

WHAT TO DO IF YOU FIND A CAT



So you've found a cat outdoors—but unless they're sick or injured, there's likely no need to turn them over to an animal shelter. The cat may be an indoor-outdoor pet or a community cat who lives nearby. If the cat is truly lost, they'll have a better chance of being reunited with their family if they don't enter the shelter.

Many cats will get home on their own; others need some help. Here's how to provide the right help.

FIND THE CAT'S OWNERS OR CARETAKERS:

- If the cat is wearing a collar, **check for an ID tag** and contact the owner.
- **Ask neighbors**, mail carriers and others who frequent your neighborhood what they know about the cat.
- **Take photos and file a found report** with animal shelters in your region.
- **Post flyers** in your neighborhood.
- **Use social media sites** such as Facebook and NextDoor to ask if anyone knows the cat, and search for "lost cat" posts to see if there's a match.
- If the cat is friendly, take them to a veterinarian or animal shelter to be **scanned for a microchip**, or put a breakaway collar on the cat and tape a note to the collar asking the owner to contact you.



A eartip is the badge of a sterilized community cat.

TAKE THE NEXT STEPS:

- **Lost pet.** Tell the owners where you last saw the cat. Point them to resources at [humanesociety.org/lostcat](https://www.humanesociety.org/lostcat).
- **Free-roaming pet.** Tactfully mention to the owners that their pet would be safer indoors. If the cat isn't sterilized, share information on local spay/neuter programs and offer to help with the cost or transportation if you're able to.
- **Sterilized community cat.** Ask the caretakers if they need assistance, such as donations of cat food, a winter shelter or someone to feed the cat when they're out of town.
- **Unsterilized community cat.** Research local trap-neuter-return resources and work with the cat's feeders to get the cat sterilized, vaccinated and ear-tipped. If you can't find the caretaker, considering taking on that role yourself (find tips at [humanesociety.org/TNRindividuals](https://www.humanesociety.org/TNRindividuals)).
- **Nursing mom cat and kittens.** Visit [humanesociety.org/foundkittens](https://www.humanesociety.org/foundkittens) for guidance.