

MY OUTDOOR CAT HASN'T COME HOME – WHAT CAN I DO?



PREPARE EVERYTHING AT HOME

Leave doors and windows open, even at night. If you have a cat flap, tie it up (to keep it open). Set up a hiding place with a feeding station near the house – especially if the cat cannot be allowed inside.

Set up the feeding station in the garden or on the terrace/balcony and monitor it with a wildlife camera. It's often helpful to check who is visiting the feeding station. For wild animals, such as hedgehogs, you can position the feeding station at a higher level. If there are territorial neighbour's cats, ask their owners not to let their cats roam freely for a few days or nights.

Search the immediate surroundings – cellars, attics, garages, sheds, woodpiles, trees, swimming pools – thoroughly, and ask your neighbours to allow you, as the owner, to enter their property or cellar compartments yourself, or to leave their cellar doors or other gates open for a few days. Please make some noise in these areas to scare the cat out.

HOW DO I SET UP A FEEDING STATION?

Choose a quiet, sheltered, shaded and weatherproof spot. If you can't find a place like this, it helps to fit out a box accordingly, make it waterproof with plastic sheeting and camouflage it with natural materials. There are no limits to your ideas and possibilities here.

Stock the feeding station with wet food. Feel free to serve it warm to intensify the smell. Tuna is always very popular. Of course, these treats will also attract other cats and wildlife.

Position the wildlife camera so that it is 4 to 5 metres away from the feeding station. This way, you'll also have a view of the surrounding area. Please make sure to obtain permission from the landowner or hunting leaseholder and ensure that data protection regulations are observed.

Always check and replenish the feeding station at the same time each day, e.g. at 08:00 and 20:00. Consistency is very often the key to success.

It is best to put up a flyer about the feeding station to inform passers-by.

NIGHT-TIME SEARCH (only in consultation with a K-9 telephone adviser)

Go out searching at night – particularly in the early hours between 02:00 and 04:00. Use a torch to shine light on all hedges, cellar shafts and other potential hiding places, looking for the reflection of a cat's eyes.

Stop every now and then, call out in a soft voice, wait and listen.

If your cat recognises a tin of treats, take it with you and shake it every now and then, then wait and listen.

Repeat the search night after night, varying the times slightly if necessary.



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PUTTING UP (OR HAVING SOMEONE PUT UP) FLYERS

Here is an example of a flyer (you can create one on the website www.stmz.ch). Key details include a good photo of your missing cat, your telephone number, and a request that any sightings be reported with photos or videos. Please also include a note stating that the flyers will be reliably removed once your cat has returned.

VERMISST



www.stmz.ch/335130 | Vermisstmeldung Nr. 335'130

KATZE «Bianca»

Vermisst seit: 30.03.2024
im Raum 9100 St. Gallen (SG)

Bitte melden Sie sich bei:
Sandra Muster

Tierdaten

Tierart / Rasse	Hauskatze
Geschlecht	weiblich
Altersgruppe	Jung / Erwachsen
Fell-Haarlänge	Halblang/Lang
Fellmusterung	einfarbig/keine
Farbe(n)	Grau
Chip	Nein
Kastration	Ja


Schweizerische Tiermeldzentrale

Die STMZ übernimmt keine Verantwortung für den Inhalt dieser Meldung

Print the flyers in large quantities (at least 200 copies) in colour and make them weatherproof using document sleeves and adhesive tape. Ask friends and acquaintances to put the flyers up (so that your scent isn't spread everywhere -> see 'Trail home') at every clearly visible and busy location within a radius of at least 500 metres. Putting up flyers on lampposts, Robidog bins, bridge railings, shops, entrance doors to residential complexes, car parks, footpaths and cycle paths, as well as distributing them through letterboxes, can quickly lead to sightings. Please note: Local authorities must be informed about the posting of posters. Please also remember to take them down again.

Post your flyer online as well. Facebook pages run by animal shelters, 'Missing & Found Animals' groups, town/local council pages, companies and tourism organisations have proved particularly helpful.



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A SELECTION OF PLACES TO REPORT A MISSING PET

STMZ, animal shelters, vets, town/local council, building authority/carcass collection points, hunters/forest rangers, SBB, police, etc.

TRAILING A PATH HOME

When trailing a path home, you lay a scent trail from all possible directions towards your home address. The example image shows that the trail (yellow arrows) is always laid from the turning point back to your home:



What can I use for the 'journey home' exercise:

- An item of clothing or bed linen worn by the caregiver. Tie this to a piece of string or a line and drag it behind you.
- Fill a plastic bottle with your own urine and dilute it with water (mixing ratio 1:10). Drill small holes in the bottle cap and turn the bottle upside down on the way back (alternative: a plant sprayer or plastic sports bottle) so that the mixture can drip or be sprayed out.
- The same method also works with tuna water, cat food water or valerian water, and is recommended for cats that have not yet bonded with their (new) owners. Caution: this may attract several cats at once, prompting them to follow the scent trail all the way home.

Where not to lay a trail: across busy roads, railway tracks, tunnels ...



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NICE TO KNOW

Patience is a crucial factor in the search for your cat. Cats like to hide away, and it can sometimes take days or even weeks for them to emerge from their hiding place or set off for home following a frightening experience. Stay patient and continue to check the feeding spot regularly, replace flyers, update social media and enquire at the organisations listed.

MY CAT HAS BEEN SPOTTED OR HAS VISITED THE FEEDING SPOT

Ask the person who spotted your cat to send you as many photos or videos as possible, and enquire about any distinctive features or behaviour to make sure it is your cat.

Once you're certain it's your missing cat, go to the sighting location. Do the same at the feeding station if your cat can be seen on the camera. Sit there and wait, call out softly or talk to the cat. It's best to go to the sighting spot well-prepared with warm clothing, food and drinks... it may take many hours for your cat to regain trust in you.

What you must not do under any circumstances: search frantically, approach your cat or, worse still, run after it.

If you know where your cat is but it won't be lured out, please contact your K-9 helpline. The approach here varies greatly from case to case.

MY OUTDOOR CAT HAS BEEN HIT BY A CAR, FALLEN FROM A GREAT HEIGHT OR RAN AWAY IMMEDIATELY AFTER MOVING HOUSE

In this case too, the tips outlined above will help your cat find its way home.

WHY A SEARCH DOG MAY NOT ACHIEVE THE DESIRED RESULT

A missing cat feels threatened and hunted by a search dog. There is a high risk that the search dog will startle the cat and drive it into a new area with new sources of danger.

DO YOU HAVE ANY MORE QUESTIONS?

Our K-9 telephone advisers are here to help you free of charge. Please contact our **helpline**:

Postal code 3xxx to 64xx: +41 77 535 88 24 (voicemail) or via the contact form on our website

Postal code 65xx to 9xxx: +41 76 457 36 22 (voicemail) or via the contact form on our website

Postal Code 1xxx to 2xxx: Please get in touch via the contact form on our website

<https://www.k9tiersucheschweiz.ch/vermisst#Vermisstmeldung>

