

HARTT Stray Animal Help Request – What’s Next?



Thank you for contacting us about a stray animal in need – we appreciate your concern! Please read the following information about how we operate and prioritize our cases:

HARTT is an all-volunteer organization

We are all volunteers. We do not have any paid staff, and we are not affiliated with animal control agencies or the Arizona Humane Society. Our volunteers perform this rescue work on their own time, outside of hours they spend at their jobs, caring for their families, etc. We do our best to respond as soon as possible, but there are a small number of us and MANY animals in need.

Animal control agencies or the Arizona Humane Society may be able to help more quickly!

Have you called the animal control agency for your city? Animal Control Officers (ACOs) are obligated by statute to respond to cases of dogs at large. While they may not be able to successfully rescue every dog, they are very skilled and so please contact them first. The number for Maricopa County Animal Care and Control is 602-506-7387. They are especially effective if the dog is somewhat contained already, as they may not be able to remain on scene for an extended period of time. **HARTT is not able to respond in cases where the dog is already contained or can be easily leashed by others.** If possible, please leash and contain the animal safely in a back yard, laundry room, etc. until animal control can respond. Arizona Humane Society will also respond for injured stray animals in certain cities within Maricopa County – their number is 602-997-7585.

How fast will HARTT respond?

Our response time varies – at times, we can come out on the same day. In other cases, it may take a week or more based on case volume and volunteer availability.

When can HARTT get involved in helping a stray animal? How often must a dog have been seen in order for HARTT to assist?

We are a humane trapping organization – we get involved once the dog is “ready for trapping”. This means that the dog has been seen in a fairly specific area repeatedly for several days at least. This area could be a particular alley, a certain field, on a particular street or group of streets, etc. If the dog has only been seen once, is only randomly seen or is covering a wider area (such as “near the airport” or “running down Main Street”), this dog won’t easily be found and therefore can’t easily be trapped. Because we are a small organization, it is not efficient for us to dispatch volunteers to drive and search large areas of communities looking for a dog on the move, as opposed to using our resources to capture dogs who are ready to be trapped.

When is a dog “ready for trapping”?

We usually prefer that all of these conditions exist before accepting a stray animal case:

1. The dog has been seen on multiple occasions
2. The dog is staying in a relatively narrow area where they can easily be located
3. There is something keeping the dog in the area – usually, there is a food source or a caregiver who is feeding and watering the dog daily
4. A community member, or members, are willing to partner with HARTT and assist us with feeding, reporting on the animal’s location, posting on NextDoor, etc.

Will HARTT come out and trap ANY stray dog?

We would love to, BUT there aren't enough hours in the day! Our HIGHEST priority, after lost owned pets, are severely injured or ill strays. After that, we prioritize dogs with a visible collar and ID tag (it's likely that a family is searching for them). Because HARTT has limited space for holding animals after trapping, those with ID tags are most easily returned home to their families quickly. IF we have the time and the volunteer resources, we will also do our best to assist with dogs who are healthy and who are not wearing a collar or tag, and who are "ready for trapping" – see above.

Since HARTT prioritizes injured strays, what types of injuries are your highest priority?

High priority:

- Lethargic, down, nearly unresponsive
- Paralyzed
- Obvious broken limb
- Embedded collar or rope around neck
- Large bleeding wound, or serious wound which is obviously infected
- Witnessed hit by car or witnessed serious trauma
- Organ prolapse (ie, organ visible outside of the body)
- Emaciation, body condition score of 2 (out of 5) – ribs, backbone and pelvic bones visible, minor loss of muscle mass. Severe waistline and tummy tuck.
- Pregnant, or actively lactating, or with puppies located
- Extensive cactus or other foreign object embedded in body
- Open-mouth breathing (cats only – this symptom is serious in cats)
- Animals trapped in an area of imminent danger, with no access to food and water, or animals who need to be extricated from an enclosed space

Lower priority – HARTT may not have the resources to respond:

- Limping, without visible bone break or visible serious wound
- Scratches or small wounds that will likely heal with time
- Fatigue, panting (dogs)
- Underweight, body condition score of 3 (out of 5) – ribs, backbone and pelvic bones are somewhat visible. Some waistline and tummy tuck. These dogs are "skinny" and not clinically "emaciated"
- Watery eyes, nasal discharge, upper respiratory symptoms

What can I do in the meantime to help?

We NEED involvement from the community in order to help as many of these animals as possible! Any and all of these things will be a great help to us, and to the animal:

- **Most important – DO NOT CHASE, PURSUE, CALL, WHISTLE or CLAP at a stray lost animal!** These behaviors are actually frightening and are not comforting. YOU CANNOT OUTFRONT a scared animal, and it

is ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO “CORNER” THEM. Doing any of these things can cause the animal to run into a roadway and be killed. Or, it can cause them to leave the area, making them nearly impossible to find. We usually suggest that everyone treat the dog as if he is invisible.

- Spread the word about this information above – tell your friends and neighbors not to do these things, and also share this information on social media, on NextDoor, etc.
- “Roll out the welcome mat” for the animal – create a safe, attractive space for them to keep coming back to! Try to find a somewhat hidden (but still easily “findable” to the animal) place to put out fresh water and food. Refresh both daily. Make sure that when ants are present (normally in the warmer months), you make the food bowl “ant-proof”. It’s easy! Place the food in a size-appropriate heavy center bowl (ceramic cereal bowls work great) and set that bowl inside a shallow, shorter outer bowl (like a pie plate). Fill the outer bowl with water daily, which will keep the ants from getting to the food in the middle. Water bowls should be made of plastic, not metal. If you need more advice on how to set up a feeding station, just ask us.
- Keep us informed. If the dog hasn’t previously “settled” in an area but if he does so after your “welcome mat” activities, call us and this could move the case up in our prioritization!
- Keep track of times and days that you see the animal – this will become important to us later if we are able to move toward trapping.
- Try to get a few good photos of the animal – this will help us decide on the right size and type of trap if we attempt trapping later. It will also help us learn if this is someone’s known, missing pet.
- REALLY want to help? Consider becoming a HARTT volunteer! We need volunteers all over our community. Visit www.azhartt.org/volunteer for more information and to fill out a volunteer application.
- HARTT’s work is made possible by donations from the public – our equipment, and the sheltering and vet care for the animals we rescue, is expensive! If you would like to support our work with a tax-deductible contribution, visit www.azhartt.org/donate.

Do you rescue animals in unusual and difficult places, such as cats up high trees, cats in walls, animals in canals or bodies of water, animals on the freeway, etc.?

Sometimes! It depends on the details – if a rescue is beyond our capabilities, we may know of other organizations or individuals that can help. Let us know about these situations so we can assess.

Do you trap stray or feral cats, or help with TNR (Trap-Neuter-Return) programs?

No, we do not. The only exceptions are cats who we believe are a match to a known missing pet cat, or cats who are seriously injured or ill and have evaded traditional trapping efforts.

Do you rescue wild animals in distress?

Sometimes! It depends on the circumstances - tell us more about the situation and we can see if it’s within our capabilities. But yes, we have rescued coyotes, roadrunners, ducks, skunks and various other injured wild animals in the past.

How can I find out more about your organization?

Our website has extensive information about who we are, the types of innovative traps we use, and many videos of past rescues. Visit us online at www.azhartt.org