

Just One Person Can Make A Difference



We are seeing an increasing number of missing/lost/stolen pets, (mostly dogs), here in the Autauga/Prattville area. It only takes one person to act if they find, see, witness, or have knowledge of any information that can be helpful in finding and returning these pets to their

families.

There are several social media sites set up for informing the public of these situations. Also, please check with the local animal shelters in the tri-county area to report a pet that is lost or one that has been found. If we all work together, hopefully we can have happy reunions for these sweet animals and their families.

Together we can make a difference!



Springtime: The Seasonal Effects On Our Pets

By: Tracy Savage-Barron

With the onset of Spring and warmer weather, many dangers could be lurking around the corner from our furry friends. Here are some common seasonal pests to be on the lookout for when it comes to protecting our pets this season.

Allergies... In the spring, people seek relief for their own allergies as well as relief for their pet's. Yes, dogs and cats frequently suffer from allergies, which can cause constant chewing, licking, wheezing, sneezing, and scratching, making them absolutely miserable. Your veterinarian may try to help manage your dog's allergy by numerous methods including injections, oral medications, nutritional management, topical shampoos, dips, ointments and environmental treatments. At home, you can provide plenty of clean water and make them as comfortable as possible. Do not hesitate to call your vet if questions or problems arise.

Heartworms... Are spread through mosquitoes and can be prevented with medication provided by your vet. Because this disease is frequently fatal, you should take the steps your veterinarian recommends to keep your pets safe.

Fleas... These tiny little pests can be quite irritating to our

animal friends. Preventative measures taken before you see fleas can save you and your pet a lot of discomfort. However, if your pet spends any time outdoors, getting fleas is pretty much inevitable. It's almost impossible to totally eradicate fleas, therefore flea control is the best solution to this problem. Be sure to vacuum frequently, change and wash bedding often, treating with topical or oral products and keeping animals groomed and cleaned are all ways to help control these little nibblers.

Ticks... Ticks spread diseases such as Lyme Disease, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, Ehrlichiosis, etc. People and pets can contract these diseases, so ticks are a serious concern. During tick season, check your pet daily for ticks. Prompt removal can help prevent the spread of tick-borne illness (wear gloves when removing ticks). Keep the grass around your home cut short, and spray the yard with pesticides for tick removal.

All seasons seem to have their effects on the animal kingdom, but, it seems that the warmer months really wreak havoc on them. So, let's do our part to help give as much relief as we can to our furry friends (inside and out), during this time of the year. And, always provide fresh water and shelter from the heat.

Inside this issue:

We Need Your Help	1
Seasonal Effects On Our Pets	1
Noise Anxiety In Pets	2
VMRC Information	3
Pet Funnies	3

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Does Your Pet Suffer from Noise Anxiety?



A clap of thunder, the sound of rain, sound of a train, fireworks, hammering or banging... these are all types of sounds that can cause your pet to have noise anxiety or phobias.

It is unknown why some pets become afraid of noises such as thunder and fireworks; it is a common problem in dogs, but less so in cats. The fear can soon become a phobia, which is defined as a persistent, excessive, and irrational fear response. In the case of thunderstorms, pets may also be fearful of storm-associated events such as a change in barometric pressure, lightning, electrostatic disturbances, and even smells associated with the storms. Noise phobias can include fear of thunderstorms, fireworks, gunshots, and even the sound of birds.

A recent study has found that certain breeds of dogs have an above average risk of developing noise phobias. These include some of the working and sporting breeds such as Collies, German Shepherds, Beagles, and Basset Hounds. This survey was quite small, however, and more research needs to be done in this area. The study also found that dogs who had separation anxiety were more likely to also have noise and thunderstorm phobias. A noise phobia may be traced to a particular bad experience of a noise, but often, no triggering event can be ascertained. In almost all instances, the fear of noises and storms escalates, worsening with each exposure. Soon the pet may become fearful of similar sounds or events associated with the noise. For example, a pet afraid of thunder may also become afraid of rain, or a dog afraid of gunshots may show fear at the mere sight of a hunting rifle.

The owner's attitude can influence the severity of the fear. For instance, if owners themselves are nervous during storms, noise phobias in their pets may occur more often or become more severe. Similarly, if the owner attempts to overly comfort the animal, the animal interprets it as confirming there really is something to be afraid of. The over petting or comforting is really positive reinforcement of an undesirable behavior. Pets are very aware of the mental state of their owners. If you are worried or nervous, this will add to the pet's fear. Your pet will look to you for direction, so keep an "upbeat" and "in charge" attitude.

Some of the signs of noise anxiety in your pet may include the following:

- Hiding (most common sign in cats)
- Urinating
- Defecating

- Chewing
- Panting
- Pacing
- Trying to escape (digging, jumping through windows or going through walls, running away)
- Drooling
- Seeking the owner
- Expressing anal glands
- Not eating
- Not listening to commands
- Trembling or shaking
- Dilated pupils
- Vocalizing (barking or meowing)

There is no guarantee that a noise phobia can be totally resolved, but in many instances the fear can be managed effectively. The effectiveness of treatment depends on a number of factors including the severity of the phobia; how long the pet has had it; whether it is ongoing, seasonal, or unpredictable; and the amount of time the owner is willing to commit to the behavior modification techniques.



The first thing to remember is that you should refrain from giving excessive attention or punishment for fearful behavior. The pet should never be punished for showing fear. This will only increase his anxiety level. Instead, project confidence, and give your dog attention in the form of playing, grooming, or other activities your pet enjoys. Some pets feel more comfortable in a small space such as a crate or a small room like a bathroom (run the fan and leave the lights on). Some pets seek out the safety of the bathtub or shower during a storm. (Some have hypothesized that a pet may feel less static electricity if on tile or porcelain.) If the pet is comfortable in a crate, the crate can be covered with a blanket to add to the feeling of security. The door to the crate should be left open and the pet should not be confined to the crate, which could dramatically increase the stress level. Some pets, especially cats, may find that a closet or area under the bed makes a good retreat.



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**Coming SOON!!!
Look for us and LIKE us
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The AP VMRC (Autauga Prattville Veterinary Medical Reserve Corps) is a team off of the AP MRC (Autauga Prattville Medical Reserve Corps) and is under it's umbrella. However the Autauga County EMA (Emergency Management Agency) is the organizing sponsor. This team will help in time of disaster/emergency with the following but not limited to, helping families find lost pets, assist in gathering any stray or displaced pets/animals, care of the pets/animals during and after the disaster/emergency and assist veterinary professionals with any medical/first aid.

There are several areas that we are currently working on to help strengthen this team and hope to have some of them finalized by the next AP VMRC newsletter to be able to share with you. However, if you are interested in joining this team please contact us at the Autauga County EMA office.



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