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Hot On Their Tail

GPS systems for canines can reduce stress when a pet is lost.

By **Tara Lynne Brown**

A runaway dog, whether in a familiar neighborhood or on vacation, is a stressful event. What if one's dog is pregnant, needs medicine or has a hearing impairment? Even a healthy dog runs the risk of a car accident, which is the most common risk associated with a runaway pet according to Dr. Jennifer Suter, a general practitioner veterinarian at Preston Animal Hospital in Morrisville, North Carolina. Very few dog owners take advantage of an affordable luxury that helps reduce the amount of time a loved canine is lost: a Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) tracking system for dogs.

There are a variety of GPS options currently available. The basic system requires an extra dog collar that houses the GPS transmitter, then when one's dog is missing (or with some systems, leaves established boundaries); text messages and emails are sent to alert the owner of the current latitude and longitude of their pet. Kristi Littrell is Adoption Manager with Best Friends Animal Society in Utah, the United States' largest animal sanctuary. Littrell used a GPS to rescue a dog who escaped from his foster home. She said, "I found him with the device in the middle of covered brush—he was the same color...I wouldn't have known he was there without it!"

Due to the signal emitted, GPS locators are recommended for dogs over 12–15 lbs. "The transmitters emit just as much radiation as a cell phone does," according to John Cullen, Director of Marketing at Zoombak, a pet tracking systems company based out of New York. Zoombak has thousands of rescue stories ranging from dogs saved from being lost in cold, snowy weather to others playing in traffic.

With the variety of GPS providers for canines comes the option of using a cell coverage area or an independent transmitter. SkyLeash is a wide-reaching and water-resistant product that can track pets up to 1,000 miles away without relying on cell towers. "The SkyLeash is the smallest system on the market today," said Douglas Martin, President of Pet-Source.com, a website devoted to pet products and the national seller of SkyLeash. "Your ability to retrieve, monitor and rescue is done in real time."

Secure a Pet™ GPS System also provides an "on demand" service, **CONTINUED ON PAGE 77**

PHOTOGRAPH PROVIDED BY SECURAPET

FROM PAGE 58 utilizing less energy when pets are within their parameters and activating only when an alert is essential. President and CEO of Secure a Pet™ (Perfectech, Inc.), Stanford Milnes, said, "We have also incorporated the latest technology and now have an iPhone app available so you can locate your pet fast and on the move." The system also includes safety lights to increase a dog's visibility if he or she escapes at night.

When thinking of other dangers involved with a pet's escape, as Dr. Suter noted, "...dog fights, tick infestations, parasites, tick-borne disease, weight loss," the investment of a GPS system delivers a valuable peace of mind. Prices range from \$69.99–\$599.99 per unit and most require a monthly service fee as low as \$12.99 per month. Dog-Tracs relies on T-Mobile's coverage area. Users can set personal "safety zones" with Zoombak and SkyLeash and view current tracking online. Secure a Pet's™ GPS System notifies owners when batteries need recharging. Soon to provide Internet mapping, RoamEO Pet Location System tracks by handheld display only. The Garmin Astro DC 30 GPS Dog Tracking System transmits signals as often as every five seconds and also displays the dog's activity—standing or running.

Although every dog is unique, certain breeds are instinctually more prone to leave their territory. "Hunting breeds tend to run away more," Cullen said. Breed is not the only factor influencing a dog's desire to stray. If one has just moved to a new neighborhood there is a greater risk. "When a dog is new to an environment they are at flight risk and will often take any opportunity to get away," shared Littrell. Owners of intact (un-neutered) males are also at a higher risk according to Dr. Suter. Regardless of these characteristics, any dog has the chance of escaping and a GPS system is modern-day way to keep pets safe. 

SOLUTIONS FROM PAGES 14 & 16

CROSSWORD



ANAGRAM

- | | |
|-------------|------------|
| Poodle | Dachshund |
| Labradoodle | Dalmatian |
| Leonberger | Spaniel |
| Sheepdog | Mastiff |
| Wolfhound | Rottweiler |

Crossword & Anagram by Myles Meller
www.themecrosswords.com

FETCH THE TRUTH

It Doesn't Pay to go After "The Man"

True.

Canine Vs. Choo-Choo

True.

Fido of the Opera

False.

There was a concert but those were not the songs played nor is there a heavy metal concert being planned for Fido.

Maybe Some Drivers Ed Would Help

True.

Fidose of Ink

False.

The tattoos are real but only air brushed on the dog.

Batteries Not Included

False.

The entire story is true except that water, not urine, is expelled from the robotic dog.

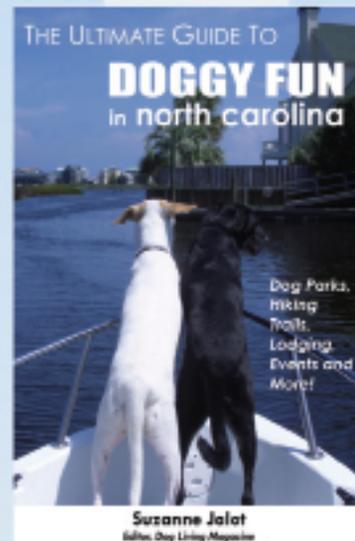
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