

# Teaching Your Dog to Find Lost Pets

[From PETCENTRIC, Purina](#)

If you want to spend some quality, meaningful time with your dog, give him a great sense of purpose and serve your community, consider training your dog to sniff out lost pets. Your dog doesn't have to be a Bloodhound or a purebred. Any type of dog, large or small, can become a pet detective if he has the right temperament and drive.

There are three types of pet-finding dogs – trailing dogs who search for lost dogs, cat detection dogs who look for lost kitties, and dual-purpose dogs who have the ability to do both.



Kat Albrecht, author [Dog Detectives: How to Train Your Dog to Find Lost Pets](#) says dogs tend to self-select which type of work they'll do. Some dogs really love cats and are thrilled to "find the kitty." About one out of every 14 dogs passes her cat test. Dogs who are afraid of cats or like to torment them are better off finding their own kind. And some dogs do both jobs equally well.

Dogs are taught to find lost pets by playing hide and seek. To the dog, it's all a fun game with a reward at the end. A "target cat" or "target dog" is hidden, and the search dog tries to find him – the reward is getting to play with the found pet.

You and your dog can team up and learn the skills needed to become a pet detective team and help people in your community find their lost pets. Some people do this as a sideline job and others partner with shelters and volunteer.

To learn pet detective skills, there is a 40-hour course, where you can bring your dog to train with you. The course teaches you to be a Missing Animal Response (MAR) technician, and it mirrors the techniques and tools used in finding missing people. You'll learn how to analyze lost pet behavior, use search probability theory to focus your search where the pet is most likely to be found. You'll also get the basics on training your dog to

find pets. Even though the course is only five days, it may take a year or more for your dog to become proficient at the job.

[Landa Coldiron](#) and [Annalisa Berns](#) became certified MARs and taught their dogs, Ellie Mae, a Bloodhound, and Lilly, a Pointer mix, to find pets. Later they were worked together to find a lost Pug and Pekingese. The dogs had been missing for three days and the owner had no leads. Ellie Mae took the Pug's scent and Lilly got on the Pekingese's scent, which led them to a schoolyard. There, Landa asked the school secretary what was going on there three days before and learned there had been a soccer game. Landa got the name and number of the soccer organizer. Fortunately, he had seen and knew who took the dogs. She was able to contact the man, who had decided to keep the wayward pooches. After some convincing, the man did the right thing and gave the Pug and Pekingese back to their beloved owners.

If you'd like to become a pet detective as a sideline or volunteer, MAR courses are now being offered by the [Missing Pet Partnership](#) in Fresno, Seattle, Denver, Grand Rapids, Philadelphia and Atlanta beginning in 2008. Online training will be available beginning in November 2007 on [HomeAgain.com](#). You'll also want to get Kat Albrecht's brand new book just released this month (Oct. 07) [\*Dog Detectives: How to Train Your Dog to Find Lost Pets\*](#).