



HOW TO CATCH A PANICKED DOG

by: Kathy "Kat" Albrecht, Missing Animal Response Network www.missinganimalresponse.com

Some dogs that are scared off by fireworks, thunder, or other traumatic events will be so terrified that they will not even come to their owners. While some dogs will ultimately calm down and then approach people, other dogs will continue to run from everyone.

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One of **the worst things that you can do is CALL a stray dog or panicked dog!** That's because if too many people have already tried to capture the dog, calling him becomes a "trigger" that can cause him to automatically take off in fear when anyone, including his owner, calls him. In many cases, people have tried to call the dog as they looked directly at the dog and walked towards it, an action that is dominate and frightening to a dog that is in the "fight or flight" mode. Instead, make some type of other noise like clearing your throat or fake a sneeze to alert the dog to your presence. Then look away, which is a submissive gesture. You can even fake that you're eating food on the ground, and we suggest that you have a baggie of smelly treats like pieces of hotdog or liver treats. Sit down on the ground, or even lay flat on your back and pat your chest. Do anything other than staring straight at dog while walking towards him! One volunteer captured a tiny terrier that **ran** from her when she called him but came wiggling up to her once she laid flat on her back and patted her chest. Another volunteer captured a panicked dog by getting out of the car with a Frisbee and started tossed it back and forth with the dog owner as they both just ignored the dog. **WHEN YOU FIXATE ALL OF YOUR ATTENTION ON THE DOG AND THE DOG IS IN A FIGHT OR FLIGHT MODE, HE WILL BECOME EVEN MORE TERRIFIED THAT YOU ARE TRYING TO CATCH HIM.** Work to get his attention and then do something with food to attract him to come to you.

Many dog owners don't believe that their own dog would not come to them and find out the hard way, even after they've been given this information. To be on the safe side, if you DO see your dog, instead of calling him, SIT DOWN on the ground, do not look directly at your dog, but start making lip-smacking "nummy, nummy, nummy" sounds as you drop treats on the ground, pretending you're eating (hopefully you WILL have treats with you to drop!) and slowly entice your dog to come to you. Our website (www.missinganimalresponse.com) has a "DON'T CALL YOUR DOG" page under our LOST PET HELP tab that includes a video demonstration on why calling out to your dog could be a very costly mistake. We STRONGLY suggest that you watch this video before you start searching for your lost dog!

You should also know that when dogs are in a full fight or flight mode and their adrenaline is flowing, the olfactory section of their brain closes down. That's why sometimes when you try to feed a hotdog to a panicked dog it won't eat it. So sometimes the food will work, sometimes it won't. It depends on the dog and what level of panic he is in. Also, some dogs will immediately recognize their owner by their scent but other dogs won't.

OTHER TIPS – We recommend that you use giant, florescent REWARD LOST DOG posters to help generate leads. We have instructions on our web site (click LOST PET HELP then NEON POSTERS) on how to create posters and also how to "tag" your car (click TAG YOUR CAR). Hiring a search dogs to track your lost dog might be an option, however in many cases strategically placed large neon posters are just as effective! When someone calls and says they saw your dog, you should respond and see if you can find your dog. If your dog is not in the immediate area but you find a wooded area or someplace that the dog might return to, set out a bucket of water and a plate of food (carry these in your car, along with a lead) as well as a wildlife camera. Photos from the camera will help you learn if your dog is coming there for food and you can then place a dog trap there. If you have a second dog who your missing dog is familiar and friendly with, take that dog with you but keep him on a long leash. If you come across your lost dog, it's possible that you can use your friendly happy dog to attract and capture your panicked dog.

Our website maintains a "Pet Detective Directory" that lists trained resources who can help you. However, be sure to check Facebook to see if there are any lost pet recovery groups in your community as some groups have volunteers who assist families with many aspects of lost pet recovery work. Above all, DO NOT GIVE UP HOPE. Physically, your dog is out there and if you remain calm and follow expert advise you stand a very good chance of getting your dog back home!