

What to do if you find a stray:

Spot:

If you spot a stray animal, remember that safety comes first. If you are driving, make sure you are able to safely park your car, out of the way of oncoming traffic. You must assess the animal before you approach it by reading its body language and behavior. Remember that an animal that is afraid, hurt, or rabid may bite. If you are unable to safely park your vehicle and/or approach the animal, call animal control and give them as much detailed information as possible about the animal, the location and time you spotted it, etc. If animal control is unavailable, call your local police department. Stay in your car if you deem it unsafe to approach the animal. If possible, stay with or near the animal until help arrives.

Approach:

If you are able to safely approach the animal, try to catch it. Some animals may be jittery and try to run away if you make any sudden moves. Some may come right up to you, and some may need coaxing. Speak in a pleasant and calm tone to the animal. Use food or treats if you have them to lure the animal to you. The next step is to restrain the animal for its safety.

If you are able to get close enough, calmly place a leash or rope around the animal's neck. If you do not have a leash or if the animal will not come close to you, make a barrier to close the animal into a small constrained area where it cannot run away. Call for help if necessary. Stay with the animal, if possible, until help arrives.

Catch:

Once you have caught the animal, take her to be scanned for a microchip. Any veterinarian's office will provide this service, usually without charge. If it is the weekend or after business hours, go to an animal urgent care center/emergency care center. If the animal has a microchip, call the number on the chip and they will provide you with the phone number registered on the chip. Your local animal shelter will also scan for chips, but be aware of their policies about releasing the animal to you if you want to take her home with you.

If you choose to take the animal home with you, provide her with fresh water, food, and a comfortable place to sleep. Keep her separate from your animals and children until you are able to take her to the vet for an exam, in case she has something contagious. Take clear pictures of the animal and make "Found" posters to hang around the area and vet clinics in the area you found it. Also post pictures and details of her online on local "Lost and Found" pages, local animal shelter pages, your neighborhood's website, NextDoor, Facebook, etc. Send an email to your HOA and ask them to email its residents. You never know who may see her picture and help reunite her with her owner.