

# GGN - Geopark Annual Report 2023

## 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 at the presentation about the geology of Mýrdalshreppur Municipality which was held by the Geopark. It was the first of several presentations about the geology of Katla Geopark in 2024.

## 2. GEOPARK FIGURES

**Number of Geopark staffs:** 2 staff (both geoscientists) full time until 1<sup>st</sup> of May. 1 staff (geoscientist) full time after 1<sup>st</sup> of May. 3 staff part-time representatives for each municipality (30% each). 1 technical staff (20%).

**Number of visitors:**

Reynisfjara geosite received 538.608 visitors in 2023. Sólheimajökull geosite had 67.123 visitors, Fjaðrárgljúfur geosite had 285.281 visitors and Laugavegur-Þórsmörk trail had 9.151 and Fimmvörðuháls trail had 4.859 visitors.

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

- Katla Geoparks' Geoweek was held with many partners and non-partners participating, for example by hosting events, hikes, and offers on products and services. (9 events in total).

- The annual Hjörleifshöfði trail run was held by Katla Centre and the Geopark during Katla Geopark's Geoweek. (1 event)
- A presentation about the Geology of Rangárþing eystra Municipality was held by the Geopark. (1 event)
- A presentation about the geology of Mýrdalshreppur Municipality was held by the Geopark. (1 event)
- A presentation about the geology of Sólheimajökull area was held by the Geopark at Icelandic Mountain Guides headquarters. (1 event)
- The Geopark hosted a visit from tourism students from the University of Iceland. (1 event)
- 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.

#### **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.

1 active students research project in cooperation with the Geopark, called Víkurfjara Beach Project (Víkurfjöruverkefnið in Icelandic).

1 geology guide about Mt. Lambafell was made by the geopark for Hvolsskóli lower secondary school, for their annual hike of the mountain.

#### **Number of Geopark press release: 5**

An article about a new information site near Þorvaldseyri and Eyjafjallajökull volcano. National newspaper and online.

3 articles on concerns about the financial status of Katla UGGp

A science article in the paper Geoconservation Research

### **3. GEOPARK ACTIVITIES**

#### **Major achievements in 2023**

The new website of Katla Geopark launched, replaces an old and outdated site.

Presentation by students about the Víkurskóli elementary school research project, The Víkurfjara Beach Project, for the President of Iceland, Mr. Guðni Th. Jóhannesson.

Release of the first scientific paper of Katla Geopark, "Volcanic Features within Katla UNESCO Global Geopark" in the paper "Geoconservation Research", a special issue on "Volcanic Geological sites in UGGp European Geoparks".

#### **Contribution towards GGN - Networking and participation**

EGN newsletter: Input in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Newsletter on the Icelandic Geoparks Forum, and in the 24<sup>th</sup> on the final conference in an EEA-funded project on Geoparks and Geotourism.

EGN magazine 21: Mountain hiking in Hvolsskóli Geoschool, Katla Geopark.

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

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

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

Visit to Holy Cross Mountains UGGp in Poland, part of a geotourism project with the Krakow Technical University and Holy Cross Mountains UGGp.

### **Management and Financial Status**

- The geopark was funded by the municipalities in 2023 and 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).

### **Sustainable tourism (Geotourism)**

- Weekly education on geosites within the geopark, called “Geosite of the week”, published on Instagram and Facebook
- 16 rocks of different rock types placed on a new information site near Þorvaldseyri and Eyjafjallajökull volcano. In 2024, signs with information about the rocks, along with texts on the 2010 eruption in Eyjafjallajökull, will be put up there as well.
- The geopark is looking into a project about Geotourism and geoscience tourism. Received a generous grant from SASS (Association of Municipalities of South Iceland) to start the project in 2024.

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

- 2 elective courses taught at Víkurskóli lower secondary school taught for the first time. Among other things the students learn is disaster risk reduction in their immediate surroundings.
- 2 presentations about the geology within the geopark were held.

### **Strategic partnership**

- No new partnerships during the year.

### **Promotional activities**

- Open presentations about geology within the geopark
- Visits to numerous companies within the geopark.

#### **4. CONTACTS**

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