

GGN - Geopark Annual Report 2024

1. GEOPARK IDENTITY

Geopark name, country, regional Network: Katla UNESCO Global Geopark, Iceland, European Geoparks Network

Year of inscription / Year of the last revalidation: 2011 / 2021

Representative photo with caption (from the most important event this year)



Photo taken when The Víkurfjara beach project, a joint research project between Víkurskóli school and Katla Geopark, in collaboration with Katla Centre, received the South Iceland Education Award for 2023. The award was presented by the President of Iceland, Mr. Guðni Th. Jóhannesson, during the annual meeting of the Science and Research Fund of South Iceland that the University Centre of South Iceland presides over.

2. GEOPARK FIGURES

Number of Geopark staff: 1 staff full-time until 1st of August 2024. 1 staff (geoscientist) full time all year, new project manager from 1st of August. 3 staff part-time representatives for each municipality (30% each). 1 technical staff (20%).

Number of visitors:

Reynisfjara geosite received 446.044 visitors in 2024, Fjaðrárgljúfur geosite had 383.627 visitors and Fimmvörðuháls trail had 4.198 visitors.

Number of Geopark events: Clarify the events held by management body and cooperative organization:

- Katla Geoparks' Geoweeek was held with many partners and non-partners participating, for example by hosting events, hikes, and offers on products and services. (10 events in total).
- The Geopark hosted a visit from 1st year tourism students from the University of Iceland, where they were given a presentation about the geopark (1 event).
- The Geopark hosted a visit from 2nd year tourism students from the University of Iceland, where the students took drone footage of Sólheimajökull outlet glacier and its surroundings (1 event).
- The Geopark hosted numerous school group visits from the US (3 events).
- Cooperating with the Birdlife Association, Environment Agency, and numerous nature conservation advocates, in promoting the protection and saving of fulmar birds, making a video and education marketing poster about how to safely rescue and release fulmar fledglings from the roads.
- Presented initial results of the research project at the Icelandic Road and Coastal Administration Research conference (1 event).
- Online voting during Geoweeek on which mountain should become the mountain of Katla Geopark (1 event).
- The annual Hjörleifshöfði trail run was held by Katla Centre and the Geopark during Katla Geopark's Geoweeek. (1 event)
- Unveiling of new information signs about the Víkurfjara beach student's research project at the halls of Icewear in Vík (1 event)
- A presentation about the geology of Skaftárhreppur Municipality was held by the Geopark during the Geoweeek (1 event)

Number of school classes realize Geopark educational programmes:

2 lower secondary schools (all classes) are active participants with the Geopark through the geoschool program, both located within Katla Geopark.

2 elective courses taught at Víkurskóli lower secondary school about geology.

2 active students research project in cooperation with the Geopark, called Víkurfjara Beach Project at Víkurskóli school and a drone monitoring project at Sólheimajökull with Hvolsskóli school.

Number of Geopark press release: 3

Landinn, a tv show in Iceland, came for a visit and took an interview with the Geopark and the students. The interviews were then aired on the RÚV TV station, a open and national tv station in March.

A newspaper article, online and printed, about the grant from the Icelandic state to the two Icelandic Geoparks of Katla and Reykjanes.

A book chapter in the book “Geohazards in European Geoparks”

3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES

Major achievements in 2024

The Geopark and Víkurskóli School received the South Iceland Education Award for 2023.

The geopark received its first ever research grant, from the Icelandic Road and Coastal Administration Research fund.

A new project manager was hired to oversee the project „Science driven tourism in Katla Geopark“.

The book chapter „Geohazards in Katla UNESCO Global Geopark“ was published in the book „Geohazards in European Geoparks“.

New geological map made for the Geopark.

Contribution towards GGN - Networking and participation

EGN magazine 22: “Our environment, our responsibility”

EGN 25th newsletter: Collaboration in Education

EGN 26th newsletter: English speaking council, the first of its kind in Iceland

Participation in the international mountain day, online article about Mt. Hafursey

Visit to Estrela UGGp, part of an EEA Grant: Building Bridges

Participation in the Geodiversity Day, online posters, and education about geodiversity

Participation in the 17th European Geopark Conference in Reykjanes UGGp, along with hosting two field trips to Katla Geopark prior to the Conference

Participation in the Volcano Day, online posters, and education about volcanoes

Participation in the International Day for disaster risk reduction with an online poster and advertisement about the new book of Geohazards in European Geoparks.

Volcano Day, online posters, and education about volcanoes

Management and Financial Status

- The geopark was funded by the municipalities in 2024, and from October the geopark received 10 million Icelandic krona funding for two years from the Icelandic government. The geopark is managed by a board composed of stakeholders and representatives for the area.

Geoconservation

- Active participation with institutions and municipalities concerning managing and conservation of sites.

- Receiving various grants for geosite infrastructure development (through municipalities) both from Framkvæmdasjóður and from Landsáætlun (governmental funding schemes for protection and management of natural sites), including for Kvernufoss geosite, Gljúfrabúi geosite and Efra-Hvolshellar geosite.

Sustainable tourism (Geotourism)

- Weekly education on geosites within the geopark, called “Geosite of the week”, published on Instagram and Facebook
- The geopark started a project looking into a project about Geotourism and geoscience tourism.

New education programmes on geoconservation, sustainable development and disaster risk reduction

- Start of an annual research project, a drone monitoring project at Sólheimajökull, with Hvolsskóli school.
- Start of slope stability monitoring (informal) near Sólheimajökull outlet glacier.

Strategic partnership

- Several new partnerships with companies within the geopark. Gravel Travel, Vík Expeditions, Magma Hotel, and Eagle Rock Tours.
- Growing relationship with the coastal Administration of Iceland, cooperation in research of coastline erosion.

Promotional activities

- Open presentations about geology within the geopark.
- Visits to numerous companies within the geopark.
- Participation in a couple of trade fairs to promote the science driven tourism project.
- Fulmar Rescue promotion in August and September.
- Active participation in South Iceland Professional Tourism Group.

4. CONTACTS

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