

How Personality Clues Help Find Lost Cats

(Cat personalities are key to knowing where your pet might be).

Lost cats require immediate attention and knowing something about cat personalities can help you locate your missing cat sooner rather than later — or not at all.

Cats are very territorial creatures. In unfamiliar territory, lost cats (particularly cautious cats) usually look for the first place that offers concealment and protection. They instinctively and silently hide to protect themselves from predators. How long they remain in that hiding place and what they do when they emerge depends entirely upon their temperament. If you have a missing cat, don't wait to see if she returns. Start searching immediately.

"If your pet has easy access to the outdoors and suddenly vanishes, ask yourself, 'What's happened?'"

Cats have been known to curl up in an open car that subsequently drives away, or they can be chased from their home environment by a dog. When an indoors-only cat escapes out of the safety of home, the question is 'Where is she hiding?'

All cats fall into one of four types of cat personalities:

The Curious Cat

With a gregarious personality, this curious feline will run to the door to greet a stranger, is generally unafraid, and consequently gets into trouble. When displaced, she will hide at first and then most likely begin to travel. She could easily get within a five-block radius of home quite quickly. Don't assume she will come when called.

The Care-less Cat

This cat is aloof and doesn't care for people. When a stranger is present, she tends to stand back and watch. When displaced, she's likely to hide but eventually will break cover, attempt to come back home, and meow to be let in. There is the possibility, however, that she will travel larger distances.

The Cautious Cat

Generally, a cautious cat likes people but is shy and will dart away to hide if a stranger comes to the door. Sometimes she'll peek around the corner and slowly come out to investigate. When displaced, however, she will immediately hide in fear. If not scared out of hiding by people or other animals, she's likely to return home on her own or meow to attract attention when her owner comes looking. This could happen within two days. But it could take as long as ten days before hunger or thirst prompts her to break cover.

The Xenophobic Cat

Xenophobia is a fear or hatred of anything strange or foreign. This fearful behavior is either part of a cat's genetic make-up or the result of traumatic kittenhood experiences. The xenophobic cat will hide when a stranger comes into the home and will not come out until well after the company has left. She doesn't enjoy being held or petted and is easily disturbed by any environmental changes. When displaced, she will bolt and hide in silence, remaining in the same hiding place, immobilized by fear. If someone other than her owner finds her, she could be mistaken as being wild and homeless, spitting and hissing out of fright. Sadly, as a result, xenophobic cats are often absorbed into the feral cat population.

How to Catch Lost Cats

In many instances, the best way of capturing a missing cat is with a humane baited trap. Cats have a very keen sense of smell. If you use a baited trap (available in Dubai from some vet clinics, charities), line it with towels that have a familiar "home smell" to entice her to go inside. You can even place some of her kitty litter inside as well.

When you make "lost" posters, don't forget to include your cat's personality traits, likes and dislikes, and include a telephone number where you can be reached at all times.

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