

Unusual number of Arctic snowy owls seen in US

5 December 2013, by Mary Esch

Snow-white owls with luminous yellow eyes are thrilling bird-watchers as the magnificent Arctic birds set up winter residence at airports, fields and beaches in the United States far south of their normal range.

Snowy owls, familiar to children as Harry Potter's pet, made a noticeable appearance in the northern half of the U.S. in 2011.

This year, bird-watchers are reporting on eBird.org snowy owl sightings at dozens of locations across the Midwest, Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states as far south as Cape Hatteras, N.C.

The [owls](#) live in the Arctic, but when their population spikes or lemmings are scarce, many must fly south to find food.

Lillian Stokes, a co-author of Stokes field guides, says a few [snowy owls](#) are seen in the U.S. every year, "but this year is phenomenal."

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