

Finding a lost pet

by Jeff Quinn, DVM and Cathy Fredrickson

Spring is the season for an increased number of lost or missing pets. There are many reasons for losing one's pet, however, one of the main reasons is many are not neutered. Male animals can detect a female in heat for miles around and will dig, climb, and often escape. A neutered male dog or cat is less likely to roam which makes him less likely to be hit by a car, poisoned, shot or to fight with other males vying for the same female.

Only 10% of dogs return on their own, 35% were wearing a tag and found, 20% were found by neighborhood signs and 46% were found by contacting local animal control agencies.*

If your pet does not have a collar with ID tags, consider having your pet microchipped. Most animal control agencies have scanners for microchip identification that will read all chips, regardless of brand. Several microchip companies are available; do your homework to find one that suits your needs. Several charge an annual fee, while some have lifetime registration. Microchipping is inexpensive with little discomfort to your pet. It is merely an injection at the shoulder area and is permanent. If your pet is lost or stolen and a micro-chip is implanted, ownership is clear.

Don't wait for your pet to come home. Get busy; make signs; call shelters, animal clinics and animal control. Signs should be put up within a ten-mile radius.

Cats have a better chance of returning home; 48% returned home within seven days.* Most were found by posting neighborhood signs. In our area with many weekenders, check locked garages, sheds and other structures that might be open for a short time, then shut.

It isn't safe for a cat to wear a collar that isn't a break-away, as cats climb trees and crawl through tight places. If their collar or tag gets caught, strangulation is possible. Microchipping is a safe alternative.

Lost-and-found websites are becoming more effective as more people utilize them. The website used primarily in this area, www.pets911.com, provides a wide radius.

What can we learn from all of this? Neuter your pet! Microchip your pet! Make sure your fence or yard is in good repair. Invisible fences can be less expensive than conventional fencing and work well if properly installed.

*Source: AAHA (American Animal Hospital Association)

Cathy Fredrickson has been a receptionist at Canyon Animal Clinic for 23 years and is currently conducting obedience and training classes. Jeff Quinn, DVM, has been a Veterinarian in Canyon Lake for 32 years. For more information, call 964-3696.



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