

I seem to be hearing more and more frequently that when a pet gets lost the owners of the pet are unsure or just do not know where to start to look for them. Having been in the animal control field for almost 40 years I would like to offer some insight or advise to those in this position. First, as soon as you notice the pet missing call your animal control officer (715-386-7789). If you do not know who that is, call your City, Town, or Village hall. They will know this information. File a report with them. If Animal Control hasn't yet picked the animal up they will have that information should there be a call. That way they can try to get your pet back to you before it goes to the impound facility. Second call your impound facility. This would be the Animal Humane Society in Woodbury, Minn. 651-730-6008. They will tell you if any animals matching the description of your lost pet have been brought in to them. By state law animals brought to the impound as strays need to be held for 5 days in Minnesota and 7 days for Wisconsin. This is to give an owner the opportunity to find their pet. When the holding period has expired the animals are reevaluated for health and temperament. If they are adoptable they are then put up for adoption and rehomed. These are the two single most important steps. The rest I offer because in my experience they have definitely helped in getting a pet home faster than if they were not done at all.

3) Call law enforcement: Washington County non emergency dispatch 651-439-9381/St. Croix County non emergency dispatch 715-386-4701

4) Let your neighbors know especially the neighborhood kids. Kids go places adults wouldn't think of going. Pets don't often stray far from familiar territory at first. Check under bushes, up trees (cats), in and around out buildings and garages. Just get the word out. The more people that know your pet is missing the more likely it is to be found.

5) Post it on social media. I am not a computer person but it is clearly amazing how fast I have seen animals reunited with their owners from just a single post to facebook. There are several web sites that will list your lost pet for you. Lost Dogs of Minn/Lost Dogs of Wi. These places can also refer you to sites for lost cats and even birds.

6) Call the local veterinary hospitals and clinics. The majority will take a lost report and post it in case an injured stray or a newly found animal comes in for treatment.

7) Place familiar objects outside the door the pet exited, or in a spot that the pet frequented when outside. The pet is more likely to hang around familiar scents and objects so put a blanket, towel, their bed or crate, something with your scent on it near the spot. If you feel comfortable doing so leave some of the pet's food in the same area. Be aware though that food left out also attracts wildlife and other stray animals. . Nobody can search 24/7 for their lost pet. Leave a light on outside if possible and keep alert for signs that your pet has returned

8) Don't stop looking. In my experience most pets do eventually turn up someplace. I have returned pets that have been lost for up to 3 years.

The best piece of advice I have for pet owners is to be sure you have some form of identification on your pet. Microchips are ideal but are not a guarantee. Many times I have scanned for a chip, found one only to find out the pet owner didn't register the chip with the company or they changed their address or phone and didn't notify them. Be sure your contact information is up to date at the microchip company, veterinary hospital and on all tags your pet is wearing. Last but definitely not least, Do Not leave your pet outside unattended.