

Tracking Your Dog

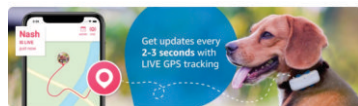
By Susan Prokopenko

Not that long ago, the two Irish Pirates (Morgan and Bonny) left the property when a visitor left the gate open upon leaving. They were found on the following property north but not until a terrifying hour had passed and they had taken a tour of the neighbourhood!

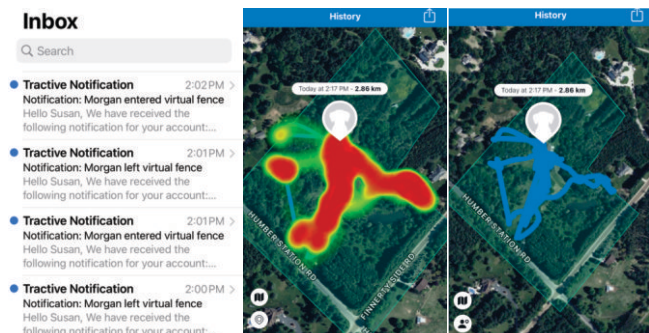


I recently bought a dog GPS tracker to give me more visibility in case this happens again. I chose the one called “Tractive GPS Tracker for Dogs” from Amazon (\$70 CDN).

To send the GPS location of your dog to your smartphone requires a GPS subscription. For the first year, I bought the Premium one for \$120 a year (\$10/month); the cheapest one is a two-year subscription for \$144 (\$6/month).



The Tractive LTE GPS dog tracker lets me view my dog’s location and the heat signature of their movements in real-time as monitored on my iPhone, with updates every 2-3 seconds, as shown in the photos below. It also allows you to set a virtual fence around the area, in this case, my 18 acres, and will send notifications to your email when the tracker leaves the virtual fence. (Note that Tractive GPS connects directly to cell networks, independent of whatever wireless provider you use for your smartphone, and also will work with Android).



It works reasonably well for the price – you can get ones costing \$1000 or so, which are much more reliable. I found you had to ensure it was working and connecting to your smartphone before letting the dog loose! It also sometimes went “crazy,” showing a breach of the virtual fence when none was breached, something to do with the dog’s speed and GPS over-tracking. There are now some which use both GPS and LTE (Cell).

I also evaluated two following devices.



The Apple AirTag works through crowdsourcing on the Apple Network. In my case, useless as there are no crowds on my 18 acres so not picked up by any other iPhone. Would be better in a city. It uses Bluetooth and requires other iPhones to allow it to be picked up using “Find My” - like what they were doing with Covid notification (of which I got none!). It only shows you where and when the last contact was.

I also purchased a Samsung Smart Things Tracker offered by Bell (cost \$100+tax and \$5/connection per month waived for the first year). It only seems to find things within 400 ft; that is, it tells you that the object is within a 400 ft circle. My house is in the centre of a 1000 x 1000 ft area so 400 ft is not helpful!

In summary, I recommend the Tractive device. I bought one Tractive device and subscription and put it on one dog when letting them out. I run them 2 x 2 and the dogs stick close together. At least I know the direction to search in!

