

## WHAT TO DO IF A DOG IS ON THE RUN

Employing the wrong techniques gives the owner or concerned citizen as much chance of capturing a scared and panicked dog as they would a coyote. In many cases, dogs that have been on the run for several days have the mindset of a feral dog and cannot be treated the same as they would in your backyard, your home, or on leash in the neighborhood. They do not behave the same when they are on the run and panicked. Humans, all humans, are a perceived threat until the dogs can calm down, turn their noses back on and mentally process that they are looking at a non-threatening human, even their owner. They will run from owners, they will run from everyone.

Generally, after a dog has been missing 24 - 48 hours, calling out to, patting your leg, yelling a dog's name, walking directly at them, chasing, following, or making direct eye contact, most often triggers a flight response. This can also be perceived as a challenge and can trigger a fight response and cause a dog to bite. Scared dogs will not recognize the owner's voice; will not bark to reveal its hiding location unless they are stuck or trapped. Even then, there's no guarantee that they will alert you or other animals to their location. Searches must be done quietly and calmly with a small group. Using a squeaky toy occasionally as you walk around can peak a hiding dog's curiosity and is not perceived as a threat. It can lure them out of hiding. Employing large, loud groups to search woods and fields has been proven to drive dogs out of the area. If the dog has found a safe zone that is central to food, water, and shelter that has been devoid of humans, the safe zone can often be lost by trampling through it. Finding and preserving a dog's safe zone is how we can lure them to safety, into the arms of the rescuers or humane traps.