



Lowell Humane Society

"Serving Greater Lowell Since 1873"

www.lowellhumanesociety.org

Does This Cat Need to be Rescued?

As an organization, we are not looking to debate whether or not cats should be indoor only. Although we always advocate that cats are safest when indoors, we do realize that there are situations where allowing a cat outdoor access may just save its life (high-arousal, litter box issues, etc.). But again, this isn't about whether cats should be indoors or not – it is about the fact that many owned cats *are not* indoors. By rushing to “rescue” a cat, you may be depriving it of his/her home and doing more harm than good. Every outdoor cat isn't a “lost” cat. Once you pick it up and take it to a shelter, it becomes lost. If you take an owned cat to a shelter, he has less than a 2% chance of being reunited with his family. He is more likely to make his way home by staying in familiar territory.

True or False: His must be lost because...

“He eats at my house every night”.

FALSE - His owner may only feed him dry cat food. The food you are feeding is much tastier. He is sure to make the rounds by your house every night for his special, tasty treat.

“I checked with all the neighbors and no one recognizes him”.

FALSE – Did you check with the house behind the woods by the neighbor's house? Probably not. Cats don't follow the same pathways as we do. Posting signs is a much better way of reaching multiple neighbors that you don't generally see or talk to on a daily basis.

“He's always hungry.”

FALSE – His body condition is going to be a much better way to confirm whether or not he is getting adequate nutrition. If he doesn't look skinny or malnourished, he is more than likely not starving.

Clues that a cat is in his home territory and not lost.

- In good condition. His coat looks good and he is of adequate weight
- Walking with tail up and ears forward
- Rolling around on the ground
- Hunting or playing
- Strolling or resting out in the open
- Happy vocalizations
- Relaxed interactions with other cats in the area

What do I do if I find a cat outdoors?

When you see a new cat, it is important to confirm whether or not he has a home. Ask neighbors, put up signs and post online to see if anybody recognizes him. Social media is an excellent avenue for reuniting lost cats with owners. The Lowell Humane Society will post found cats for you and they will also be shared with other social media sites like Commonwealth Cat Recovery. The Humane Society will also provide a paper collar for the cat. We recommend writing “Call xxx-xxx-xxxx if you own this cat”. It is a quick way to determine if a cat has a family before removing them from their territory. Be sure to also have the cat scanned for a microchip.

Once these steps are taken and no owner can be found, you can bring the cat to the Humane Society. We request that these steps be taken first, before healthy stray cats will be accepted. If a cat is injured and in poor health/condition, the animal can be surrendered immediately.

In some cases, healthy cats may be released back to their territory if they are unable to be rehomed due to temperament issues. Finders will always be notified in these situations. The shelter chooses not to euthanize healthy animals if it is safe and appropriate for the cat to be released.