



Pet Tails



Fall 2006

Lost Pet Behavior: Finding your lost cat

By Kathy "Kat" Albrecht

There is a *science* to finding lost people. Professional trained searchers don't wander aimlessly in the woods when searching for a missing hiker. Instead, an organized search plan is implemented based on the knowledge of the behavioral patterns of lost people.



A stray cat naps on the sidewalk.

For example, backpackers behave differently when lost and travel different distances than do hunters, berry pickers, and Alzheimer's patients. And because search-and-rescue managers are so familiar with these patterns of behavior, they can accurately predict where a lost person will be found. Backpackers are typically found on or

near an established trail, hunters are typically found deep in the woods, and Alzheimer's patients are typically found within a ¼ mile radius of where they became lost.

So what do we know about the behavioral patterns of *lost pets*? The methods that should be used to search

for a lost dog, an outdoor-access cat that has vanished from its territory, and an indoor-only cat that has escaped outside are all entirely different methods.

Dogs travel and are picked up by rescuers who determine their fate, the disappearance of an outdoor-access cat means that something has hap-

pened to interrupt that cat's behavior of coming home, and indoor-only cats that escape outdoors hide in silence near their escape point.

And it is not only the behaviors of lost dogs and cats that have been overlooked – the behaviors of the people who lose their pets and the behaviors of the people who find those lost pets impact the chances that a lost pet will be returned home.

Understanding these human and animal behaviors will increase the likelihood that lost pets will be found. Here is what we know so far:

LOST CAT BEHAVIOR Outdoor-Access Cats: Cats are territorial.

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Ask Kona



Dear Kona,

Sometimes, when I go out for a few hours and leave my dog Jamie at home, he chews on my possessions. He chewed the earpieces off my glasses, the insoles from my shoes and destroyed the remote for the TV! Why does he do this?

How can I get him to stop?
Barefoot Mom

Dear Barefoot,
Each dog is an individual so I can't tell you "why" for sure, but I do have some ideas. We dogs love to chew. Chewing reduces stress, feels good and it is healthy and normal dog

behavior. Jamie probably selected the items he chose because he missed you and they smell like you. He was lonely and thought "I love mom so much I could just eat her up."

Of course you want him to chew on his toys and

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Shelter says goodbye to Oscar

On Friday, August 11th Oscar, the house cat at the Santa Ynez Valley Humane Society, passed away.

He arrived at the door of the humane society over a decade ago in a terrible state; white, thin and ill. He was brought into the office for what our staff thought was his last meal, but Oscar recovered. As he grew stronger and healthier, his white coat turned a beautiful red/orange tabby color. Oscar

greeted staff, volunteers and guests at the front office of the shelter ever since.

He will be greatly missed.



Happy Tails



Spoofy started looking for a new home in September of 2001 and was adopted August 2nd.



Oscar found her new home September 5th after waiting since February 2005.

Over the last 3 months many animals who were waiting to be adopted for years have found their new homes. We'll miss them at the shelter but are thrilled that wonderful families have adopted them.



Barney's handicap kept him from being adopted for almost 2 years. He was adopted on August 21st.



Jenny was homeless since October 2002 and was adopted August 3rd.

Wish List

Pet supplies:

Nutromax pet food
Canned dog & cat food
Pelletized animal bedding
Rescue Remedy
DAP (dog appeasing pheromone comfort & spray)
Feliway spray

Sturdy kennel toys:

Nylabones
Kongs, large and small size
Buster cubes
Jolly balls
Stuffed dog toys
Squeaky toys
Tennis balls
Portable shade canopy

Cleaning supplies:

Sponges
Paper towels
Trash bags

Office supplies:

Copy paper
Pens
Highlighters
Sharpies
Dry erase markers
Small television with DVD player

Household item donations accepted at the *House of Treasures Thrift Shop*.

Board of Directors

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Lost Pet Behavior

When an outdoor-access cat suddenly vanishes, it means that *something has happened* to that cat to interrupt its normal behavior of returning home. The disappearance could mean that the cat is injured, trapped, or deceased within its territory. It could also



mean that the cat was transported out of the area—either intentionally (by an irate neighbor who trapped the cat) or unintentionally (by the cat climbing into an opened parked van). It could also mean that the cat was displaced into unfamiliar territory—something as simple as being chased by a dog causing the cat to hide under a deck a block from home. When this happens, the

When displaced, some cats will panic and remain hiding in the same place for weeks.

temperament of the cat will influence how it behaves. When displaced into unfamiliar territory, some cats will be so panicked and afraid they will remain in the same hiding place for weeks and they will never return home while others will break cover within hours and return home. **The investigative question to solve when an outdoor-access cat disappears is: WHAT HAPPENED TO THE CAT?**

Indoor-Only Cats:

The territory for an indoor-only cat is the inside of the home where it lives. When an indoor-only cat escapes outdoors, it is “displaced” into unfamiliar territory. Usually they will look for the first place that will offer concealment and protection. Their instinctive response is to

HIDE IN SILENCE because that is their primary protection from predators. How long they remain in that hiding place and what they do from there is dependant upon their temperament. Using baited humane traps as a recovery tool is a highly effective method for recovering displaced, panicked cats that are hiding. **The investigative question to solve when an indoor-only cat escapes outdoors is: WHERE IS THE CAT HIDING?**

Temperaments That Influence Distances Traveled:

Temperament influences actions. How a cat behaves when in its normal territory will influence how it behaves when it becomes “lost” or displaced into unfamiliar territory. Encourage cat owners to develop a search strategy based on the specific behavior of their cat. Here are guidelines to use:

CURIOUS/CLOWN CAT –

These are gregarious cats that get into trouble easily, run to the door to greet a stranger, and are not easily afraid of anything. When displaced, these cats might initially hide but then they will most likely TRAVEL. Strategy for recovery should be to place florescent posters within at least a five block radius. Also, interview neighbors in a door-to-door search, thoroughly searching possible hiding places in yards of houses and other areas within a close proximity to the escape point. Do not assume that the cat will come when you call!



CARE-LESS CAT – These aloof cats don't seem to care much about people. When a stranger comes in,

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Lost Pet Behavior

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they stand back and watch. When displaced they will likely initially hide, but eventually they will break



cover and come back to the door, meow, or possibly travel. Strategy should be to search hiding places nearby, interview neighbors door-to-door and search their yards. If these

efforts do not produce results, consider setting a baited humane trap.

CAUTIOUS CAT – These cats are generally stable but they show occasional shyness. They like people but when a stranger comes to the door, they dart and hide. Some of these cats peek around the corner

and eventually come out to investigate. When displaced, they will likely immediately hide in fear. If not pushed (scared off) from their hiding place, they will typically return to the point where they escaped from or they will meow when the owner comes to look for them. This behavior typically is observed either within the first two days (after the cat has built up confidence) or not until seven to ten days later when their hunger or thirst has reached a point where they will respond. Strategy would be to conduct a tightly focused search in neighbors' yards and to set baited humane traps.

CATATONIC/XENOPHOBIC

CAT – Xenophobia means “fear or hatred of things strange or foreign.” Xenophobic cats are afraid of EVE-

Fearful cats are often mistaken as being untamed or “feral.”

RYTHING that is new or unfamiliar. Their fearful behavior is hard-wired into their character; it is caused by genetics and/or kittenhood experiences (nature or nurture). These cats will hide when a stranger comes into their home, and they typically will not come out until well after the company has left. They do not do

well with human contact (being held, petted, etc.) and they are easily disturbed by any change in their environment. When displaced, they bolt and then HIDE IN SILENCE. They tend to remain in the same hiding place and become almost catatonic, immobilized with fear. If they are found by someone other than their owners, they are typically mistaken as being untamed or “feral.” The primary strategy to recover these cats would be to set

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Ask Kona

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not your belongings so here are a few suggestions to change his behavior.

1. Place the objects he is likely to chew out of his reach – shoes in the closet, laundry in the hamper, glasses, etc, on a high shelf. Help him resist temptation until he learns what is legal to chew. The humans joke, "Puppies teach children to be tidy."
2. Spend some quality time exercising with him before you leave. A walk or a game of retrieve or frisbee will burn some energy and reduce stress. Jamie is likely to nap while you are gone.
3. Be calm and unemotional as you leave and when you return. No grand "good byes" or exuberant greetings.

4. Leave him good toys to chew on. There are an assortment of toys in our house. Nylabones satisfy my urge to chew and clean my teeth as well. I especially like Kongs, the rubber toys that are hollow inside. My mom stuffs them with rice and ground meat and freezes them. It takes a while to get the yummys out and is satisfying work. Some dogs like Buster Cubes, a plastic cube that requires a dog to paw it repeatedly to get a small biscuit. My Border Collie friends never tire of the Buster Cube game.
5. Before you leave, rub your hands on Jamie's tennis ball or soft toys. Your scent is a comfort to him.



If Jamie does make a mistake, don't

punish him after the fact. Dogs live in the present. He is likely to associate the punishment with you, not his actions while you were gone. Be more proactive next time.

I hope this advice helps you keep your shoes intact, because you will need them to run and play and share a wonderful relationship with your good dog, Jamie.

Wags,
Kona

Kona is a 13-year-old chocolate Labrador Retriever. She is companion and mentor to animal behaviorist, Amanda Eagle. Send your questions to Kona, PO Box 1111, Santa Ynez, 93460. She will answer one question in our next newsletter.

Lost Pet Behavior

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baited humane traps. Xenophobic cats that become “lost” are routinely absorbed into the feral cat population.

HUMAN BEHAVIORS

Guardian Behaviors

Guardians often behave in ways that actually inhibit their chances of recovering their lost pets. Some develop a “wait and see” approach (believing their pet will return home like Lassie) and by the time they start actively looking, the vital first few hours to locate their pet (or witnesses who saw the pet) are gone. Others develop “tunnel vision” and fail to find their dog or cat because they focus on wrong theories. They experience “grief avoidance” and quickly give up their search effort because they really believe they will never see their cat again. They feel helpless and alone, often discouraged by others who rebuke them and tell them “you’ll never find your cat.” In addition, the level of human animal bond (HAB) will influence the recovery efforts of a lost pet. People with a strong HAB will go to extremes to find their lost pet. They will accomplish the “impossible” task of visiting all shelters, posting flyers, and contacting rescue groups while maintaining a full-time job and other family commitments.

One of the primary reasons why so many lost cats are never found is that cat guardians focus their entire search efforts by posting lost cat flyers and by searching the cages at the local shelter. Although these techniques are important and should not be overlooked, the primary technique to recover a missing cat should be to obtain permission from all neighbors to enter their

Obtain permission from all neighbors to search their yards for your cat.

yards and conduct an aggressive, physical search for the missing cat (and to set baited humane traps there when necessary). Simply asking a neighbor to “look” for the lost cat is not sufficient! Neighbors are not going to crawl around on their bellies under their decks or houses to search for someone else’s lost cat! It is up to the guardians to do this! In addition, the failure to microchip and place a collar with an ID tag are a major contributing factor to lost dogs and cats never finding their way back home. Indoor-only cats and dogs that seldom go places are all at risk of escaping when a burglar breaks into a home or when a natural disaster strikes. The amount of dogs and cats that were displaced from their homes and unidentifiable during Hurricane Katrina is staggering. Thousands of these animals were transported to animal shelters and sanctuaries all across the country, making a reunion with the family who might be searching for them nearly impossible. Losing a pet is like cancer – most people don’t give it much thought and most never believe it will happen to them. If you haven’t done so already, make sure all of your animals have collars, ID tags, and microchips.

Rescuer Behaviors

When people find stray cats, they misinterpret behaviors. When rescuers observe a cat with a xenophobic temperament they assume, based on the cowering and skittish behavior, that the cat is an untamed “feral.” For this reason, it is recommended that cats with xenophobic temperaments should wear an additional tag on their break-away collars that says, “I’M FEAR-

FUL, NOT FERAL!” While it is true that feral, untamed cats that are unaccustomed to human contact will hiss, spit, twirl, lunge, and urinate when humanely trapped, **this “wild animal” behavior is also common in cats who have xenophobic temperaments!** We know this because we have talked to owners of lost xenophobic cats that had to be humanely trapped in order to be recovered; the owners verified that their cats exhibited wild behavior while in the humane trap. These behaviors are a reflection of a **fearful TEMPERAMENT, not a lack of TAMENESS.** Shelter and TNR workers should scan all “feral” cats for microchips and conduct research (check Classifieds, lost cat reports, etc.) to determine if the new “feral” is actually someone’s xenophobic pet cat that escaped outdoors, perhaps several weeks or months before it was found.

Kathy “Kat” Albrecht is a former police detective-turned-pet detective and author of “THE LOST PET CHRONICLES: ADVENTURES OF A K-9 COP TURNED PET DETECTIVE.” Kat is the founder of Missing Pet Partnership (www.lostapet.org) a national nonprofit organization working to conduct research into the behavioral patterns of lost pets. Kat is also the CEO of Pet Hunters International (www.pethunters.com) the first-ever pet detective academy that trains and certifies technicians and search dogs to track lost pets.



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For more information visit www.lostapet.org.

Tributes and Memorials

Gifts in honor of beloved pets...

Merry-Margaret

Dennis & Jobie Brooks, Sr.

Nanook

Sandra Wishon

In memory of people who loved animals...

Bette Moss

Claire & Dwight Watts

Carmella Houghtaling

Val or Bonnie Bisoglio

Florence Jensen

Lorraine Brem

Richard & Nancy Richardson

Howard Marter

Jack & Kathlyn Austin

Cindy Baise Hughes

Joseph & Patricia Blanton

Bob Bronfen

Margaret Brown

Susan Cobb & Tim Gorham

Charles & Irene Cunningham

Alan Ebenstein

Wendy and Rudy Eisler

E. Jane Boyce Eldridge

Thomas & Linda Fiorentine

Carol Geer

Sid & Karen Goldstien

Larry & Suz Holmer

Helmut & Doris Holzheu

Boris & Barbara Jacobowsky

Carol Jenkins

Ed Kushner

Vincent and Norma Jean Leifer

Bev Lewis

Raymond Mullin

William & Kamala Parris

James Prine

Douglas & Betsy Riedy

Thomas & Dona Senning

Richard & Ronda Shawcroft, Sr.

Jerry & Claire Shoemaker

Sam and Ellie Starfas

Joann Taylor

Ralph & Aury Todd

Robert & Patricia Weatherby

Marsha White

John & Lisa Woodbury

K.R. & R. Ziegler

Jeanne Mei

Helen Bundgen

Joe Seward

SYV Humane Society Auxiliary

Shy & Clyde Bourgeois

Lorraine Brem

Jerry and Betty Ewing

Charles & Rosena McConica

Harris & Carol Sherline

R.D. Willis

Sandy Sires

Harris & Carol Sherline

William & Norma Hollowell

Rick & Linda Marzullo

Greta Morss

Steve Todd

Diane Hamilton

Walter Duer

SYV Humane Society Auxiliary

Wanda Allison

Donald Allison

Willy Norlin

Best Western Pea Soup Andersens Inn

DC Whitford Trucking, Inc.

Best Western King Frederik Inn

Oswald Da Ros

J. Eric Kruljac

Solvang Chamber of Commerce

Joan Hartmann

Nelson and Sondra Owens

In memory of beloved pets...

Annie

Sandra Sanger

Poquito

Stan & Karen Roberts

Rachel

Marsha White

Stormy

Bruce & Liz Beeler

Carol Sherline

Vita

Carol Sherline

Ziggy & Cuddles

Dennis & Jobie Brooks, Sr.

Holiday Safety Tips

Halloween...

- Halloween fun means sweet treats for people, but don't feed candy to animals. Chocolate can be fatal to dogs and cats and wrappers can be choking hazards to your family pet. Pets should be fed only pet treats.
- Keep your cats and dogs indoors while unattended. Animals allowed to roam freely face many dangers outdoors including attacks from other animals, being hit by cars, or being taken by people who mistakenly believe they are unowned. Unattended animals are also at risk of

abuse leading to injury or death, either from pranksters that go too far or from truly violent and dangerous people.

- Trick-or-treat time means the front door is opening and closing frequently. Make sure your canine and feline companions are wearing IDs, collars and/or microchip ID in case they accidentally slip out the door.
- Consider keeping your pet at home in a separate room away



from trick-or-treating children. Remember that strangers and scary costumes can be frightening and confusing for pets.

- If you dress up your pet, make the costume as safe as it is silly. Keep it comfortable so the animal doesn't get overheated and don't obstruct his vision or movement. Also, do not restrict airflow by tying a costume around the neck. Beware of binding elastic and dangling

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Continue Supporting the Santa Ynez Valley Humane Society



Holiday lounges in a cat bed at the shelter's adoption center.

Donations directly benefit the animals at the Santa Ynez Valley Humane Society and support our low-fee spay and neuter program.

The Santa Ynez Valley Humane Society is a 501(c)3 private, non-profit organization. We are not governed by nor do we receive monetary support from any regional or national Humane Society or SPCA.

We do not receive local, state or federal government funds to run our programs. Donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Please send a receipt to:

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In memory of _____

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Person Pet

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Regular \$25.00

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Business \$100.00

Life member \$1000.00

Total: _____

Please notify of honorarium/memorial gift:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip Code: _____

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things that are easy to swallow. If your pet will walk door to door with you, add a reflective collar or light-reflecting fabric to the costume... and don't forget to use a leash.

Thanksgiving and Christmas...

- If you are serving turkey with bones, NEVER give leftovers to your pets, and be especially cautious as cooked bones (and rich holiday foods) can be fatal.
- Make sure garbage and leftovers are safely disposed of right away, as even trained pets may be tempted to counter-surf or raid the garbage or outside trash. Put a heavy item on all outside trash lids so that stray/wild animals cannot get into the trash as well.
- Remember to caution others



(both kids and adults) not to give your pets anything except their normal treats. Rich foods may cause a painful pancreatitis, and guests may not be aware of dangers that seem obvious to you.

- Keep decorations out of reach of playful pets. Ribbons and sparking lights can be harmful or fatal. Pine needles can get lodged in an animal's esophagus, making it painfully prickly for your pet to swallow. Even drinking the water from the Christmas tree base is enough to cause diarrhea, mouth sores, vomiting and loss of appetite.
- If you are having several guests over, put your pets in a separate room with some toys and a soft place to lie. Pets that have their own room will feel safer; less stressed and won't be able to accidentally escape out the front door. Also remember:
 - Keep current identification on your pet at all times. With

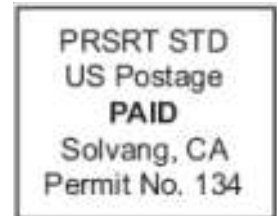
holiday parties and guests abounding, your pet may have more opportunities to escape.

- Remember how much your pet values time with you. Make time to spend doing things that you both enjoy

New Year's Eve...

- If you live in an area that will celebrate with loud bangs, make sure you keep pets inside, shielded from loud noises. Close the curtains and turn on the TV or radio to provide some distraction. A quiet place, such as a carrier, may provide your pet with a sense of security and comfort.
- If loud noises upset your pets, do not leave them alone while you're out celebrating make sure someone can stay with them.

Have a safe and happy autumn and holiday season!!



October 18th shop New Frontiers

On Wednesday, October 18th, New Frontiers will be donating 5% of the day's sales to the Santa Ynez Valley Humane Society. The market is located at 1984 Old Mission Drive in Solvang at the northwest corner of the intersection of Highway 246 and Alamo Pintado. Their hours are 10:00 am to 8:00 pm.

New Frontiers pride themselves on their array of natural products and organic produce and

wonderful deli selection.

If you are interested in seeing what the market has to offer or regularly shop there, be sure to mark your calendar and support the humane society while purchasing your groceries at the market.



Santa Ynez Valley Humane Society
PO Box 335
111 Commerce Drive
Buellton, CA 93427

Phone: (805) 688-8224
Fax: (805) 693-9804
Email: humane@syv.com
Website: www.syvhumane.org

Shelter Hours:

Monday-Saturday 10-4

Pet behavior consultations:

Evenings by appointment

Clinic Hours:

Wednesdays by appointment

House of Treasures Thrift Shop

393 Alisal Road in Solvang

Phone: (805) 686-9521

Hours: Monday 10-2

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