



LOST ANIMALS

If you find a stray dog, contact the Licking County Dog Shelter and Adoption Center (740) 349-6562, or visit their facility at 544 Dog Leg Rd in Heath. You can also search their database of lost and found pets at <https://apps.lcounty.com/animal-control/lost-and-found/>.

If you find a stray cat, local authorities have no legal responsibility to attend to it. While the Licking County dog warden has an obligation to take in stray dogs, this law does not apply to cats. Licking County Animal Shelter no longer takes in stray cats.

What should you do if you find a stray cat? First, think of what you would want the finder of your pet to do. Often, cats seem to be strays but actually have a home. Good Samaritans who have never lost a pet may assume that the owner of the found cat abandoned them or, at the very least, neglected to keep them safely confined at home. But accidents can happen to anyone. The frantic owner could be looking everywhere for their beloved pet. Cats do tend to roam and can appear to be lost. *But a cat that is hanging around looking for food, or trying to get into your house may have a home not far away, so you need to be sure they are genuinely homeless before assuming they are stray and either taking it to an animal rescue, or deciding to take it in yourself.*

We suggest...

1. Take them to a vet's office or animal rescue to scan the cat for a microchip. The pet's microchip number is linked to the owner's contact information. Once scanned the owner can be contacted and reunited with their lost cat.
2. Put a paper collar on the cat you think might be a stray and write a message and your telephone number on it asking the owner to call you if the cat is theirs.
3. Ask your neighbors if their cat is missing or if they recognize the cat. There may well be someone searching frantically for their much-loved lost pet.
4. Consider putting up a "found" poster with a photo of the cat around your neighborhood, at rescues, pet stores, and vets offices, and giving your contact details so the owner can get in touch with you if they see it. Give a description of the cat as well: is it neutered/spayed, declawed, male/female?
5. You can also post a photo of the cat and the location the cat was found on "lost and found pets" groups on Facebook. Here are a few for Licking County and central Ohio:

<https://www.facebook.com/Licking-County-Lost-Found-Pets-412295492121331/?fref=ts>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/lostandfoundpetsLC/>

<https://www.facebook.com/petfbi.org/?fref=ts>

There are also lost and found pet websites:

<https://www.tabbytracker.com/>

<https://www.pawboost.com/>

<http://petfbi.org/>

Finally, be honest with yourself in answering these questions: Are you willing to add the cat to your household if the owner cannot be located? And will you be willing to return them to their original home if the owner turns up after you've started to form an attachment? Be reasonable about how much you can afford to do for that animal if no owner shows up.

What should you do if you find a litter of kittens?

Spring and summer in the animal rescue realm is commonly referred to as “Kitten Season”. It is much more likely to come across a litter of unattended kittens or a single kitten during this time. Before assuming the kittens have been dumped or abandoned by the mother cat, consider the following:

1. You might have come across the kittens while their mother is off searching for food, or is in the process of moving them to a different location. Try to determine if the mother is coming back for them, or if they are truly orphaned. To do this, stand far away from the kittens — 35 feet or more. You might need to go away completely before the mother cat will return to attend to the kittens. It might be several hours before the mother cat returns — until she no longer senses the presence of humans hovering near her litter.
2. The mother cat offers her kittens’ best chance for survival, so wait and watch as long as you can. The best food for the kittens is their mother’s milk. Remove the kittens *only* if they are in immediate, grave danger – freezing or wet, near/in the roadway, in an area with predatory animals.
3. If mom returns and the area is relatively safe, leave the kittens alone with mom until they are weaned. You can offer a shelter and regular food to mom, but keep the food and shelter at a distance from each other. Mom will find the food but will not accept your shelter if the food is nearby, because she will not want to attract other cats to food located near her kittens.
4. Six weeks is the optimal age to take the kittens from the mother for socialization and adoption placement, and any time after eight weeks for Trap-Neuter-Return (spay/neuter, vaccination, eartip, and return to their colony). Female cats can become pregnant with a new litter even while they are still nursing, so *don’t forget to get the mother cat spayed* or you will have more kittens soon!

What if the mother cat does not return:

If you discover that mom has been hit by a car, or if for any reason it appears that she is not coming back, then you should remove the kittens. This is crucial to the kittens' survival. *But you must be prepared to see this project through to weaning if you decide to intervene.*

If you take the kittens in, it is unlikely that you will find an organization with available staff or volunteers to take on bottle-feeding on short notice. Some organizations do have experienced bottle-feeders, but prior logistical planning is necessary. Animal shelters and veterinarians generally do not take in newborn kittens, since they do not have the staff to feed and stimulate them for elimination around-the-clock. You can contact the Licking County Humane Society and we will *attempt* to find someone to bottle-feed the kittens, but this might take days or weeks, and we might not be successful in locating a feeder. LCHS can teach you how to bottle feed kittens if you are willing to foster them.

Is it a stray or a feral cat? If the cat is not friendly and approachable, it may be a feral. If your neighborhood cat is feral, or it doesn't seem like he's ever lived in a home, then he likely isn't adoptable, but he can stay outdoors while you provide food and shelter. So long as a feral cat is healthy, they will live happily outside. The most important rule for caring for feral cats: **fix them, fast.** We support the trapping and neutering of feral cats where local charities have the capacity to do so. If the cat is approachable and friendly it may be a stray cat that belongs to someone. There are two organizations that can help with trapping and fixing feral cats: Licking County TNR and Pet Promise. The Licking County Humane Society can rent out humane traps and offers low-cost spay/neuter for these cats as well.

- **LC TNR**

- Founded and managed by Dr. Joanna Reen.
- Happens once a month (First Sunday of every month) at Refugee Canyon Veterinary Services in Hebron, OH.
- Clinic can spay/neuter approximately 25 cats at a time.
- Recommended donation of \$25
- Service includes s/n, ear tip, & Rabies vaccination
- People who are interested in taking advantage of the clinic must fill out a Colony Registration Form and mail it to Dr. Reen. Once Dr. Reen has registered the colony, colony caretakers can begin trapping.
- Cats must be FERAL and delivered in a box trap the morning of the clinic, between 8:30 am – 9:00 am.
- Colony Registration Forms can be obtained at LCHS or at Refugee Canyon Veterinary Services in Hebron, Ohio.

- **Pet Promise – City Kitty Program**

- <http://petpromise.org/city-kitty>
- Pet Promise provides rabies vaccinations, spay/neuter surgery and offers the use of humane traps when needed.
- Pet Promise volunteers provide guidance in the humane trapping of, and post-surgical care of, altered feral cats and kittens and expert advice to novice caregivers in their guardianship of feral cats in their neighborhoods.
- For more information about the City Kitty Program, contact Pet Promise at 614-738-2149.

Take a look around, and talk with your neighbors about how you can all work together to help these feral cats. It's important to get all of your neighborhood's cats spayed or neutered so you don't end up with even more cats. This is called Trap-Neuter-Return or TNR, and it's the most effective and humane way to control the free-roaming cat population.

For information on trapping feral cats and caring for them before and after surgery, check out Neighborhood Cats or Alley Cat Allies.

List of Rescue Organizations that Take in Cats

If you have explored these options, and you conclude that you must rehome the cat or surrender it to an animal rescue, please consider contacting the rescues on this list:

<http://cat.rescueshelter.com/Ohio>

If you surrender the cat to a county shelter, know that the cat may never leave that facility. Approximately 71% of cats that enter county shelters are euthanized. Please consider surrendering the cat to a no-kill animal rescue.

Our Role

There is a common misconception that the shelter is ready and able to accept any animal at any time. The Licking County Humane Society is a managed-intake facility. As the shelter has limited space and resources, we are unable to accept animals on the spot in the majority of cases. We also maintain a list of animals already awaiting entry. While we make every effort to honor the waiting list, several factors may prevent us from accepting animals strictly on a first come, first serve basis.