

## Finding Your Lost Greyhound by Michael McCann

Okay, you've lost him. He slipped his collar, or ran out of the open gate; He was spooked by lightning and jumped the back fence; You dropped the leash, or you let him run off lead, he saw a squirrel and suddenly he was gone. How he was lost doesn't really matter now: What matters is the steps you have to take to get him back. He's out there and he's depending on you to find him. He's lost and can't find his way home. It's been a couple of hours now: You've scoured the neighborhood, and you are hoping to see him in every yard and around every corner. But, you are beginning to realize that you can't find him. Here's what you have to do:

*Change your mindset:* This is most important, and most difficult step. You have to stop checking every street and back yard yourself, and start recruiting an army to do it for you. Most greyhounds are found within a mile or two of where they were lost, but a two mile radius is nearly 13 square miles, an impossible area to search adequately alone. You have to stop looking for your dog, and start looking for people. Everything that follows depends on it. With every hour that goes by, your chances of finding your dog, on your own, diminish. You now have to find someone who has seen your dog. You need a sighting and in order to get a sighting, you need help! Ask everyone you know, including your friends, co workers, adoption group and son's cub scout pack to help you. Don't wait until tomorrow, do it now.

*Get the word out:* Whether you have help or not, you've got to get the word out about your lost dog. You and your volunteers are going to search yes, but while you're searching, you're going to post flyers on every available telephone pole, in every super market, drug store, school, church, police stations, vets' office or any other public place surrounding the area. Ninety percent of lost dogs who are found, are found because someone saw a flyer. The flyers don't have to be fancy, but get them printed on the brightest, most fluorescent paper available. "LOST GREYHOUND" In big letters. "If sighted please call (555)555~5555" a silhouette of a running greyhound works great as an attention grabber. 500 of them is a good start, but you may need more. The area should be so saturated with flyers that you can't turn around without seeing one. Don't expand your search area until you've totally covered the area where he was last seen. Here is a template you can download: add your own phone numbers, and use to print your own flyers: [http://www.coovara.com/download/LOST GREYHOUND ORIGINAL.doc](http://www.coovara.com/download/LOST_GREYHOUND_ORIGINAL.doc) 34.5KB 1187 downloads

- Knock on doors and talk to everyone you see; the mail person, the UPS driver, the local landscaper. Any of these people may see your dog, and if they do, now they won't just think it's some dog on his way home, they'll know he's lost. Give everyone you talk to a flyer.
- Schools are a great resource for search help. Ask the principal to make announcements about the lost dog and leave flyers to pass out and post on bulletin boards.. Kids see everything in the neighborhood but will ignore dogs running around unless asked to look. If you hand one kid a flyer, five more will have seen it by the end of the day. Don't ignore the little kids either. They tell their folks everything.
- Call every veterinarian's office, animal control officer and police department within two or three miles from where he was last seen. In rural areas, expand your calling to every nearby town. Follow up with a flyer or several. Faxing them will save you some time but it is important that they see you, rather than just a piece of paper. If you show people how concerned you are, they'll want to help you. Don't just call them once, call them every few days and in the case of the police, during every shift, to make sure everyone knows about your dog.
- Run newspaper ads in the local papers, and while you're at it, talk to a reporter and see if she'll run a local interest story on the lost greyhound. Local cable access stations often will run your lost dog ad for free and local radio stations and TV stations will often run the story on a slow news night
- Check your local animal shelters every few days, in person. It is amazing how many folks who work in these places don't know dog breeds. Your greyhound could be hanging out at a local shelter, up for adoption, because they think he's a Whippet or a Doberman mix.
- Get in touch with your local Department of Public Works, or Highway Department. Sadly, they often will pick up an animal's body from the road, and if there is no identification, the owner will never know. Collars often fall off when a dog is loose or struck by a car.

*Tools you'll need:* Print some maps of your area to give to the volunteers. (There are directions on how to make on line interactive maps in post #10 of this thread.) Make notations of areas that have been well posted. Set up grids and utilize them to cover all the locations in your search area. Send teams to each grid area. Get some heavy duty staple guns and use those for putting up your flyers on telephone poles and clear packing tape for other hard surfaces (Don't use duct tape; it looks messy and some localities bristle at having these flyers posted; you want the locals helping you, not trying to shut your search down). If available, try to keep in touch with your teams with cell phones, or walkie talkie so that when you get a sighting, you can have them go immediately to the sight.

Make sure that there is always someone available at the phone number you posted. You don't want people to call with a sighting, then hang up because they got a message service.

*Don't assume anything:* Don't assume your dog has been picked up, it's the trap that everyone seems to fall into: "No sighting, someone must have picked up my dog!". Greyhounds are notorious for disappearing in the woodwork. A person can walk right by a brindle Greyhound laying in a pile of leaves and never even see him. Some go for months or even years without being found, because people assume they have been picked up or are dead.

Don't assume that the call you got about a dog five miles away is yours. Follow it up, yes, but when you start getting calls about dogs, ask questions: What color was the dog you saw? How big? Which way was it heading? What time and on what day did you see him? Have you ever seen him before? You don't want to be running out of your search area just to find that someone called you about a beagle they saw running through the yard. These false leads are actually a positive sign, they mean your efforts are working; people are looking out for your dog. It's just that they don't know the difference between a Greyhound and a Jack Russell terrorist.

*Don't lose hope:* A few days or a week of searching can be discouraging. A lack of sightings, or no word at all can be tough on a positive attitude. Just remember, your hound is still out there, and someone has seen him. All you have to do, is to find that person. It's only natural to start thinking the worst. But, as non-street savvy as greyhounds are, they are survivors. Keep looking. Don't give up, your Grey is counting on you.

Edited to Add:

A NOTE ABOUT REWARDS: Lost Greyhounds, especially shy ones, are extremely difficult to catch. Your goal should be to encourage people who see the dog call you with the sighting. Once the sightings have established where the dog is hanging out, then set up feeding stations for her. Then, you can set up a humane trap for the capture.

In our experience, rewards often work against getting sightings. What happens is that you will increase the numbers of people looking for the dog yes, but the new people tend to be bounty hunters; teenagers, or "cowboys", who just think of the money, not the safety of the animal. Often, when they see the dog, the first thing they do is chase, and sometimes they chase the dog right out the safety of the territory the dog has felt comfortable in. These people rarely call in sightings, because they want to cash in.

We suggest that the wording of that flyer should be something like: "LOST GREYHOUND, IF SIGHTED, PLEASE CALL , (555) 555-5555, PLEASE, DO NOT CHASE HER". We never even mention a reward. We feel that if someone does catch the dog, and asks for a reward, we can still pay it, but we don't ask for trouble by offering money in advance.

Would you rather have a hundred sympathetic animal lovers helping you look for your dog, or a couple of hundred clueless bounty hunters trying to cash in on her? We'll go with the animal **lovers, every time.**

# Finding Them is Only the First Step

by **Michael McCann**

Finding a lost Greyhound is difficult: catching a loose Greyhound, who doesn't want to be caught, could be one of the most frustrating challenges one ever faces in Greyhound rescue. Over the years we've heard dozens of stories about Greyhounds running loose for months and even years, and thought to be impossible to catch. The truth is, any Grey can be caught, with time, tools and patience.

The most common scenario is a new adopter with a shy, or downright spooky Grey. Any new experience can set off a run for freedom: a loud motorcycle, something blowing in the wind, or just a stranger, moving to pet him. He panics, slips the collar and he's off. He hangs around the neighborhood, and sightings come in about him every day, almost always in the same general area. People hoping to catch him, chase him, and of course, he runs. As every day goes by he becomes more spooked. Soon, the adopter gets frustrated with the search and gives up. What to do?

The first thing to do is to set up a feeding and watering station. It should be near where the dog has been sighted. He's going to be looking for food, and if he finds a source, he'll keep coming back to it. To help him find it, put some stinky cat food in his bowl. Be consistent, Greyhounds are creatures of habit, and if you are consistent, he'll keep coming back every day to the same place at the same time

## ***Three Methods of Greyhound Capture***

*Finesse Capture* : If you are trying to capture a shy spooky hound, and don't have access to a live trap, a finesse capture may be your only option. Things to try are:

- When you or your volunteers see the hound, do not to chase or follow him, make him think you have no interest in him. Turn away, don't make eye contact, sit down on the ground, and if you have a hound with you, give some treats to him: there is nothing that will make a hungry dog more curious, than watching another dog eat.
- If he approaches you, stay on the ground, avoid eye contact and toss treats in his direction; gain his trust through his food motivation. Lick your lips, and yawn, a lot. These are "Calming Signals." (The book "Calming Signals by Turid Rugass is a good primer on the use of non threatening signals for stressed dogs.) Have a looped leash handy in case he approaches close enough.
- If he won't approach anyone, and is fond of his crate, bring the crate to the location and set it up. Put his food in the crate and feed him there. Get him used to eating like he did at home.
- If he likes riding in the car, leave the car door open overnight: you may have a surprise waiting for you in the morning.
- Leave his own bedding in places where he's been sighted, near a bowl of food. He may connect the bedding and food with home, and stay close to the area.
- If possible, set up his feeding station in a fenced area with a gate. Closing a gate behind a hound is a lot easier than trying to get him to come to you.
- A squawker, or predator call is a device that trainers use to recall hounds at the track. It usually works well for confident dogs, or dogs in a pack situation, like at the racetrack. It is a good tool to have in your bag of tricks, but be aware that it is nearly always a failure with shy, spooky Greyhounds. If the dog doesn't react to, or runs from the noise, don't use it again; he's not going to be any more attracted to it on the second try.

*Live Trap Capture* : Some animal control officers and SPCA chapters have animal traps large enough for a Greyhound; however, it is often a lesson in frustration locating and borrowing them. A humane live trap should be required equipment for Greyhound Adoption agencies. They are not inexpensive, but they can save hundreds of volunteer hours by offering a method of capture that is safe and effective. The best type of trap we've used is the Tomahawk Live Trap for large dogs. [Tomahawk Web Page](#) or the Midwest Live Trap, [Midwest Webpage](#). The trap ordered should be large enough for a Greyhound: at least 72" Long by 20" Wide, by 26" Tall. Smaller traps are not sufficient for Greyhounds, they tend to trip prematurely, the door falling on the Greyhound's back, allowing escape. Once a hound has a small trap trip like this, it will be nearly impossible to encourage the dog to enter any trap again. If your group can't afford one, perhaps you can pool resources with other groups in your area. It may save you many days of trying to capture a loose, spooky hound.

- Set the trap up in the area you have been feeding the dog. Once set up, feed the dog only in the trap. If the dog refuses to enter at first, don't take the food out of the trap. You want to train him to eat in the trap, he'll want to train you to take the food out of it.
- Greyhounds have sensitive feet. Most of these cage type traps have wire floors, so when setting the trap, put some sort of cushioning on the floor. A blanket, or straw will work well.
- It's not uncommon to catch other critters in these traps first. Just release them and hope for better luck tomorrow.

There are other traps available. One is a humane snare trap that throws a loop over the dog's head. It has not been effective in capturing Greyhounds, because of the unique shape of the Grey's head and neck. If used it must be constantly monitored, because a dog captured with this method can injure himself in his panic to get free.

*Chemical Capture* : This is the least effective and most dangerous method of capture. Greyhounds are extremely sensitive to drugs and anesthesia. To put drugs like Acepromazine into the dog's food is an invitation to disaster: the drug will take time to work, and in that time the dog will almost certainly be far from your search area. A drugged dog is susceptible to attack by other animals, may fall into a body of water, or wander into traffic. Do not try drugging a dog yourself; this method has been tried by dozens of groups over the years yet, we have never heard of a successful capture using ingested drugs.

The only method of chemical capture, which has been effective with Greyhounds, is a drug dart with a radio tag administered by a qualified technician. The technician must be able to get to within 25 feet of the dog to make a good shot. When darted the dog will run, sometimes for a good distance, until the drug takes effect. The radio tag will lead the searchers to the dog. This method is risky for the dog, and a veterinarian should be available to administer a reversing agent, and to deal with any after effects of the drug. Some animal control officers have dart guns and are eager to use them. If the ACO has no experience with sighthound capture, or with radio tags, don't allow it. It is just too risky!

*Staying the Course* : When you are trying to catch one of these hounds, you will get frustrated, angry and just plain tired. Some take a long time to capture. When one method doesn't work, try another. When you start getting negative feedback from people who have already given up, ignore it. There is nothing more rewarding than bringing a hound home after a long time on the run and watching him thrive.