



# Ramsar Sites Information Service

## Annotated List of Wetlands of International Importance

# Iceland

6 Ramsar Site(s) covering 128,666 ha

### Andakill Protected Habitat Area

Site number: 2,129 | Country: Iceland | Administrative region: Borgarfjardarsysla County

Area: 3,086 ha | Coordinates: 64°33'21"N 21°47'11"W | Designation dates: 18-02-2013

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Andakill Protected Habitat Area (Andakill, Hvanneyri). 18/02/2013; Borgarfjardarsysla County; 3,086 ha; 64°33'41"N 021°46'09"W. Nature Reserve, Habitat Protected Area. A complex wetland located at the estuary of the fjord Borgarfjörður, with two rivers, Hvítá and Andakilsá, and the lake Vatnshamravatn, as well as alluvial floodplains, marshes, and managed hayfields. The shallow and rich freshwater lake hosts numerous species of waterbirds, among them shelducks *Tadorna tadorna* and the White-Tailed Sea Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*. When the tide is low, extensive mud, sand and gravel bars provide important feeding grounds for waterbirds. There is a peninsula into the fjord which consists of rows of rocky outcrops and extensive freshwater bogs. Along the river Hvítá there are alluvial plains created by regular floods containing high sediment loads and providing an important resting, feeding and breeding area for such wetland birds as the Greenland White-fronted goose *Anser albifrons flavirostris*. On the other side of the peninsula, the floodplains of river Andakilsá include extensive wetlands and marshes primarily used for livestock grazing. The main hydrological value of the wetland is flood control, sediments and nutrients retention, carbon storage, and shoreline stabilization. Within the site there is the campus of the University of Agriculture of Iceland and a wetland centre for research and awareness raising for visitors. Ramsar Site no. 2129. Most recent RIS information: 2013.

### Grunnafjörður

Site number: 854 | Country: Iceland | Administrative region:

Area: 1,470 ha | Coordinates: 64°23'02"N 21°55'41"W | Designation dates: 24-06-1996

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Grunnafjörður. 24/06/96; 1,470 ha; 64°23'N 21°55'W. Nature Reserve. River mouth, estuary and seabay consisting of mudflats rich in invertebrates, supporting musselbanks and saltmarsh vegetation. The site is an important staging, wintering and breeding area for large numbers of various species of waterbirds. Human activities include recreation and collection of eider down, and farming and salmon fishing in the surrounding area. Ramsar site no. 854. Most recent RIS information: 1996.

## Gudlaugstungur Nature Reserve

Site number: 2,130 | Country: Iceland | Administrative region: Húnavatnshreppur

Area: 40,160 ha | Coordinates: 64°57'N 19°16'W | Designation dates: 18-02-2013

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Gudlaugstungur Nature Reserve (Friðland í Guðlaugstungum). 18/02/2013; Austur-Húnavatnssýsla County; 40,160 ha; 64°57'00"N 019°16'00"W. Nature Reserve. One of the most extensive wetland areas in the central highlands of Iceland, comprising an extensive mosaic of sedge fens, palsa mires and drier heathland. The site is crossed by small streams and glacial rivers, and small ponds are abundant. The wetland area is surrounded by species-rich dwarf willow scrub heath land with high cover of mosses and lichens, which provide diverse habitats for plants, animals and birds. Guðlaugstungur-wetland harbours the largest breeding colony of the Pink-Footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus* in the world, estimated at 13,600 pairs in 2002 or over 25% of the national and 18-21% of the world population of this species. There are no major humanmade structures within the reserve area, with the exception of a gravel road and a mountain cabin in the northwestern part. Farmers currently hold traditional grazing and fishing rights. The area is unhabited but receives seasonal tourists during the summer. Soil erosion and overgrazing are the main factors threatening the ecological character of the site. Ramsar Site no. 2130. Most recent RIS information: 2013.

## Myvatn-Laxá region

Site number: 167 | Country: Iceland | Administrative region: Sudur Thingeyjar Sysla

Area: 20,000 ha | Coordinates: 65°30'50"N 17°03'38"W | Designation dates: 02-12-1977

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Myvatn-Laxá region (part). 02/12/77; 20,000 ha; 65°40'N 017°00'W. Added to the Montreux Record, 4 July 1990, removed from the Record, 16 June 1993. Protected Area. Part of a vast lake, river and marsh complex fed by both cold and thermal springs. The site supports freshwater marshes, a rich submerged flora, algal communities, *Betula* woodland, bog and moorland. The abundant invertebrate fauna provide food for large numbers of waterbirds. The site is especially important for two duck species that, in Europe, nest only in Iceland. Virtually the entire European population of *Bucephala islandica* breeds in the area (2,000 pairs). The site is important for various other species of nesting waterbirds and large numbers of molting Anatidae. Human activities include farming, fishing, mining for diatomite, hydro- and geothermal electricity generation, and tourism. Subject of a Ramsar Advisory Mission in 1992. Ramsar site no. 167. Most recent RIS information: 1992.

## Snaefell and Eyjabakkar Area

Site number: 2,131 | Country: Iceland | Administrative region: Fljótisdalshreppur

Area: 26,450 ha | Coordinates: 64°43'N 15°31'59"W | Designation dates: 18-02-2013

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Snaefell and Eyjabakkar Area (Snæfells- og Eyjabakkasvæðið). 18/02/2013; Norður-Múlasýsla County; 26,450 ha; 64°43'00"N 15°32'00"W. National Park; Habitat/Species Management Area; Nature Reserve. Situated in the northeastern boundaries of the Vatnajökull icecap, in the outwash plain formed by the river Jökulsá í Fljótssda where it flows through the depression to the north of Eyjabakkajökull glacier. Small ponds and lakes, sedge and sandy fens, palsa mires, moist sedge and moss heath are the main habitat types. The site is a key area for moulting of Pink-Footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus* during summer. The most common breeding birds of the Eyjabakkar wetlands and surrounding heathlands are Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*, Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*, dunlin *Calidris alpina* and Snow Bunting *Plectrophenax nivalis*. There are no major humanmade structures within the reserve area with the exception of the new Fljótssdalsvirkjun power plant. The main land uses within the site are grazing and some tourism. Some of the factors affecting the site's ecological character are soil erosion and global warming, which is reducing glaciers, permafrost and palsa formations. Ramsar Site no. 2131. Most Recent RIS information: 2013.

## Thjörsárver

Site number: 460 | Country: Iceland | Administrative region:

Area: 37,500 ha | Coordinates: 64°37'11"N 18°45'16"W | Designation dates: 20-03-1990

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Thjörsárver. 20/03/90; 37,500 ha; 64°35'N 019°15'W. Added to the Montreux Record, 4 July 1990, removed from the Record, 16 June 1993. Nature Reserve. The upper part of the Thjórsa River, tundra meadows dissected by numerous glacial and spring-fed streams, the site includes abundant pools and lakes and extensive marshland dominated by sedges. The site is surrounded by a desert composed of volcanic sand. It is the most important nesting area in Iceland for the goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*, supporting about 10,000 pairs. Ramsar site no. 460. Most recent RIS information: 1992.