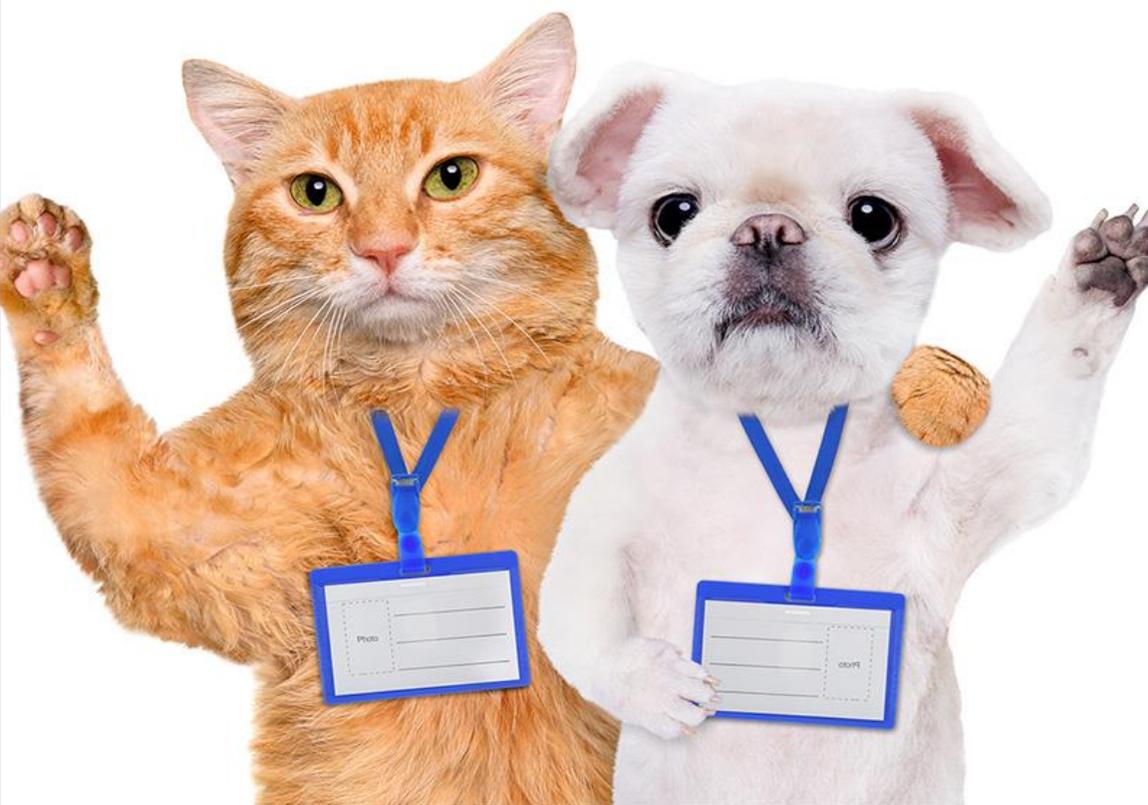


PROPER PET IDENTIFICATION

Pet ID Tags, Registries and Recovery Services, Microchips, Tattoos, and DNA



JOSEPH ANDREW SAPIA & PATRICIA SAPIA

Proper Pet Identification

Pet ID Tags, Lost Pet Registries and
Recovery Services, Microchips, Tattoos, and
DNA

by

Joseph Andrew Sapia

and

Patricia Sapia

Proper Pet Identification

Copyright © 2017 by Patricia Sapia

All rights reserved.

Although the authors and publisher have researched all sources to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the information contained in this book, we assume no responsibility for errors, inaccuracies, omissions or any other inconsistency herein. Efforts have been made to verify the information given in this book. However, there may be inaccuracies or misunderstandings. Therefore this book should be used only as a guide. Neither the authors nor the publisher shall have liability or responsibility to any person or entity for any loss or damage stemming from reliance on the information provided in this book.

ASIN: 12345678

Published by: PETS ROCK PRESS

Authors@lostpetfoundpet.com

Petsrockpress@lostpetfoundpet.com

www.lostpetfoundpet.com

Cover Design: [Inksplatterdesign](#)

Ebook conversion services by [Booknook.biz](#)

Proper Pet Identification is an excerpt from [*The Complete Guide to Lost Pet Prevention & Recovery 2nd \(Revised Edition\)*](#).

Now available on [Amazon](#) as a Kindle and as a paperback.

For Midnight



*and for
Marama, Tra and Kitty*

*and for
all the lost, missing and stolen pets—*

*it is for them this book is dedicated,
with love*

Contents

Dedication

Pet Identification

Proper ID – Your Pet’s Ticket Home

Permanent Identification

Registries and Recovery Services

ID Tags

Keep Information Current

Types of Tags

Alternative Tag Ideas

Tattoos

Tattoo Registries

Tattoo Agents

The Tattooing Procedure

Tattooing Other Pets

Cost of Tattooing

Pros and Cons of Tattooing

Microchips

Implanting the Microchip

Cost of Microchipping

Where to Get a Microchip

Microchipping Birds, Ferrets and Other Animals

Pros and Cons of Microchipping

DNA

DNA and Pets

DNA Sample Kits

Cost of DNA Profiling

Resources

Afterword

Pet Identification

Proper ID –Your Pet’s Ticket Home

Proper pet identification provides a vital link between you and anyone who may find your lost pet. Although most people’s idea of pet identification is the standard identification tag, there are many other options available today and new pet identification methods and products are continually being developed. While tags are indispensable and indeed remain the most popular form of pet identification, they can become lost, leaving your pet vulnerable. That so few animals are reunited with their owners is mostly due to the lack of identification.

With no positive means of identification, it is impossible for animal control, shelter workers, or anyone else finding your lost pet to contact you. For this reason, many national pet organizations now encourage pet owners to supplement visible forms of identification like ID tags with permanent identification such as tattoos and microchip implants. (See [figure 5.](#)) By using multiple forms of identification, including some form of permanent identification, you greatly increase the chances of recovering a lost pet. Although the reasons for proper pet identification are obvious, please consider these other facts:

- Shelters will generally hold pets with some form of identification longer than pets without identification. This is actually the law in many places. In Pennsylvania, for example, shelters are only required to hold unidentifiable strays for two days. If a stray is brought in with some form of identification, however, the shelter is required to hold the animal for ten days, even if they are unable to locate its owner right away.

- If your pet is injured while it is missing, and taken to an animal hospital, it is more likely to be given medical care if it is wearing identification tags or is in some other way identifiable.
- Pets without identification are often taken in and kept by the people who find them. As your pet may have been missing for days, it may look malnourished and neglected to the people finding it. Believing the animal to be unwanted or abandoned, they understandably feel justified in keeping your pet.
- Tattoos may prevent pet theft since research laboratories will not, as a rule, purchase tattooed animals. In addition, new funding and grant requirements are beginning to force research facilities to scan for microchips.
- Microchip implants have proven very successful in reuniting owners with their missing pets. Millions of pets are now implanted with microchips, and many shelters now have universal scanners. (See [“Microchips.”](#))
- While DNA won’t help someone finding your pet to contact you, it can win you a victory in court if your pet is stolen or taken in and claimed by someone who refuses to return the animal.
- Consider using newer technology—for example, facial recognition applications. You can scan your pet’s unique features with your phone, and the company will keep these records on file in case your pet ever goes missing. (See [“Resources/Registries and Recovery Services.”](#))

Permanent Identification

Your pet should never be without visible identification, whether it’s inside or outside the house. The major drawback of identification tags, however, is that they can be lost or intentionally removed. Therefore, standard identification tags should be supplemented with at least one form of permanent identification. Many humane organizations now recommend the use of tattoos and microchips. The American Kennel Club not only encourages but also actively promotes the use of permanent identification.

The multiple identification approach maximizes your chance of recovering your pet. A pet owner should purchase identification tags from a registry and have their pet tattooed and implanted with a microchip.

Figure 5

Some Sound Advice from the American Humane Association

“It’s impossible to overemphasize the importance of an ID tag, a license tag, microchip, or any other device that can better help local animal welfare professionals identify and reunite lost pets with their families again. The great tragedy is that so many animals arrive at shelters with no ID tags. That means it’s up to the owner to track down the lost pet-often a very difficult thing to do. If your pet happens to become lost, yet has any form of identification with your phone number on it, then chances are it won’t be lost for very long.”

Jack Sparks, Associate Vice-President, Communications
American Humane Association
www.americanhumane.org

[\[Back\]](#)

Registries and Recovery Services

A pet identification registry is a company that serves as a liaison between you and the person who finds your missing pet. In our opinion, using an identification registry is one of the most important things you can do to prepare for the possibility of pet loss. If you use a pet registry, your pet’s identification will have the phone number of the registry company instead of your own number. The key things here are that the registry’s phone number never changes, and there’s always someone to answer the phone around the clock. Also, some registries provide additional services that not only safeguard your pet, but can also be of great assistance to you in your recovery efforts.

There are several types of registries: identification tag registries, tattoo registries, and microchip registries. They all operate on the same principle, your pet wears (or is implanted or tattooed with) a unique identification number. The finder of your pet reads (or in the case of microchips, scans) the identification number and contacts the registry, where all of your information is kept in a database. The registry then contacts you or someone else whom you have designated. The system works wonderfully as long as pet owners remember to update their contact information if there is a change. Here are some additional benefits to using a registry:

- Your personal contact details and other information can be easily updated.
- The registry links you to the person who finds your missing pet.
- A registry allows you to keep personal information private.
- A registry allows you to use multiple contact numbers without multiple tags.
- Many registries provide extended services such as guaranteed payment for emergency medical care, transportation, and boarding.
- A registry can keep vital medical or dietary information in their database and can inform whoever finds your pet as to its special needs.
- No matter where you go with your pet, there will be someone to answer the phone who can in turn contact you.
- Statistically, prevention-conscious pet owners that take the time to register their pets with a registry are less likely to lose them.

Although identification registries have been around for years, many are now expanding the services they provide. These services can benefit everyone and are especially beneficial to those who may be unable to conduct an extensive search effort themselves (the elderly or the housebound, for example). The services they provide vary from actual hands-on help to consulting, assistance, and long-distance support for pet owners who lose their pet away from home. Different registries offer different levels of support, so it is best to contact them to determine which best suits your needs. The benefits and services they provide may or may not require your having registered with them prior to your pet's being lost, although it is always best to register in advance since it saves you valuable time.

We strongly urge you to purchase the tags through a national registry. Using a tag registry greatly increases the effectiveness of your pet's tags. An example of a national registry would be [American Pet Association's Guardian Membership Program](#). For a list of other tag registries, (See "[Resources/Registries and Recovery Services](#)"). Many registries provide additional recovery services, which may include one or more of the following:

- ***Professionally Designed Posters and Flyers*** – Created for you and shipped to you by overnight mail.
- ***Postcard Mailers*** – Similar to posters and flyers only in postcard form, these are mailed to homes and businesses in the specific target area where your pet was lost. This can be very effective since a good

percentage of missing pets are taken in by people right in the area where the animals were lost.

- **Contacting Facilities** – Mailing and/or faxing flyers and other important information about your lost pet to all the facilities that take in stray animals within a certain distance of where your pet was lost. This is especially helpful if you lose your pet while traveling.
- **Hands-on Help** – There are even services that do the actual legwork; not simply creating professional flyers and posters, but also distributing them for you. National Pet Recovery is one example of a company that offers such a comprehensive service. They boast an impressive 87% recovery rate. (See “[Resources/Registries and Recovery Services.](#)”)
- **Database Matching and Lost Pet Reports** – Gathering and maintaining information about lost pets and then comparing and matching the descriptions of the hundreds of pets reported missing and found each day.
- **Guaranteed Payments** – Guaranteeing payment for emergency transportation, boarding, emergency medical care, etc. This must be paid back once the pet is recovered.
- **Rewards** – Offering substantial rewards for information on lost and stolen pets.

Figure 6

The Guardian Collar Tag System

The American Pet Association’s Guardian Collar Tag System is truly a comprehensive service that includes emergency medical care, boarding, and transportation arrangements. They offer professional recovery advice, a 24-hour lost pet hotline, Guardian’s proven-effective registered stainless steel ID tag and a \$1,000 stolen pet reward poster for maximum protection and other member benefits.

To find out more about the Guardian Collar Tag System, contact the [American Pet Association](#) at (800-272-7387) or visit their website at www.myapaonline.org.

[\[Back\]](#)

ID Tags

A secure collar and a legible tag combine to make the first line of defense in lost pet prevention & recovery. Your pet should never be without them, both inside and outside of the house. Animal shelter workers across the country attest to the fact that when a pet is brought in wearing an ID tag with current contact information, reunions can be made quickly and easily, and the possibility of the pet being euthanized is virtually eliminated. When pet owners reclaim their pets quickly, it allows shelters to provide more space for other lost and homeless pets.

A tag, which is the first thing that an animal control officer or anyone else will look for when finding a stray, should have your phone number, including your area code. If possible, use more than one contact number (e.g., day, evening, and cell phone numbers).

Remember that you're not always going to be available, so be sure to have an answering machine or a voice mail service. If you are uncomfortable with including your own phone number on a tag, consider using a national tag registry (they will keep all your personal information private). (See [figure 6](#).)

Keep Information Current

One common problem with tags is that people move and change their phone numbers and fail to update the information on their pets' tags. Make sure you update the information immediately when something changes. Don't wait! Most tag registries will update your information free or for a nominal fee. A tag without accurate, up-to-date contact information is as good as having no tag at all. If your pet's tags are lost or if your contact information changes, use a temporary tag until they're replaced. Temporary tags can be purchased online or in most pet supply stores, through pet magazines and product catalogs, or you can make them yourself. (See [figure 7](#).)

Types of Tags

Standard Tags – The standard tag remains the most popular. It comes in a variety of shapes, from a simple square to the shape of a bone or fire hydrant. They are made of aluminum, brass, stainless steel, or plastic. They are inexpensive and are easily engraved or written on with relevant information.

Municipal Licenses and Rabies Tags – Many cities require that all dogs within their municipality are licensed and vaccinated against rabies, and more and more towns are requiring this for cats as well. When you

license your pet or get a rabies vaccination, you get a tag. A rabies tag is proof that your pet has been vaccinated. This is important because if your pet is brought into a shelter, isn't wearing its rabies tags, there is evidence of its having had an altercation with a wild animal, and the offending animal is not available for testing, your pet is at serious risk of being destroyed. (See "Rabies.") Licensing and vaccinating your pet are a fundamental part of responsible pet ownership, and while many pets have been reunited with their owners through both license and rabies tags, they are not ideal for identification purposes. Municipal licenses and rabies tags are a must, but should be seen as a supplement to, rather than a substitute for, more reliable methods of pet identification, as they do not contain your phone number and can only be used as a form of identification during regular business hours.

Alternative Tag Ideas

- ***GPS Pet Tracking Tags*** – Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) technology, the ability to track and pinpoint via satellite one's precise location anywhere on the planet, has been in use for some time now. While originally developed for various government, scientific, and military purposes, every day it seems to find another commercial application, the most recent being tracking pets.

The device mounts to your pet's collar. The owner then programs it to alert them via phone if their pet strays beyond the predetermined boundary set by the pet owner.

- ***Shrinkable Tags*** – Sold under the brand name FasTags, these are a great way of teaching children the importance of pet identification. Just use a permanent marking pen to write your name, address, and phone number on one of these plastic tags, pop it in the oven (or toaster oven) for five minutes, and watch it shrink down to a tag ready to be hung on the pet's collar. Visit www.fastags.com. And check out www.gotags.com for their whole assortment of standard ID tags, "tiny tags" (for pups and kittens), slide-on tags, and embroidered collars.
- ***Slide-on Tags*** – These tags have slits at both ends and slide onto your pet's collar (it must be an open-ended collar). They are less likely than hanging tags to fall off.
- ***Nameplate Tags*** – Permanently attached with rivets to your pet's collar, these tags are not likely to come loose.

- ***Pet Wallets, Cylinders, and Kaleidoscope Tags*** – These all work on the principle of allowing you to include a lot more information than standard tags can hold (the information is miniaturized and is read through a magnifying glass on the end of the tag). A friend of ours has a little Beagle that has a life-threatening disease and requires twice-a-day medication. His owners use a kaleidoscope tag that contains all the medical and emergency prescription information necessary to keep their pup alive until they're reunited with him.
- ***Small Pet Necklace Tags*** – TagXpress (www.tagxpress.com) makes a tiny necklace ID tag that is perfect for cats and tiny dogs such as Chihuahuas.
- ***Temporary Tags*** – These can be filled out and customized when you are traveling or moving with your pet, or when you need to update information while waiting for new permanent tags. (See "[Resources/ID Tags.](#)")
- ***Embroidered Collars*** – Although not actually a tag, they serve the same function. You can have your pet's name and a contact number custom-embroidered right on the collar.
- ***Fluorescent Collars*** – Again, while not an ID tag, using a collar that stands out significantly increases the chance of recovering your pet. People are much more likely to remember spotting a stray with a brightly-colored collar. A bright fluorescent collar works well.

Figure 7

A Quick Tag Idea

In the absence of standard temporary tags, try wrapping a piece of paper around your pet's collar and writing the information on it with a permanent marking pen, then covering it with clear tape to prevent smudging. It may not look pretty, but the important thing is that your pet is always wearing its tag and that the tag has accurate information!

[\[Back\]](#)

Tattoos

Tattooing doesn't mean your pet will join the ranks of sailors and motorcycle gangs. No skulls and crossbones or spitting cobras here, simply a unique identification number tattooed on your pet, a number that is issued by a pet registry. Tattooing is an excellent supplementary means

of identification. A pet tattoo is a permanent form of identification, a numbered mark that is unique to your animal and one that cannot be lost. The American Kennel Club and many other national pet and humane organizations support the use of tattoos and other permanent methods of identification.

Tattooing is also an effective deterrent against pet thieves who make their living stealing dogs and picking up strays and selling them to research facilities and laboratories. Since laboratories will not, as a rule, accept tattooed animals, tattooing is a major deterrent. (See “Stolen Pets.”) Also, a tattoo, along with the tattoo registration papers you receive from the registry, establishes proof of ownership that will stand up in a court of law, according to Tattoo-A-Pet.

Does tattooing work? Tattoos have been responsible for reuniting many lost pets with their worried owners. Some recovery stories can only be described as miraculous. (See [figure 8.](#)) An animal control officer we spoke to told us that in the course of his 25 years of dealing with stray animals, he has only come across a handful of tattooed pets. However, he said every one of them was returned to its owner. Tattooing works, as long as the tattoo number is registered. The problem is that not enough people use them, mainly because they just don’t know how to go about having their pet tattooed.

Shelter workers, veterinarians, and animal control officials are trained to search for tattoos on stray animals that come into their custody. If a tattoo is discovered, they will immediately contact the tattoo registry. These professionals, whose job involves regular contact with stray animals, are familiar with these markings and know who to call.

Tattoo Registries

Tattoo-A-Pet, which has been around since 1972, has a long track record of successfully reuniting owners with their lost pets. If the company is contacted about an animal that’s not registered in their database, they will even contact other registries in an effort to locate the owners.

If your animal is already tattooed, many registries will list the existing tattoo with their registry. This is actually pretty routine, as many smaller registries have gone out of business over the years and the larger registries have picked up their clients. Agents will also tattoo an alternate number at the client’s request, such as a social security number. It is advisable, however, that pet owners use the tattoo registry’s assigned number system, since these markings are easy to trace and well known among shelter workers.

Tattoo Agents

A good reason for using a tattoo registry is the tattoo agent—an independent tattooer affiliated with a registry. Tattoo-A-Pet has thousands of tattoo agents across the country. Most of these agents are already involved in some aspect of pet care (e.g., pet grooming, pet store owners, breeders, veterinarians, etc.) and so are experienced in handling animals.

- You can locate a qualified tattoo agent by contacting Tattoo-A-Pet. (See “[Resources/Registries and Recovery Services](#).”) Simply tell them your zip code or area code and they will put you in touch with an experienced tattoo agent near you.

The Tattooing Procedure

The tattooing process is safe, humane, virtually painless and bloodless, and no anesthetic is necessary. (See [figure 9](#).) The entire procedure takes about three minutes to complete. You will also receive an ID tag with a toll-free number when you sign up.

You can view a video clip demonstration of the tattoo procedure at www.tattoo-a-pet.com.

For dogs, the tattoo is inscribed in an inconspicuous spot, usually on the belly or sometimes under the thigh of the hind leg. Cats are generally tattooed on the inner ear. Wherever it is, the fur around the tattoo should be trimmed regularly so the tattoo is always visible.

A cat or dog can be tattooed from the age of six weeks, but pet owners are urged to have it done at no later than eight weeks. The longer your pet is not tattooed, the longer it has no permanent link to you. One of the problems with tattooing that is often raised is that tattoos can fade and become unreadable as a pet grows. The folks at Tattoo-A-Pet say that if the tattoo is done properly, there should be no fading. This is one more reason to go to a professional tattoo agent who is experienced in tattooing animals. If a letter or number does fade or blur, many agents will touch it up free of charge. In any event, it is better to have a tattoo that is a little faded than to have no form of permanent identification at all, as faded tattoos are difficult but not impossible to trace.

Tattooing Other Pets

Tattooing is not just for cats and dogs. Almost any type of animal can and has been tattooed. Ferrets, hamsters, goats, rabbits, and even horses can and have been tattooed.

Cost of Tattooing

The cost to tattoo your dog with Tattoo-A-Pet is currently \$35.00. This fee includes the tattoo (from one of their authorized tattoo agents), an official registration/ownership certificate, a hotline tag and other registration materials (quite inexpensive when compared to the peace of mind you will gain). All registrations with Tattoo-A-Pet last for the lifetime of the pet, and the company offers a rate for single pets as well as a breeder rate. The breeder/kennel rate at Tattoo-A-Pet is also available to people who own multiple pets, allowing you to register as many pets as you own or ever will own.

Pros and Cons of Tattooing

There are some people who complain that tattoos can fade, that many shelter workers are reluctant to get close enough to look for a tattoo for fear of being bitten, or that a tattoo can be deliberately altered by someone. While these criticisms have some validity, the positive aspects of tattooing far outweigh the potential negatives. As already stated, fading should not happen if the tattoo is done properly, and it can always be touched up. As for fear of being bitten, shelter workers are justifiably cautious because they know that while a pet may be docile and happy-go-lucky at home, it may, out of fear in a strange environment, attempt to bite. Most shelter employees, however, are very good at handling frightened stray animals, and it is part of their standard procedure to check stray animals for tattoos. It's certainly possible that someone would go as far as deliberately altering a tattoo, but we believe that would be a rare exception. In any event, this is just another good reason to use multiple forms of identification!

Figure 8

Miracles Can Happen

“It could never happen to me. That’s what I have always thought . . . I have always been so conservative, especially where safety and security are concerned, almost to the point of fanaticism, or so I thought.

“Well, the worst happened to me. Star, my nine-year-old Sheltie, slipped through a gate a service man had left open. She was in a new neighborhood and frightened. At some point, she must have panicked and just started running.

“I had delivered over 2,000 flyers . . . I was getting so upset that I usually started weeping when I was talking to people.

“Star was lost a few days before Halloween. On Monday, February 13 (nearly four months later), I got a call from the National Dog Registry. That evening, the rescuers drove to my house and brought Star home to me.

“Star was rescued by some young men who were four-wheeling in the desert 40 miles southwest of where she had been lost, and had found her in a leghold trap almost dead. Star was with the mother of the rescuer for two weeks and nursed back to health. At two weeks she was given a bath and the tattoo was found.

“There are no words to describe my emotions at this point . . . But the bottom line is, without the (National Dog Registry registered) tattoo, I would never have gotten her back. The whole ordeal has made a believer out of me. Dog-people friends of mine from all over the country are now making sure their dogs are tattooed (and registered with NDR). THE SYSTEM WORKS!!! And MIRACLES CAN HAPPEN, BECAUSE ONE HAPPENED TO ME!!!”

—Brenda Mileski
Henderson, Nevada

*Reprinted with permission from the National Dog Registry.
Copyright 1995. All rights reserved.*

[\[Back\]](#)

Figure 9

Why Pet Tattooing is Painless

According to the National Dog Registry, which has been tattooing pets for more than 40 years, “Pet tattoos are not like human tattoos, because there are distinct dimensional differences between the structures of human and animal skin. On humans, the tattoo must go much deeper into the skin, because of the thickness and uneven shape of the epidermis. Canine and feline epidermis is much thinner... Because the tattoo needle does not reach the nerve endings of a cat or dog’s skin, it is not possible for your pet to feel pain. The only sensation your pet will feel is the vibration of the marker.”

Reprinted with permission from the National Dog Registry. Copyright 1997. All rights reserved.

[\[Back\]](#)

Microchips

A microchip implant is a tiny micro-electronic device consisting of a silicon chip and a passive coil all inside a bio-compatible glass pellet about the size of a grain of rice. It’s actually a tiny radio transponder. The chip is encoded with a unique, unalterable identification number. Once the chip is implanted under the skin, you simply register the chip with the registry company, who will keep all of your contact information in its database in much the same way other registries keep track of tattoo numbers and tag identification numbers.

If your pet is taken into a shelter or to a veterinarian, scanned, and a chip is discovered, they will contact the registry who in turn will contact you. Chips can even be traced to the veterinarian who did the implant. This is important because if you have a chip implanted and your pet escapes before you’ve had a chance to register it (or if you move and forget to update your contact information with the chip registry), the chip can be traced to the veterinarian who implanted it. She or he will likely know how to get in touch with you. A microchip could also save your pet from becoming a research experiment, as new grant and funding requirements are forcing research laboratories to scan animals that have been slated for experimentation or research for microchips.

The two leading microchip implant companies on the market today are [AKC Reunite](#), the lost pet registry run by the [American Kennel Club](#)

and [AVID](#) (American Veterinary Identification Devices), which is the maker of the FriendChip and reports impressive results with its PETrac Recovery Network system. (See “[Resources/Registries and Recovery Services](#).”)

Although microchipping pets has been done for over a decade now, it is only since the invention of the universal scanner that it has become widely accepted. In the earlier days of microchipping, there were several different chip manufacturers, each requiring a different scanning device. The situation was so bad that it was not unusual for shelter workers to have to use four different scanning devices on a single animal. Fortunately for us and our animals, the industry has standardized, with the development and subsequent proliferation of the universal scanner. More than 100,000 universal scanners have been sold to veterinarians and animal shelters, or given away through free scanner placement programs.

Also, the newer chips employ anti-migration technology which allows the chip to adhere to the tissue almost immediately, thus preventing it from moving around under the skin, which was a major drawback of earlier chips.

With the incompatibility and migration problems solved, and with organizations like The [American Kennel Club](#) endorsing the technology, consumer as well as professional confidence is growing. More and more veterinarians are doing implants and promoting the use of chips.

Implanting the Microchip

The microchip is injected into the animal with a large-gauge needle, and is normally implanted between the shoulder blades. The whole procedure only takes a few seconds and is painless, so no anesthetic is necessary. Because the chip is biocompatible, there is virtually no chance of an allergic reaction or rejection.

As soon as an animal is weaned – six to eight weeks – it can have a microchip implanted. A good time to do it is at the time of initial vaccinations. In fact, many veterinarians will offer a discount if it is done at the same time as another procedure. And your pet is never too old to be implanted with a microchip. Many animal shelters microchip the animals they adopt out to new homes. The fee for microchipping is included in the adoption cost.

Cost of Microchipping

The price is set by the veterinarian and is separate from the cost of registration, so it is best to call for an exact price. However, it is very affordable and well within the means of most people. The registration is

for the lifetime of your pet, and enrollment is free for dogs that assist the disabled. Also, many shelters offer discounts to people who adopt animals if they microchip them.

Where to Get a Microchip

This is a medical procedure and must be done by a veterinarian or under a veterinarian's supervision. Your veterinary clinic or animal shelter should be able to give you a referral in the event that they don't do implants themselves. Or you can simply call AVID at (800) 336-AVID (2843) or log onto the AVID website at www.avidid.com to locate a participating veterinarian in your area. Or contact AKC Reunite at (800) 252-7894 and speak with a microchipping consultant, or visit their website at www.akcreunite.org. Shelters may offer inexpensive microchipping services or special microchipping clinics. (See "[Resources/Registries and Recovery Services](#).”)

Microchipping Birds, Ferrets, and Other Animals

Other animals that are commonly microchipped are ferrets, pygmy goats, horses, and birds. They make a smaller chip that can be implanted in birds as small as five ounces (about the size of a Cockatiel), while standard chips are used for larger exotic birds such as Macaws.

Pros and Cons of Microchipping

The most common objection to microchips is that not every scanner can read every type of chip. This is still a problem in some places, but this issue is rapidly being resolved.

Another objection has been that the microchips tended to move after being implanted, sometimes far from the implant site. As mentioned above, this may have been true in the early days of this technology; new chips employ anti-migration technology and begin to bond with the animal's tissue within hours of implantation.

A third criticism is that shelter workers simply don't scan for chips. Again, this was more widely true when the technology was first being introduced. Microchip implants are endorsed by so many organizations now that professional animal handlers routinely scan for chips when they pick up a stray.

The simple fact is that microchips work and are responsible for tens of thousands of lost pet recoveries. (See [figure 10](#).) You need to be aware, however, that no identification method is one hundred percent effective. Therefore, none of the methods described in this book should be relied on alone, but rather used in conjunction with other identification methods.

Figure 10

“Tails” with Happy Endings from Companion Animal Recovery (CAR)

Tashatu, Female Rottweiler Dog

“Tashatu was stolen over a month before turning up at the dog pound. Before Tashatu was euthanized, they scanned a HomeAgain microchip and we called the owner. The owner was thrilled and said without the chip she would have never gotten her dog back!”

Bucc, Male Labrador Retriever Dog

“We received another call on a lost Labrador Retriever. This is our most recovered dog breed by far with over 5,000 successfully recovered Labs and counting. In this recovery, Bucc wandered approximately 40 miles until he was found in Valrico, Florida. The owner was in St. Petersburg, and she was amazed! So were we!”

Bob, Male Domestic Long-Hair Cat

“Bob had been lost for two weeks when the owner called us. We told her not to give up hope because she had had Bob implanted with the HomeAgain microchip from her vet. Two months later, we received a call at midnight that Bob had been found. The owner cried for several minutes when we gave her the wonderful news. We cried too!”

Reprinted with permission from The American Kennel Club Companion Animal Recovery. Copyright 2001. All rights reserved.

[\[Back\]](#)

DNA

Having your pet’s DNA profile done is yet one more way of identifying your pet. Your pet’s DNA “fingerprint” is a permanent, tamperproof record of your pet’s identity that is every bit as conclusive as the DNA evidence that can positively link a suspect to a crime or exonerate him. Similarly, a DNA profile of your pet can win you a victory

in court if your pet is ever lost and claimed by someone else refusing to return the animal. (See [figure 11.](#))

In 1996, the AKC began an ambitious DNA pilot program and now has the largest collection of DNA profiles involving purebred dogs ever assembled. While DNA services are not required in order to register your dog, two of the largest kennel clubs—The American Kennel Club and The United Kennel Club—do offer DNA services to members only. Some companies also offer DNA services direct to consumers.

DNA and Pets

There are companies that provide a variety of other services related to the DNA profiling of pets, such as parentage verification, various breeding applications, and permanent methods of identification. However, due to a lack of sufficient public interest, the DNA profiling choices available to pet owners are limited.

If you do end up needing to prove ownership of a lost or stolen pet, a DNA profile of your pet is unalterable proof. Remember that a DNA profile should complement other forms of pet identification.

DNA Sample Kits

DNA sampling is safe, easy, and noninvasive, and you can take the sample yourself simply by rubbing the inside of your pet's mouth with the cotton swab provided in the DNA sample kit. All you have to do is mail it back to the service after you collect the sample. It's that simple. Two to four weeks later, you'll receive a DNA certificate that bears your name, your pet's name, and a DNA registration number.

Owners of exotic birds should request a kit from an avian service. (See "[Resources/DNA.](#)") When your kit arrives, you carefully clip one of your pet's nails, draw a single drop of blood, and place it in the small plastic test tube provided with the kit. You then mail the sample back to the company, where it will be stored until analysis may be needed in the future. Note that even small amounts of blood loss from a tiny bird can be quite serious; therefore, you may want to consider having this done by someone with experience, such as your veterinarian.

Cost of DNA Profiling

DNA profiling may be less expensive than you think. Prices vary from service to service, so call, or review the company's websites for exact prices. In addition, some kennel clubs offer discounted rates for members.

Figure 11

DNA Analysis and the Legal System

“DNA-based evidence is admissible in court. DNA analysis has been used in criminal cases to link a suspect to the crime scene; it has been used in civil trials to provide evidence for paternity disputes; and it has been used for evidence in lawsuits against suspected animal smugglers.

“Can DNA-based identification satisfy the “burden of proof?” In civil cases, the burden of proof is less exacting than in criminal trials. Once DNA-based evidence has been admitted into a civil case, it is essentially a matter of satisfying a jury. This will undoubtedly vary from case to case and, naturally, other lines of evidence play a role in the final outcome.”

Reprinted with permission from PE Zoogen The ABCs of Animal Genetics. Copyright 1997. All rights reserved.

[\[Back\]](#)

DNA Leaves No Doubt

In May of 1993, the *Newburyport Daily News* in Massachusetts reported that an animal control officer captured a bright yellow and green Macaw. Within a few days, three people (ultimately five) stepped forward to claim the bird, which was valued at \$2,500 dollars. All of the claimants offered various evidence: photos, lost bird reports that they had filed, etc. The first claimant showed up with photographs, and animal control confirmed that the woman had indeed reported her bird as missing some time before. A second claimant had, only a week prior, reported a bird stolen from the lobby of his hotel, and yet a third insisted that the bird belonged to him and that he could prove it beyond any doubt because he had a DNA profile on his bird. A sample of the bird’s DNA was sent off to the lab. Meanwhile, two more people came forward claiming the bird belonged to them. When the DNA test results came back and were compared with the results of a DNA test the gentleman had done several years before, it was conclusive. There was no doubt that the bird belonged to him.

Index to Resources

[DNA](#)

[ID Tags](#)

[Registries and Recovery Services](#)

DNA:

We do not have personal experience with any of the labs. Talk to your veterinarian if you have questions.

BioPet Laboratories

www.biopetlabs.com

DDC Veterinary

www.vetdnacenter.com

ID TAGS:

Also See: ID Tag Registries Resources

ID tags come with each tag registry

Doctors Foster and Smith

www.drsfostersmith.com

Fastags.com

www.fastags.com

GoTags.com

www.gotags.com

GPS Tag

www.pettracker.com

Small Pet Necklace Tag

www.tagxpress.com

Tagxpress.com

www.tagxpress.com

The Tile App

This is a great item to add to your pet's collar to aid in your prevention and recovery efforts.

www.thetileapp.com

REGISTRIES AND RECOVERY SERVICES:

(Also see: Lost Pet Recovery Services, Pet Search Dogs and Pet Consultants and Places that List Lost/Found Pets)

ID Tag Registries:

ID tags come with each tag registry.

The American Pet Association

Guardian Tag

www.myapaonline.org

AKC Reunite

www.akcreunite.org

Fidofinder.com

www.fidofinder.com

PET*ID Short Cut Home

www.petid.com

Smart Tag

www.idtag.com

Pet Health Alert

Health alert tag & registry.

www.pethealthalert.com

Tattoo Registries:

Tattoo-A-Pet

Phone: (800) 828-8667.

www.tattoo-a-pet.com

AKC Reunite

www.akcreunite.org

Microchip Registries:

AVID (Friend Chip)

Microchip consultant: (800) 336-2843.

www.avidid.com

AKC Reunite

Microchip consultant: (800) 252-789.4

www.akcreunite.org

HomeAgain

www.homeagain.com

LostFoundPets.us

Microchip searches and listing services.

www.lostfoundpets.us

Facial Recognition Registries:

Finding Rover

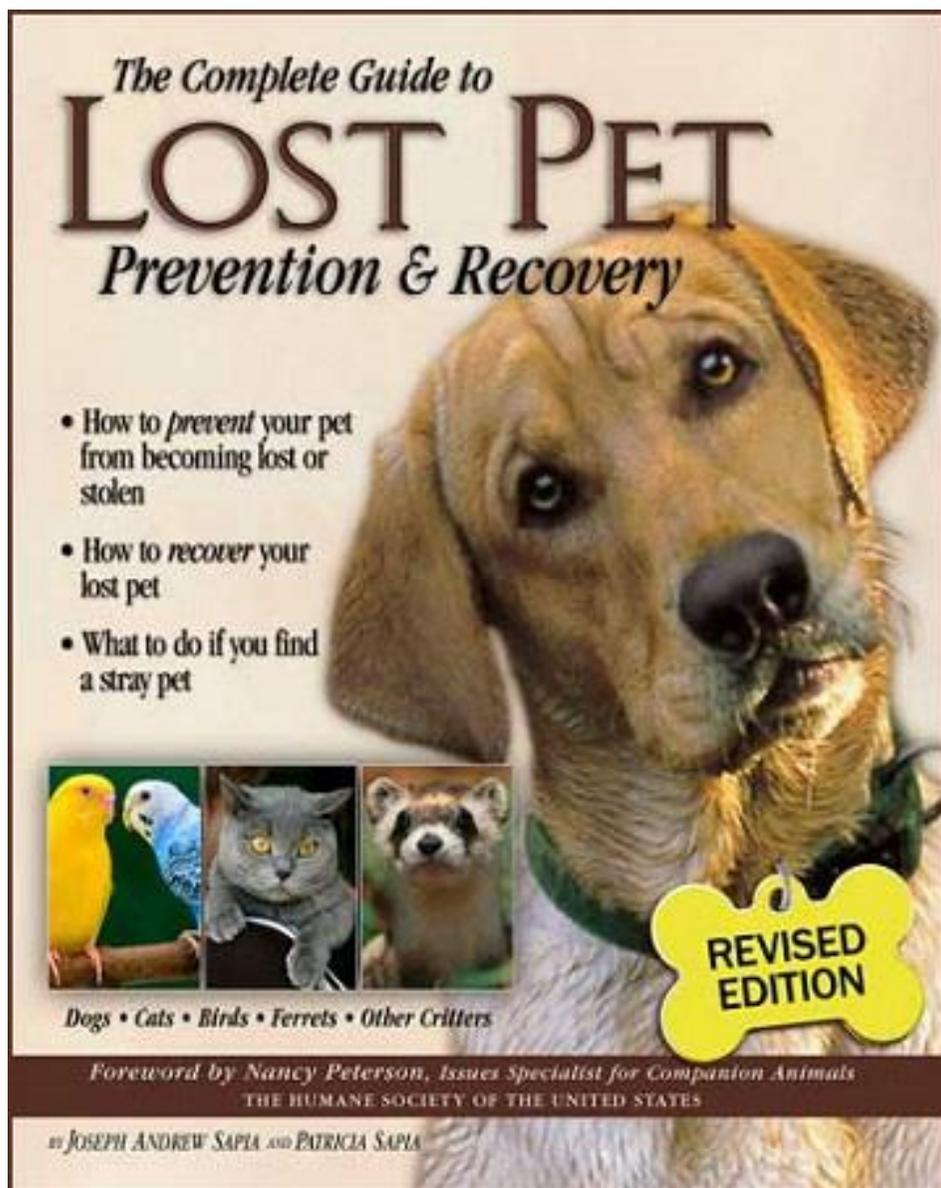
www.findingrover.com

PiP App

www.petrecognition.com

Proper Pet Identification is an excerpt from [*The Complete Guide to Lost Pet Prevention & Recovery 2nd \(Revised Edition\)*](#).

Now available on [Amazon](#) as a Kindle and as a paperback.



The Complete Guide to
LOST PET
Prevention & Recovery

- How to *prevent* your pet from becoming lost or stolen
- How to *recover* your lost pet
- What to do if you find a stray pet



Dogs • Cats • Birds • Ferrets • Other Critters

REVISED EDITION

Foreword by Nancy Peterson, Issues Specialist for Companion Animals
THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

by JOSEPH ANDREW SAPLA and PATRICIA SAPLA

The Complete Guide to Lost Pet Prevention & Recovery shows owners of dogs, cats, birds, ferrets, and other critters how to prevent their pets from becoming lost or stolen, how to recover lost pets, and what to do if they find a stray pet.

What the experts are saying about [The Complete Guide to Lost Pet Prevention & Recovery 2nd \(Revised Edition\)](#).

Now available on [Amazon](#) as a Kindle and as a paperback.

Martha Armstrong, Senior Vice President for Companion Animals and Equine Protection, The Humane Society of the United States: “This book is a must-read for everyone who is concerned about the ultimate safety of pet animals.”

Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association: “a remarkably comprehensive guide”.

PetSmart: “a must for every home with pets”.

Cat Fancy: “make a place on your bookshelf and buy it”.

Dog Fancy: “a valuable directory of resources”.

Publishers Weekly: “an excellent resource”.

Animal Sheltering Magazine: “well-researched and well-written”.

Dumb Friends League: “this book will make a difference for you”.

Google Books Review: “an invaluable resource for all pet owners”.

Midwest Book Review: “an absolute ‘must’”.

Dog World: “amazingly comprehensive . . . buy this book now”.

Foreword magazine—Book of the Year Award!

To see the complete table of contents [click here](#).

To see our complete reviews [click here](#).

Download the Kindle edition now.

Or buy the paperback 284 page 8x10 in. glossy cover edition. It will make a great addition to your pet reference library. If your pet is ever lost you will have ready access to this great resource. It also makes a perfect gift! Visit <http://www.lostpetfoundpet.com> to learn more.