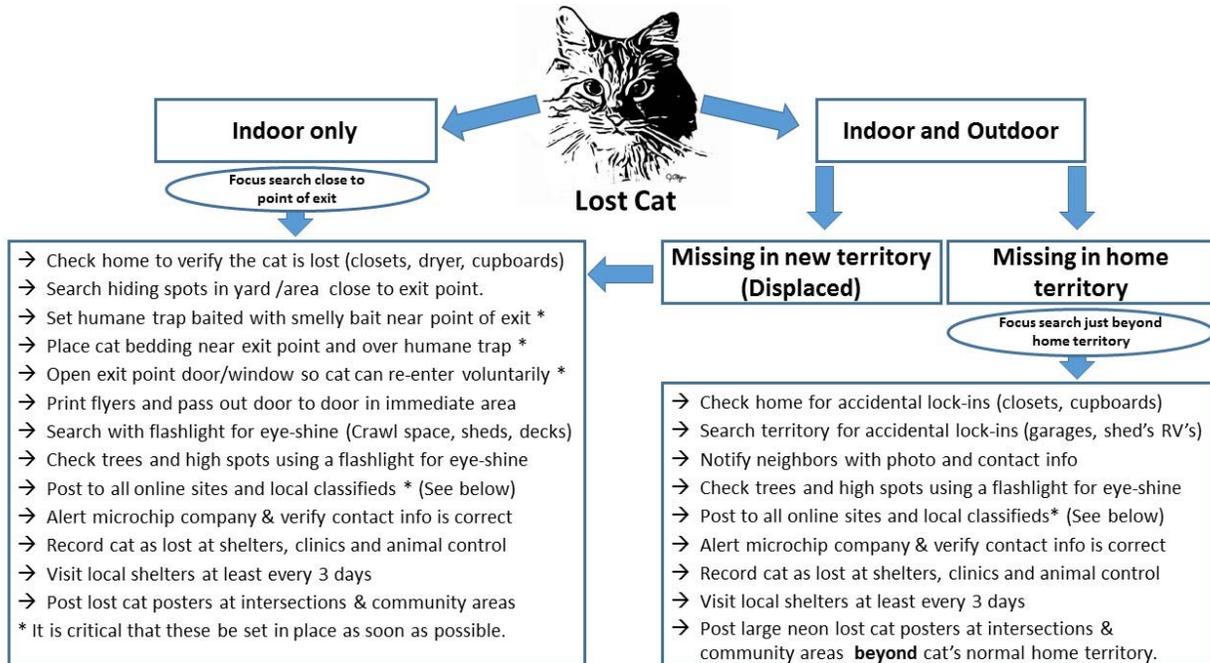
Creating Compassionate Solutions



For more information on lost cat recovery, go to www.communitycatcoalitionwa.org

Crash Course in Finding Your Lost Cat

This is an overview of the most important strategies for finding lost cats. For more information, check the appendix for helpful links and excerpts from *“Missing: Proven Strategies for Finding Your Lost Cat”*. The most important thing to know at this stage, is that the strategies for finding a lost indoor-only cat are very different from finding an outdoor-access cat who hasn’t returned home. Use the flow chart below to identify the first steps to follow. For more detailed information, read the following pages.



*Places to post: Local online shelter sites, newspaper classifieds, Facebook lost cat / pet sites, Craigslist, lost pet websites, neighborhood blogs

*A **displaced cat** is one lost in unfamiliar territory after a move to a new home, escape from carrier or transport to a new area.

Before You Panic

Whether your cat is strictly an indoor cat or an indoor-outdoor cat, first confirm that your cat is missing by doing a quick search inside and outside.

- Open a can of your cat’s favorite food, shake the treat bag, pull out the catnip stash or pick up a favorite toy.
- Check inside- closed rooms, washers/dryers, furniture, beds and box springs, closets, storage bins, ottomans, shelves and heating vents
- Check outside- garages, sheds, cabinets, chimneys, under porches and decks, crawl spaces, trees and shrubs, vehicles and RV’s. Use a flashlight to check for eye-shine.

Search Tips

Shine a flashlight under homes and decks. Eye shine in dark places is a great way to detect cats. Use your smart phone to take photos under inaccessible areas. Bring a bag of your cat's favorite treats.

Indoor only cat or Displaced Cats

***Indoor only cats typically hide in silence within a house or two distance of home. They will sometimes do this for 2 to 3 weeks. Focus your search close to home and don't be discouraged.**

- ❑ Keep the door or window the cat exited from open. Many cats come back in on their own. Corral your other pets in a back bedroom or crate them near the door to attract the lost cat. (Only if they like each other!) If the window is high, try putting a chair or table under it to allow easy re-entry. They are most likely to re-enter after dark, so keep it open at night if possible. If you have access to a wildlife camera, place one in your yard near the exit.
- ❑ Place cat bedding and clothing or towels from the cat's favorite person near the door.
- ❑ Rent, borrow or buy humane traps. Use a wildlife camera to help monitor the traps.
 - If possible, get a **Tru-Catch** style trap instead of a spring strap. They are quieter and less likely to injure or startle the cat.
 - Place the trap in a covered spot near the point of exit.
 - Cover the trap with used bedding from home. Pillow cases and towels work great.
 - Place newspaper, a thin pillow case or cardboard on the trap bottom.
 - Bait the trap with tuna, roast chicken or sardines. Make a trail or raisin-sized food fragments going into the trap. Pour tuna juice or chicken drippings/ broth around the trap to amplify the scent.
- ❑ You already did a cursory search to confirm that your cat is missing. Now do a second, more thorough outdoor search of your property using a flashlight. Look for eye-shine. Unless your cat was chased, he is most likely very close in a dark concealed place. Sitting quietly in place and speaking in a conversational tone may lure them out. This works best after dark.
- ❑ Print flyers and pass them out to neighbors.
 - If possible, talk to the neighbors instead of just leaving a flyer.
 - Ask for permission to check in and under all structures or vehicles on their property. Bring a flashlight to check for eye-shine.
 - If they feed cats outside, ask if you can install a wildlife camera.
 - Consider adding a reward. This will motivate even non-cat lovers to pay attention.
 - Enlist the help of any neighbor kids. They are likely to be the first ones to notice a new cat in the neighborhood.
- ❑ Alert your microchip company that your cat is missing.
 - Verify that contact information is up-to-date.
 - Enter the chip number in the free **FoundAnimals Microchip Registry**. If it doesn't show up, register it now. <https://microchipregistry.foundanimals.org/>
- ❑ Post your cat as lost at local shelters, veterinary clinics, rescues and animal control.
- ❑ Advertise your cat as lost on Craigslist (pet and lost and found sections), Nextdoor.com, Neighborhood blogs, Facebook Lost Cat / Pet sites and the newspaper classifieds. Use the words Lost and Cat in the title so it will show up in a search.
- ❑ Post neon colored poster-board signs at intersections and community areas. **See page 4.**
- ❑ Check local shelters at least every three days. Make sure your flyer is still posted there.

Indoor – Outdoor Cats

***Outdoor access cats are most likely to be found inside a neighbor's home, accidentally locked in a garage or shed or just beyond their normal territory. If they are chased past the home territory they know, they may not know how get back home or may be too frightened to traverse the area where they were spooked. Post beyond home territory!**

- ❑ Print as many flyers as possible and pass them out in **at least** a 4 block radius to start.
 - Include a photograph and contact info. You will get more tips if you include contact info for email, Facebook and texting in addition to a phone number.
 - Consider adding a reward to the flyer. This will motivate even non-cat lovers to pay attention and check their property. Rewards of \$100 - \$500 catch people's attention.
 - Look on Google Maps in satellite view to make sure you reach all the homes.
 - If possible, talk to the neighbors instead of just leaving a flyer.
 - If they feed cats outside, ask if you can install a wildlife camera where they feed the cats. Rescues will often loan or rent wildlife cameras.
 - Ask if they've noticed any new cats or any aggressive interactions among neighborhood cats recently. If so, your cat may have been chased out of his normal territory.
 - Enlist the help of kids in your own neighborhood and in areas outside your cat's normal territory. They are likely to be the first ones to notice a new cat.
- ❑ As you go door-to-door with flyers, ask if you can check their crawl spaces, garage, sheds, RV's, decks and other structures to check for accidental lock-ins.
 - Bring a flashlight to check for eye-shine both in trees and in dark places. A cell phone can be used to photograph inaccessible areas that are too small for access.
 - If the owner won't let you check their property, ask them to leave doors cracked open so your cat can exit voluntarily. Tell them that your cat may be hiding and not visible.
- ❑ Post neon colored poster-board signs at intersections and community areas. **See page 4.**
- ❑ Alert your microchip company that your cat is missing.
 - Verify that contact information is up-to-date.
 - Enter the chip number in the free **FoundAnimals Microchip Registry**. If it doesn't show up, register it now. <https://microchipregistry.foundanimals.org/>
- ❑ Post your cat as lost at local shelters, veterinary clinics, rescues and animal control.
- ❑ Advertise your cat as lost on Craigslist (pet and lost and found sections), Nextdoor.com, Neighborhood blogs, Facebook Lost Cat / Pet sites and the newspaper classifieds. Use the words Lost and Cat in the title so it will show up in a search.
- ❑ Check local shelters at least every three days. Make sure your flyer is still posted there. Be prepared to continue checking the shelters for months. Lost cats are more likely to show up at shelters weeks or months after they are lost. There are several reasons for this. First, lost cats are often hiding and would-be rescuers may not know they are even there. Second, many cats will resist being handled by strangers. Even friendly cats can take a while to trust new people and many cannot be caught at all without a trap.

Flyers and Posters

Posters should be posted at major intersections and community areas. Focus **close to home** on lost **indoor-only cats**. For **outdoor access cats**, think **beyond** their normal territory. Male cats tend to have larger territories than females. In one study of radio-collar tracked cats, the average territory size was just under 5 acres, but it isn't uncommon to recover a cat a couple miles from home.

Avoid traffic **signs** or poles as it is illegal to post on many of those and they may be taken down. Ask permission before putting them on private property. People are often happy to help if asked. Put the flyer in an upside-down sheet protector and use weather resistant tape to attach to the poster.

- H-frame wire stakes can be used to place them in yards or gardens. You can order them on Amazon if they don't carry them in a local hardware store. Duct tape the poster to a piece of cardboard to attach it to the H-frame. Don't forget to post one in front of your own house!
- Posters can be attached to poles with duct tape. If you attach cardboard or a second sheet of poster board to the back, it will last longer.
- Posters can also be attached to car bumpers or back windows. Car markers work great on the windows!



Flyer to pass out



Flyer to post – Use 5+ inch letters

Flyers are best in color, but black and white can be effective if you do a good job describing your cat. Save money by printing 4 sheets per page. If you have a large area to cover, print 10 per page on card stock and pass out as business cards. Indoor only cats are nearly always found close to home, but it is a good idea to pass them out in a 2 to 4 block radius of home just in case they were chased or spooked out of the area. For outdoor access cats, flyers should be passed out in about a 1 mile radius of home. Be sure to talk to as many people as possible when passing them out. All it takes is one small clue to get your cat home!

Trap Basics

One of the best tools for retrieving a lost indoor-only or displaced cat is a humane trap, especially if they are set as soon as possible and kept consistently baited.

See the appendix for more detailed trapping tips and details.

The trap needs to be close to where your cat is hiding, so he can smell the bait. Setting the trap in the first day or two gives you the greatest chance of getting your cat back, but be prepared to keep it set for weeks. Cats typically hunker down and hide for long periods. If your cat doesn't go in the trap, it doesn't necessarily mean that he isn't in the area. It may just mean that:

- Your cat isn't yet hungry enough or brave enough to break cover and seek food.
- Your trap isn't in a location where he can get to it without going out into the open.

What Kind of Trap Should You Use?

I would recommend using a, Tru-Catch style trap. These use gravity instead of springs to close the door and have rings that prevent the door from lifting when it closes. There are two advantages to using this type of trap.



1. They are safer than spring-style traps that close with force and can occasionally catch a tail or leg as the cat goes in.
2. When triggered, they make far less noise. If your cat accidentally triggers a spring-based trap or witnesses another cat go inside, the loud sound may scare your cat off and deter him from going in again.

Where to Set the Trap

- Place the trap close to the point of exit or where there was a sighting of your cat.
- Choose a covered area. Most lost cats avoid going out in the open until they are used to the new area. That can take weeks, so choose a concealed area that he can get to easily.

How to Set the Trap

1. If the trap is off your property, put a flyer on the trap that explains its purpose.
2. Place a single layer of newsprint, cardboard or cloth on the **bottom**. Don't use towels.
3. Cover the **top** of the trap with a used towel or bedding from your home.
4. Make sure the trap is in a level location and no rocks, branches or other obstacles will prevent the door from closing all the way. Test it before you leave.
5. Choose a smelly bait like tuna so the cat can detect the odor from a distance. Make a trail of raisin-sized food particles going into the trap. If your cat has a favorite food that isn't smelly, use it in addition to the tuna. Roast chicken works well for some cats and some cats like sardines or KFC original recipe chicken. Try them all!
6. Monitor the trap frequently and make sure it is adequately protected from the elements.

What if You Accidentally Trap Wildlife or the Wrong Cat?

Some people are reluctant to use a trap because they are afraid they will catch a neighbor cat or wildlife. Don't let this stop you from setting a trap! You may be missing your best and possibly only way to retrieve him. If you catch something, just let it go!

Catching Wildlife

If you are using a Tru-Catch trap, releasing wildlife is easy.

- First, make sure the trap is completely covered with a towel or blanket. This will reduce the animal's fear and also offer you some protection.
- Aim the trap opening away from you and towards bushes, trees or other kind of cover. Don't release a wild animal out in the open. A scared or confused animal could run towards the "cover" of your legs if that is the only visible hiding spot. Pick up the trap by the handle and carry it away from your body to a better spot. You can also slide it with your foot or a yard tool into a more concealed location.
- Gently tip the trap over with your foot or a yard tool. If it is a Tru-Catch trap, the door will open automatically when it is upside down. The animal is going to be afraid of you, so if you are behind the trap in the opposite direction of the cover, they will run away from you. Opossums sometimes linger inside for a while before coming out. If you uncover the trap and walk away they will eventually come out. If you have a spring-style trap, you may have to open it by hand. Wear gloves for extra protection. Spring style traps can be locked in the open position by threading a stick or wooden dowel through the bars to prop it open.

Remember, the animal is terrified of you and just wants to get away!



Relocating Wildlife

Some people relocate wildlife trapped during the recovery effort for their cat because they are afraid the animal will keep going in. This is generally **not** the case. Once a wild animal has been trapped they are far less likely to go in again, so the kindest action is to release them right where they were trapped. Relocating wildlife is inhumane to the animal, to any dependent young left behind and to the animals in the new territory. In addition to spreading diseases and parasites to new areas, relocated animals have to compete with the local wildlife for food and shelter. As a result, the survival rate is low. Beyond these ethical issues, it is also illegal in many areas to transport an animal to a new area. Be kind, and let them stay in their home.

Catching Neighbor Cats

Before trapping, inform other cat owners in the area that you are trying to trap your cat. Ask them if they can keep their free-roaming cats inside for the next few days. If they can't do this, just release their cat every time it goes in. Most cats will learn to stay out after being trapped a few times. Other



cats will happily go in repeatedly for the treats. Try attracting the cat to another area for treats. Just be sure not to leave the food unattended. If your missing cat gets the food, he is not likely to go in the trap.

Catching Unknown Cats

If you catch an unknown cat, ask your neighbors if they recognize him. If they don't, do your best to assess the cat before releasing. Consider the following before deciding what to do.

- **Is the cat underweight or in poor condition?** If so, he may be homeless or someone's lost cat. Take the cat to a veterinarian's office or a local rescue to be scanned for a microchip. If you can foster him while you search for his potential home or look for other rescue options, you could be saving the cat's life.
- **Is the cat healthy, relaxed and making friendly overtures?** These often indicate that the cat is owned and is in his home territory. If you don't have the time or desire to verify that it is an owned cat, it would be better to turn the cat loose than to take it to a shelter. Many people have indoor-outdoor cats and they may assume a predator got him if he disappears and not bother to check the shelter. If you want to be sure, take the cat inside, list him as found on Craigslist and at the local shelter and post found signs around the neighborhood.
- **Is the cat behaving like a feral cat?** If the cat is acting terrified with ears back and pupils dilated he may be feral. Hissing or growling defensively may also indicate that the cat is feral. If the cat appears feral and does not have an ear tip indicating that he is altered, consider contacting a local rescue for help with assessment to see if he is a good candidate for TNR [Trap-Neuter-Return]. If he is truly feral, this may be his only chance to be altered. If you don't know of any local rescue groups, you can do an area code search on Petfinder.com. Some communities offer low-cost or free altering for feral cats and some shelters have "return to field" programs that alter cats and return them to their home territory. Feral cats do best when they remain in their home territory and are at high risk of euthanasia at most shelters, so returning them is the most humane solution. * **See Appendix Scared Cat vs. Feral Cat**
- If you are going to hang onto a cat for a few days, make sure she isn't lactating. If she is, and the kittens are outside hidden, it may be kindest to release her. It is, however, safe to spay her and return her right away if you have the ability to get her into a clinic immediately. Contact a local rescue for information on how to help her.

Cats and Animal Shelters

Municipal shelters place cats for adoption if they aren't claimed. In our area, shelters can place the cat up for adoption if not claimed in 3 days. So, it is good advice to **check the shelters at least once every two to three days**. However, many cat owners invest the majority of their cat recovery time on shelter searches. It is a big mistake to make animal shelter checks your **main** or **only** cat-finding tool because the probability of finding your cat there is actually lower than other search methods. Here is why.

- Unlike lost dogs, cats are more likely to hide and be invisible to would-be rescuers. This is particularly true of displaced cats who can remain invisible for weeks or even months. By the time they are visible, many owners have given up hope and have stopped making trips to the shelter.
- Once spotted, many cats are difficult or impossible to catch. It takes time for them to trust enough to allow handling and placement in a carrier. Some cannot be caught at all without a trap. This reduces the likelihood of your cat ending up at a shelter. Free roaming cats are common in many communities, so few of these cats end up at a shelter simply because they are not perceived to be lost.
- It doesn't take long for a lost cat to look like an abandoned or unowned cat. So when a lost cat shows up on a porch or is found eating with other free-roaming cats, people may assume he is homeless. An APPA study found that 35% of owned cats were adopted as strays. While it is impossible to know how many of those are lost cats, I do find that a large number of lost cats are later found eating or living in a residence close to where the cat was lost. Even in areas with high predator populations, it is a very common outcome to find cats being cared for by a near neighbor weeks or months after the cat disappeared.
- Lost cat owner's sometimes devote so much time to shelter checks, that they neglect the search methods that lead to faster recoveries. Door to door flyers, posters, careful searches and traps are far more likely to result in your cat being found.

A study by the National Council of Pet Population Study and Policy (NCPSP) found that only 2- 5% of the cats entering shelters are reunited with their owners. Many of those reunions are due to the microchips detected by the scanners at the shelter.

Exceptions: There are exceptions to every rule. If your cat is a confident and social cat who approaches strangers for attention and invites himself into homes, he is more likely to be noticed and taken to a shelter. This is particularly true in neighborhoods with few free roaming cats. However, even with this kind of cat, you are likely to get him back faster and without paying a shelter impound fee if all the neighbors have flyers. And those flyers will make it less likely that the finder will decide to keep your friendly feline.

Appendix:

Lost Cat Infographics

Community at Coalition

Lost Indoor-Only Cats

Myth 1
My Cat Was Taken by a Predator
Fact: Lost cats typically hide in silence and leave no scent trail. Predators can't find a hidden cat!

Myth 2
My Cat is Lost Far From Home
Fact: Lost indoor-only cats are nearly always found within earshot of home.

Myth 3
My Cat was Stolen
Fact: Theft is rare. If you can't find your cat, a thief won't be able to either!

I'm hiding nearby REALLY!

Myths that Keep Them Lost Forever

The First 4 Things to Do When an Indoor-Only Cat gets Out

1. Leave exit point door or window open
2. Do a thorough search of your house and yard
3. Set humane traps in the area
4. Talk to all neighbors

- Contain other pets in closed rooms or crates.
- Leave exit point open as long as safety allows.
- Use a cat tree or chair if the exit point is high.
- Place favorite items inside & outside near door.
- Don't** close the door until the cat is well inside. Fast movements may make him bolt back out.
- Follow the point of exit to the nearest cover. Cats usually follow the line of a building, fence or vegetation to the nearest hiding spot. Use a quiet voice and make familiar "treat" sounds.
- Use a flashlight to check for eye-shine under decks, sheds, crawlspaces and vehicles.
- Ask near neighbors if you can search their yards, crawlspaces, garages, decks and sheds.
- Talk to your immediate neighbors. They are more likely to report possible sightings if you speak to them in person.
- Pass out flyers with a photo and contact number. Leave on their porch or gate if they aren't home and check back later.
- Borrow humane traps. Check on Nextdoor, Facebook lost pet groups and local shelters and rescues to see who has traps to loan.
- Place the traps in a covered area and hiding spots near the point of exit. Don't place them out in the open--scared cats stay close to cover.
- Cover the trap with familiar items from home. Used bedding and clothing work well.
- Keep trap **consistently** baited with favorite wet food or tuna until the cat is caught.

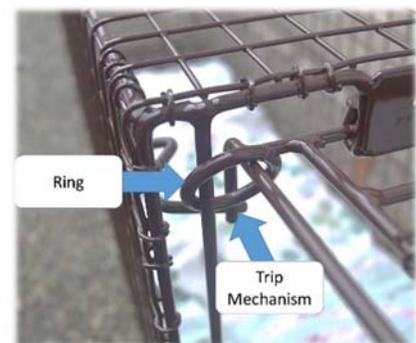
The chances of getting your lost cat home are greatest if you **act fast and don't give up**. Start now. If you wait, it may be too late.

Community at Coalition

Appendix:

Trap Details: How to Set a Tru Catch Trap

1. Place a single layer of newsprint or thin cloth like a pillow case on the bottom. Some cats don't like to walk on the wire bottom. **Don't** let it extend over the trip plate or it may get stuck underneath and not trigger the door closing mechanism. Avoid towels or thick layers of newsprint that may interfere with the trip plate.
2. Cover the top with a towel or bedding from your home. If you have one that you or your cat has been using, that is even better. To reduce the stress on your trapped cat, extend the cover over the door too so the trap will be completely covered when triggered. Just be sure it isn't dangling over the edge where it might prevent the door from closing completely.
3. Make sure the trap is in a level location and no rocks, branches or other obstacles will prevent the door from closing all the way. Most traps have a friction-based lever that is attached to the trip plate. When the cat steps on the trip plate, the door closes. To set a Tru-Catch trap, pull the two rings up and hold the door open with one hand. Twist the trigger rod so the trip plate lifts. The curved end will rest against the trip mechanism. Using a stick or pen, test the trip plate to make sure it is working properly.
4. Choose a smelly bait like tuna so the cat can detect the odor from a distance. If your cat has a favorite food that isn't smelly, use it **in addition** to the tuna. Roast chicken works well for some cats and some cats like sardines or KFC original recipe chicken. If you aren't sure, try them all! Put the bait on a paper towel or small piece of cardboard. Bowls and cans are not a good idea because they can get stuck under the trip plate and prevent it from working.



*If you are using a different trap style, check YouTube for directions.

5. Make a trail of pea-sized food from outside the trap to the back of the trap. *In our area, raccoons seem to prefer dry food over the wet food, so avoid using kibble as bait if you are in an area with a high raccoon population.



6. Saturate the area around the trap with tuna juice, roast chicken drippings or the liquid from sardine cans. These carry the scent a greater distance. If you don't have any of these, placing tuna fish or canned food in a sock and hanging it in an unreachable spot in the vicinity of the trap will help.

7. Once you have placed the trap, added the bait and set the trigger, use a stick or pen to test the trip plate to make sure it goes off. If it doesn't, make sure there isn't anything under the trip plate. Adjust the trigger mechanism if needed.



This trap is somewhat concealed, but the vegetation at the front of the trap may prevent the door from going all the way down. The cat will escape if the door doesn't close all the way. Your cat may not go in the trap again now that he knows he may be trapped.

Where to Set the Trap

As in real estate, location is everything when it comes to trap placement. A cat lost in unfamiliar territory will instinctively lay low. Some cats will literally hunker down and hide for two or three weeks without making a sound or moving at all. However long the cat remains hidden, her first movements away from her hiding spot are likely to be under cover of dark and close to buildings, shrubs, cars or other objects that conceal her location. If you watch a feral or shy cat move, they tend to skirt the sides of buildings or follow a line of shrubs to get from one location to another. So, when choosing where to place the trap, try to think like a scared cat. Here are some tips.

- 1- **Place the trap near the point of exit from the house.** If that location is too open or visible, choose the closest covered spot. Or, make your own cover. Leaning a piece of plywood against the house or moving a chair with a towel draped over it will provide natural cover as the cat moves from his hiding spot towards the trap or back to the door he exited from. Avoid making a lot of noise when you do this so you don't spook him. Remember, he's most likely very close by.
- 2- **If you can't place the trap near the point of exit, choose a covered area nearby.**

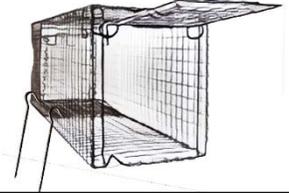
Feral, shy or lost cats have great survival instincts and tend to avoid crossing open areas unless there are no other options. Cover might be bushes, a deck, cars or anything else in their environment that they can hide under or behind. If there is a house, fence or other structure nearby, place the trap flush with the wall. Choose an area that is partially concealed and protected from the elements. And make sure there is at least a cat-sized path around the trap's location.

- 3- **Avoid putting traps in an area where their exit could be blocked by a predator or territorial cat.** Cats like to have an escape route and don't like being cornered. If they don't have a clear escape path, they may avoid the trap and choose to go hungry.
- 4- **Choose a location you can monitor from afar.** This will be more convenient for you. Also, repeated visits to the trap may actually scare your cat away.

10 Ways to ^{NOT} Lose a Cat in a Trap

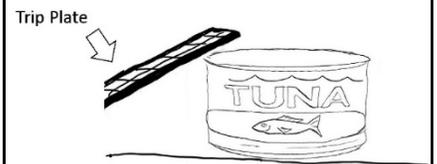
#1 Always set traps on level ground.

If the trap wiggles too much the cat may not enter. And if it tips over, the cat may escape. If you can't find a level spot, use tent or garden stakes to hold it in place. Cinder blocks or wood can also be used to level a trap and hold it in place.



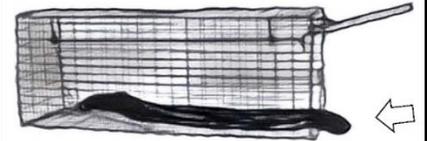
#2 Use thin paper plates or cardboard to hold the bait.

Cans or bowls of food can get lodged under the trip plate and prevent it from tripping when the cat goes in.



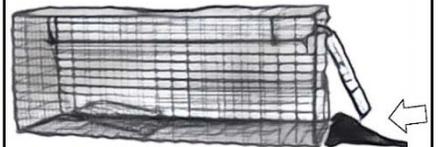
#3 Use paper, grass or a thin pillow case to cover the bottom.

Heavy towels, cardboard or rugs may prevent the trip plate from compressing when the cat steps on it. It can also keep the door from closing all the way if it gets pulled out too far.



#4 Test the door to make sure nothing prevents it from closing.

Rocks, vegetation or even uneven dirt in front of the door may prevent it from closing all the way allowing the cat to escape.



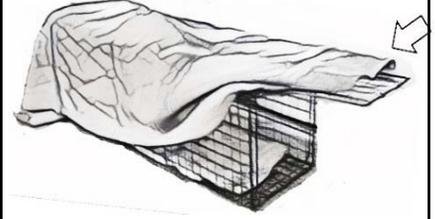
#5 If the trap has a back door, make sure it is latched.

Use a carabiner or zip-tie to make it escape-proof. Test it first!



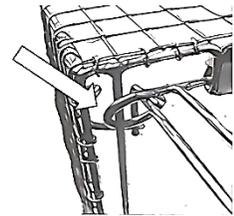
#6 Keep trap coverings like towels or rugs away from door.

As trapped cats try to escape, they can pull towels or rugs into the trap. Cats occasionally escape when this action lifts the rings and allows the door to open enough for them to squeeze out. Towels or rugs can also get in the way as the door closes allowing escape.



#7 Test and adjust the trap mechanism before setting.

Every trap is a little different. A hair trigger may need to be roughed up with a file to prevent it from closing prematurely. If it is rusty or difficult to close, use sandpaper to smooth it. Know your traps!



#8 Conceal the trap.

A visible trap can be stolen, vandalized or picked up by someone who doesn't want you to trap. Even worse, someone could steal the trap with a cat inside! Cats are also more likely to enter a trap that is close to natural cover.



#9 Monitor your trap and post a note on it if you have to leave.

Put a note with contact information and the reason for trapping. People are naturally suspicious and may think you have bad intentions or intend to harm the cat. Say "rescue in progress" or "lost cat" and invite finders to contact you with questions.



#10 Never open the door or attempt transfer outside.

This is the most important tip of all. Use a small enclosed place like a bathroom or car. Close the windows too. A cat that escapes during a failed transfer is now trap-wise and may not go in a trap again!



Scared Cat or Feral Cat?



This cat was judged to be feral and was scheduled to be euthanized. After a 2-week assessment in a foster home, she was found to be tame.

Caution: In a trap, shy or scared cats are indistinguishable from a feral cat. **Avoid taking a cat who is acting scared or exhibiting defensive behavior like hissing, growling or lunging to a public shelter.** Contact a local rescue for help in assessing the cat. Most public shelters are required by law to take in cats in their jurisdiction. Cats who arrive at the shelter in traps or who are described as feral by the people dropping them off, may not be given an opportunity to demonstrate that they are tame. Social cats are generally held for a minimum of three days to give owners a chance to claim them. Feral cats or scared cats may not be given this courtesy. In many

parts of the country, feral cats are euthanized soon after intake. Few public shelters have the time or resources to adequately assess a cat for tameness, temperament and adoptability. It isn't their fault, a cage in a noisy shelter is simply not the right environment for a scared or feral cat.

Some shelters have barn programs, but a tame cat acting feral because it is lost or scared is not a good candidate for a barn. It is common for cats who appeared feral in the trap to reveal themselves to be totally tame and adoptable cats once they have had time to relax. In most cases, a minimum of two weeks in a low-stress environment is recommended for assessment. If you can't do this and you know the cat has been living in your neighborhood, consider fixing the cat and turning him loose back in his home territory. With a reliable food source, the cat will stay around. You can keep your eye out for him and continue to monitor and assess after he is released.

Always do your best to find out if the cat has an owner or is a lost cat.

- Scan the cat for a microchip.
- Check lost cat listings online and in the local shelters.
- Notify shelters and local vet clinics as soon as possible. Provide a photo and location.
- Post found notices online. Craigslist, Nextdoor, Neighborhood groups & Facebook.
- Put up "Cat Found" posters in the neighborhood.

Hopefully, someone is doing this for your cat too!

Did a Coyote Get Your Cat?

There is something out there more dangerous than coyotes. Lost cats face many dangers, and coyotes are usually at the top of people's danger list. But there is something far more dangerous than coyotes and I am convinced that it takes more missing cats than people realize.



One of the first recommended steps when a cat is missing is to go door-to-door with flyers. When you do this, you are almost certain to knock on the door of a person who will say, "I hate to tell you this, but there are a lot of coyotes in this area..." Stated like this, it is easy to feel stupid and start thinking. "Of course, coyotes got my cat. It is hopeless and I just need to face up to reality." With the advent of social media, now you hear this message online as well. "You know, there are coyotes...."

I am here to tell you that there is something far more dangerous than coyotes. In fact, I believe it is probably the single most damaging "tip" given to lost cat owners. What is it? It is planting or reinforcing the IDEA that coyotes took the cat! When people with lost cats hear this, they give up hope and stop looking. And in the absence of evidence this is the absolute worst thing to do. Losing a cat is both stressful and heartbreaking. Many people will choose the sense of closure offered by believing the cat is dead, to the stress of the unknown. This grief avoidance causes many to stop looking for their lost cat.

Yes, coyotes do take cats, but most lost cats are not taken by coyotes. In fact an indoor only cat lost outside is actually at lower risk of predation because they typically hide or stay near cover for the first few weeks. And outdoor cats are more likely to be found locked in a neighbor's garage, stranded in a tree or lost just outside their normal territory.

If you have lost your cat or are helping someone find their lost cat, don't give up!

Because it is true -giving up kills more cats than coyotes.

Fake Mews

Fake News isn't just in politics. Humans like quick fixes, and bogus claims made on social media can spread quickly. It doesn't take long for these to be taken as fact.

Recently, we've noticed this "fact" showing up on lost pet sites. Is it fake?

"In an indoor cat gets outside, put their litter box outside. They can smell it from up to a mile away and find their way home."

Cats do have a great sense of smell, but can cats smell a litterbox from a mile away? We have been unable to find any research studies that support or disprove this statement. But our concerns on this graphic have more to do with the danger of taking this advice, than with a missing study that may corroborate this claim.

Research and anecdotal reports do support the observation that most indoor-only cats lost outside are found very close to home. In fact, most are found within a house or two distance from home. They hide under houses, decks, sheds etc. and can remain "frozen in silence" for days or even weeks before venturing out. That is GOOD news, because a cat in hiding does not leave a trail for a predator to find them. And a well-placed and baited humane trap can get them back. Often, they will go back in the house on their own if the door or window they exited from is left open. So why is putting the litterbox outside an issue? There are several reasons why this advice may be dangerous.

1- Your indoor-only cat may "own" your home, but the yard outside is the **territory of other cats**. Cats and off-leash dogs are attracted to the scent of urine and they WILL find the litterbox. Resident cats can be aggressive with newcomers and chase them away from your home. Lost cats dive for cover and stay put. That is what you want them do--stay close until they break cover and go in the trap or re-enter the home. Once a cat is chased out of the yard, getting them back is much more difficult. They will still be hiding, but not close enough to get in the trap or find their way back home without risking another encounter with the territorial neighbor cat.

2- Cat litter attracts predators. In fact, some coyote trappers use cat litter as bait. Ever wonder why cats bury their waste? They don't want to advertise their presence to predators! A litter box placed or sprinkled around the home may put your cat at risk of being snatched by a predator before you can get him back in the house.

3- People like easy solutions. If a graphic tells them that their lost cat can smell the litterbox from a mile away, they may conclude that this is all they need to do. Or, they may come to the conclusion that their cat must be more than a mile away from home if the litterbox trick doesn't work. Both of these ideas are dangerous and may reduce the chances of a cat being found. There is no single trick to recovering a lost indoor-only cat, but there are methods that are highly effective. Use ALL of them!

Can a litterbox placed outside help your lost cat find its way home? Possibly, but it can also result in them being lost forever if a predator finds them first. Other articles from the home are less likely to attract predators, dogs or territorial cats. If you want to place scent items, choose bedding, fur from resident cats or combed from a cat tree, or an unwashed item of clothing. Place these over the humane trap or in a trail to the front door. Your lost cat WILL smell these, but the coyote or bobcat passing through the general area is far less likely to detect these and consider them an advertisement for an easy meal.

MICROCHIPS IN A NUTSHELL

Community Cat Coalition <https://www.facebook.com/CommunityCatCoalitionWa/> www.communitycatcoalitionwa.org

Microchips are rice-sized devices that use radio-frequency identification (RFID) to transmit microchip digits to a scanner. When implanted between the shoulder blades of pets, they provide a permanent way to identify a pet's owner provided the chip is **registered** and the information is kept up-to-date. Microchips are inserted with a syringe and the discomfort experienced by the pet is similar to being vaccinated. **Microchips are only useful if the person scanning your pet uses a universal scanner, knows proper scanning technique and understands how to look up microchip data in an online registry.**

Microchips must be registered with one of the following ***participating microchipping and pet recovery services** so they show up in the AAHA Microchip Lookup Tool.

<http://www.petmicrochiplookup.org/>

Microchips come in different frequencies (125 kHz, 128 kHz and 134.2 kHz), so a **universal scanner** must be used to detect all.

When entering microchip info, do **not** use the **letters** O or I. Microchips do not have these letters, but they **do** have the numbers zero (0) and one (1).

You can register **any** microchip brand with any registry. Most charge a fee for registration.

If you register **any** brand of chip with the following registries, they will show up in the AAHA Microchip Lookup Tool. If you have a microchip like AVID, it won't show up because it isn't on the list. Chips that aren't on the list should be registered on **Found Animals Foundation free** microchip registry.

<https://microchipregistry.foundanimals.org>

The person scanning your pet may not know about the **AAHA microchip lookup tool**, so it is safest to register your microchip with both the microchip company database and the free registry.

Currently, these companies are incorporated into the tool:

24PetWatch Pet Protection Services
911PetChip
AKC Reunite
BC Pet Registry
EIDAP
Found Animals
Free Pet Chip Registry
Furreka
HomeAgain
Homeward Bound Pet

InfoPET
Microchip I.D. Solutions
Microchip ID Systems, Inc.
Nanochip ID Inc.
National Animal Identification Center
PetKey
PetLink
Petstablished
Save This Life
SmartTag Microchip

Microchipping Basics

Microchips are rice-sized devices that use radio-frequency identification (RFID) to transmit microchip digits to a scanner. When implanted between the shoulder blades of pets, they provide a permanent way to identify a pet’s owner provided the chip is **registered** and the information is kept up-to-date. Microchips are inserted with a syringe and the discomfort experienced by the pet is similar to being vaccinated. **Microchips are only useful if the person scanning your pet uses a universal scanner, knows proper scanning technique and understands how to look up microchip data in an online registry.**

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*Participating microchipping and pet recovery services	
24PetWatch Pet Protection Services	Nanochip ID Inc.
AKC Reunite	National Animal Identification Center
EIDAP	PetKey
Found Animals	PetLink
HomeAgain	Petstablished
Homeward Bound Pet	Save This Life
InfoPET	SmartTag Microchip
Microchip ID Systems, Inc	

Note: The person scanning your pet may not know about the **AAHA microchip lookup tool**, so it is safest to register your microchip with both the microchip company database and the free registry.

MICROCHIPS RECORDS

How can you tell if the microchip has been registered?

- Find your microchip number. If you lost it or want to verify that it is correct, have your vet scan your pet to be sure.
- Enter the number on the AAHA Microchip Lookup Tool below. If the search does not show a date of registration, you either aren't registered or your microchip company doesn't share its data with AAHA. AAHA = American Animal Hospital Association (Registering on the free registry will take care of this.)
- Call your microchip company. The microchip brand and a contact number will show up when you enter the microchip.

AAHA Microchip Lookup Tool: <http://www.petmicrochiplookup.org/>

Pet Microchip Lookup

Enter the microchip ID below and click "Search". Enter only the 9, 10 or 15 character microchip number, with no punctuation or spaces. Do not include the microchip type code or manufacturer's name or abbreviation. The results are returned with the most recent entry displaying first. Therefore, start by calling the company listed first in the "enrolled with" box. If you are unable to get the correct information from the top record, work your way down the list.

The Microchip is enrolled with:

Date Last Updated: 10/16/2014
 Found Animals Registry For more information please call: 855-PET-CHIP (855-738-2447)
 or visit: <http://www.found.org>

← Enter Chip Number

← Date registered and number to call

Free Registry: <https://microchipregistry.foundanimals.org>

Chip Registration: The safest option is to register your microchip with both your **microchip company** and the **free registry**. Most companies have a one-time fee. The yearly fee is for extras that don't affect the chip registration. Find out what those extra are before paying a yearly fee.

Microchip Records

Owner Name: _____

Pets Name: _____ **Microchip #** _____ **Brand** _____ **Updated on** _____

Pets Name: _____ **Microchip #** _____ **Brand** _____ **Updated on** _____

Pets Name: _____ **Microchip #** _____ **Brand** _____ **Updated on** _____

Pets Name: _____ **Microchip #** _____ **Brand** _____ **Updated on** _____

Pets Name: _____ **Microchip #** _____ **Brand** _____ **Updated on** _____

Pets Name: _____ **Microchip #** _____ **Brand** _____ **Updated on** _____

Puget Sound Area Shelters

PAWS

<http://www.paws.org> <http://www.paws.org/cats-and-dogs/lost-a-pet/>

15305 44th Ave. W, Lynnwood, 425.787.2500

Shelters strays from: Brier, *Bothell, Kenmore, Lake Forest Park, Mill Creek, Mountlake Terrace, Mukilteo, Shoreline and Woodinville

***Bothell spans both King and Snohomish County and includes city and unincorporated areas. Check Everett Animal Shelter and RASKC too.**

Paws in Paradise

<http://www.pawsinparadise.com/>

Must call Edmonds P.D. before bringing in a stray: 425.771.0205

21100 72nd Ave W, Edmonds, 425.778.1475

Shelters strays from: Edmonds

Burien C.A.R.E.S.

<http://buriencares.com/>

909 SW 151st Street, Burien, WA 98166, 206.812.2737

Shelters strays from: the city of Burien

Everett Animal Shelter

<https://everettwa.gov/171/Lost-Pets>

333 Smith Island Road, Everett, 425.257.6000

Shelters strays from: *Bothell, Darrington, Gold Bar, Index, Kirkland, Lake Stevens, Lynnwood, Marysville, Monroe, Snohomish, Stanwood, Tulalip and unincorporated Snohomish County

Humane Society for Seattle/King County

<http://www.seattlehumane.org/services/emergencies/lost-animal>

13212 SE Eastgate Way, Bellevue, 425.641.0080

Shelters strays from: Medina and Renton

Humane Society for Tacoma & Pierce County

<http://www.thehumanesociety.org/>

Shelters strays from: Federal Way, Tacoma and unincorporated Pierce County

Metro Animal Services

<http://www.metroanimalservices.org/>

1200 39th Ave SE, Puyallup, 253.841.5595

Serves strays from: Algona, Milton, and Pacific

Regional Animal Services of King County

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/safety/regionalAnimalServices/LostFound/LOST.aspx>

21615 64th Ave, S, Kent 206.296.7387

Serves strays from: **All of King County** except Seattle, Des Moines, Federal Way, Hunts Point, Kirkland, Medina, Normandy Park, Renton, Skykomish, and cities served by PAWS

Seattle Animal Shelter

<http://www.seattle.gov/animal-shelter/lost-pets>

Adoptable Cats

2061 15th Ave W, Seattle, 206.386.7387

Shelters strays from: Seattle

Whatcom Humane Society

<http://www.whatcomhumane.org/>

3710 Williamson Way, Bellingham, 360.733.2080

Shelters strays from: all areas of Whatcom County

The following cities maintain their own animal control services.

Algona 253-833-2897

Auburn 253-876-1997

Bothell 425-486-3256

Burien 206-241-4647

Des Moines 206-870-6549

Federal Way 253-835-2567

Hunts Point 425-455-1834

Medina 425-233-6400

Humane Traps in Snohomish and King County

*Please call to confirm trap availability and deposit/rent fees. This info is based on email inquiries and/or website information 2015. If you learn of any changes or errors, please email CCCoFWa@gmail.com so we can update this information.

[Island County](#) [King County](#) [Pierce County](#) [Skagit County](#) [Snohomish County](#)

Island County

Camano Animal Shelter Association – \$50 refundable deposit, \$10 for 3 days of use then \$2 daily
198 Can Ku Road
Camano Island, WA 98282
360-387-1902

WAIF Coupeville Shelter – \$50 refundable cash deposit - Two week trap limit
20168 State Route 20
Coupeville, WA 98239
360-678-8900 ext. 1100

King County

Auburn Valley Humane Society – \$75 Refundable Deposit, \$5/DAY
4910 A St Se
Auburn, WA 98092
253 249-7849 or info@auburnvalleyhs.org

MEOW Cat Rescue – **\$70 Fully Refundable Deposit**
10600 NE 68th, Suite F
Kirkland, WA 98033
Phone: (425) 822-6369

Renton Animal Control (no charge to Renton residents)
155 SW Grady Way
Renton, WA 98057
Phone: (425) 430-7550

Seattle Animal Shelter (no charge to Seattle residents)
2061 15th Ave W
Seattle, WA 98119
Phone: (206) 386-7387

Pierce County

Northwest Spay & Neuter Center – 15 traps to loan \$40 Refundable Deposit

6401 Pacific Ave,

Tacoma, WA

253-627-7729

Pasado's Safe Haven (Pierce County & South King county) – \$40 Refundable Deposit

206-300-7217 Darcyj@pasadosafehaven.org

Next to Nature – Photo ID required

1624 Tacoma Ave S,

Tacoma, WA

(253) 779-8141

Skagit County

Mount Vernon Police Department – Free live trap rentals to citizens of Mount Vernon

1805 Continental Place

Mount Vernon, WA 98273

360-336-6271

The NOAH Center – \$50 deposit

31300 Brandstrom Road

Stanwood, WA 98292

Phone: (360) 629-7055

Saving Pets One at a Time (S.P.O.T.) – Provides traps, education and support for TNR

No physical address but provides services throughout Skagit County

www.savingpetsoneatitime.org

360-336-5388

Snohomish County

Purrfect Pals – \$75 deposit Fully Refundable Deposit

230 McRae Rd NE

Arlington, WA 98223

Email first to check availability of traps. cats@purrfectpals.org

Phone: (360) 652-9611

The Community Cat Coalition – \$75 Fully Refundable Deposit / Free for CCC members Email CCCoFWa@gmail.com to arrange for trap pick up from the CCC storage unit.

www.communitycatcoalitionwa.org

316 128th St SE

Everett, WA 98208

Feral Cat Spay Neuter Project – \$85 Fully Refundable Deposit

4001 198th St SW Ste #3

Lynnwood, WA 98036-6731

Call first to check availability of traps.

Phone: (425) 673-2287.

PAWs Lynnwood – \$10/day or \$50/week, plus a \$100 deposit

15305 44th Ave W

Lynnwood, WA 98087

Phone: (425) 787-2500

Pasado's Safe Haven – *No deposit or rental fee at this time

Monroe, WA on there.

Contact jennyf@pasadosafehaven.org or 360-793-9393 x107.

*They are considering adding a deposit because many of their traps have not been returned.

Ace Equipment Rentals – \$15 daily \$60 week

702 2nd Street

Snohomish, WA 98290

Phone: (360) 568-1300

The NOAH Center – \$50 deposit

31300 Brandstrom Road

Stanwood, WA 98292

Phone: (360) 629-7055

Homeward Pets – No deposit required at this time.

13132 NE 177th Pl

Woodinville, WA 98072

Phone: (425) 488-4444

Purchasing your own trap.

Many feed stores and hardware stores sell humane traps. We recommend buying Tru-Catch traps. These have ring closures instead of springs. This makes them both safer and quieter. The cheaper spring-based traps make a loud slapping sound when triggered and many cats will avoid going into one if they hear one go off or accidentally spring it themselves while investigating the trap. Trappers often refer to these as “silver slappies”. Occasionally, a cat will be injured when their tail or leg gets caught by the spring door of this type of trap. www.trucatchtraps.com \$50 - \$100.