



# BCT Stewardship Journal: November 2024

## Snowy Owls are Back!

The snowy owl is making its way down south, but “south” for this white-feathered bird is not as far as you may think. This beautiful, yellow-eyed owl resides in the Arctic tundra to breed and catch prey. Come November, some of these birds fly as far south as New England, including Cape Cod! The number of “Snowies” that migrate this far south varies year to year. This owl is an irruptive species, meaning that when there are unfavorable conditions in its home territory it will travel elsewhere in search of food. When migrating, snowy owls are drawn to open areas that resemble their native tundra. Lucky for us, open areas along the coastline are perfect for these skilled hunters.



A young snowy owl readies for flight at Sandy Neck Beach in Barnstable.

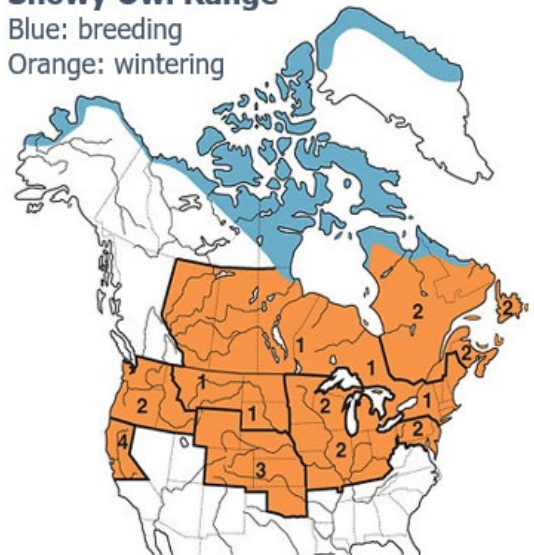
*Image source: Steve Heaslip, 2021/Cape Cod Times File*

Snowy Owls are a treat to see and definitely stand out from the rest of our feathered friends. While most owls are nocturnal, the snowy owl can be seen in the daytime. With their majestic wingspan and tendency to fly close to the ground, this bird has been referred to as a “photographers dream”. While Cape Cod has gone some years without seeing any, this year we are in luck. Mass Audubon reported a snowy owl sighting in Provincetown on November 19<sup>th</sup>.

Look for these birds sitting on or near the ground in wide-open areas. You are likely to see them perched on crests of dunes, fenceposts, and telephone poles. Mass Audubon recommends keeping at a distance of at least 50 yards when observing an owl and to always watch the owl’s behavior to ensure you are not disturbing it. With that being said, have your camera ready, you may be one of the lucky ones to catch a photo!

### Snowy Owl Range

Blue: breeding  
Orange: wintering



*Image source: The Birds of North America Online and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.*