



**Icelandic Museum  
of Natural History**

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# Icelandic Museum of Natural History

**Dr. Hilmar J. Malmquist director**

Natural sciences and social engagement  
EMYA 2022 Conference

Estonian National Museum, Muusemi Tee 2, Tartu, Estonia. May 4 – 7, 2022

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# The background

- **IMNH established in 2007.** One of 3 „Central“ Museums, state-run
- **The roots** go back to Copenhagen 1887 and Reykjavík 1889, .... foundation of **The Icelandic Natural History Society.**  
*Main purpose: „establish Natural History Museum in Reykjavík, owned by the nation, to maintain a permanent exhibition on Icelandic nature for the public.“*
- 1951. **Icelandic Institute of Natural History** established, sister-institute to IMNH
- In 2018 IMNH opened its first exhibition, *Water in Icelandic Nature*, in private housing/facilities
- **At last, in 2024–25 IMNH will get new headquarters ....**  
... after more than 130 years of struggle and waiting!

# The Pearl, Reykjavík

## *WATER in Icelandic Nature*

- First permanent exhibition by IMNH. Opened December 1st 2018
- Cooperation with the private sector
- Visitors 2019: 188.191 (~ 500.000 in the Pearl) – record
- **RedDot** Design Award 2019 with **Gagarín** experience design studio

# Why Water?

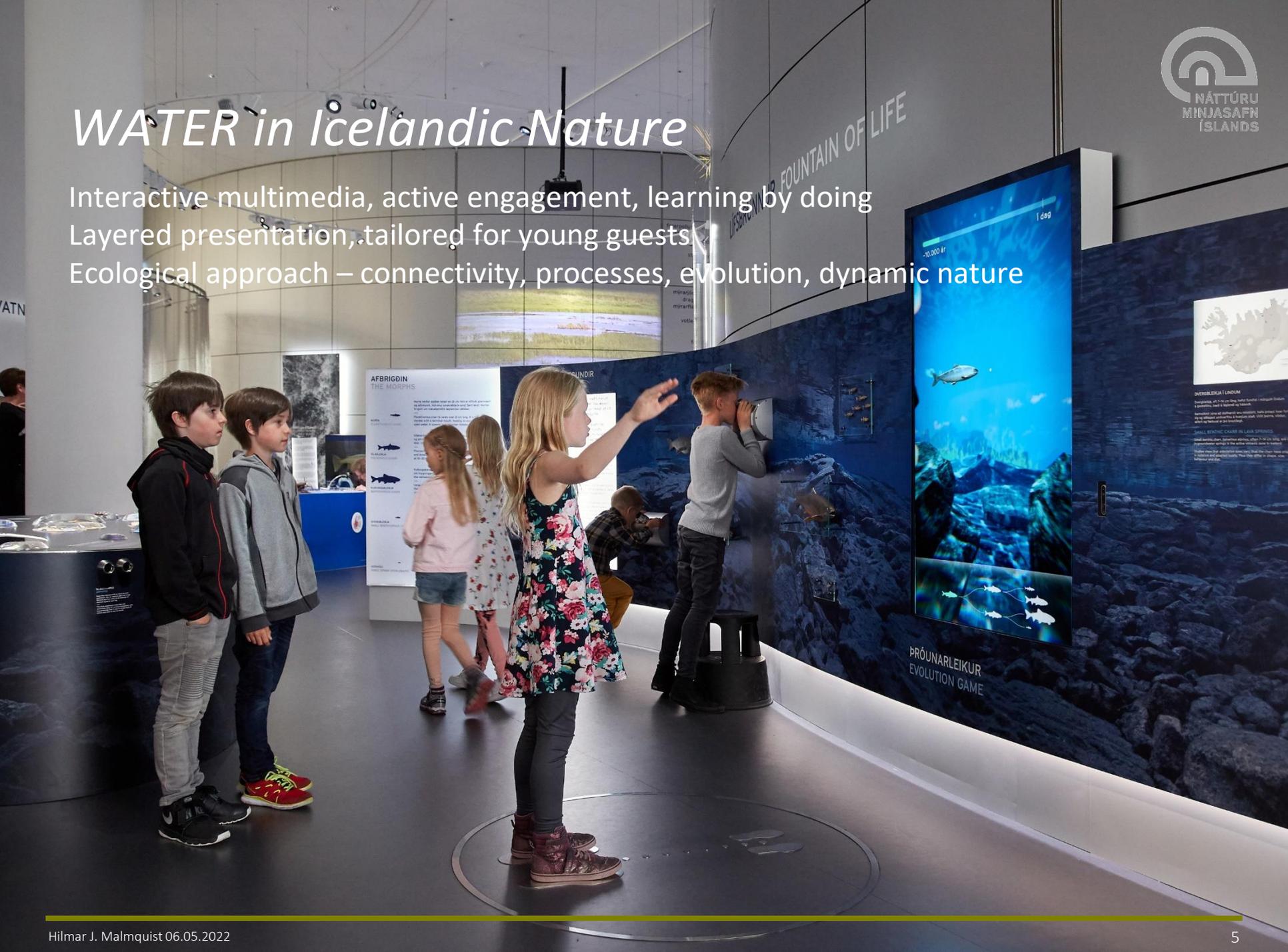
- Life originated in water, it is a remarkable element
- Not a commercial commodity, but a natural heritage (Ban Ki-moon)
- Freshwater is one of Iceland's most precious natural element
  - Very rich in water, diverse types and unique, rich intraspecific biodiversity
  - Multitude of ecoservices in addition to electricity, geothermal heat etc.
- The Pearl building was designed for hot water storage
- The exhibiton reflects the diversity, beauty and functions of water, thereby enhancing environmental awareness, respect and love for Nature
- Visitors take home better understanding of ecological interactions and processes and the importance of sustainable use of water

# WATER in Icelandic Nature

Interactive multimedia, active engagement, learning by doing

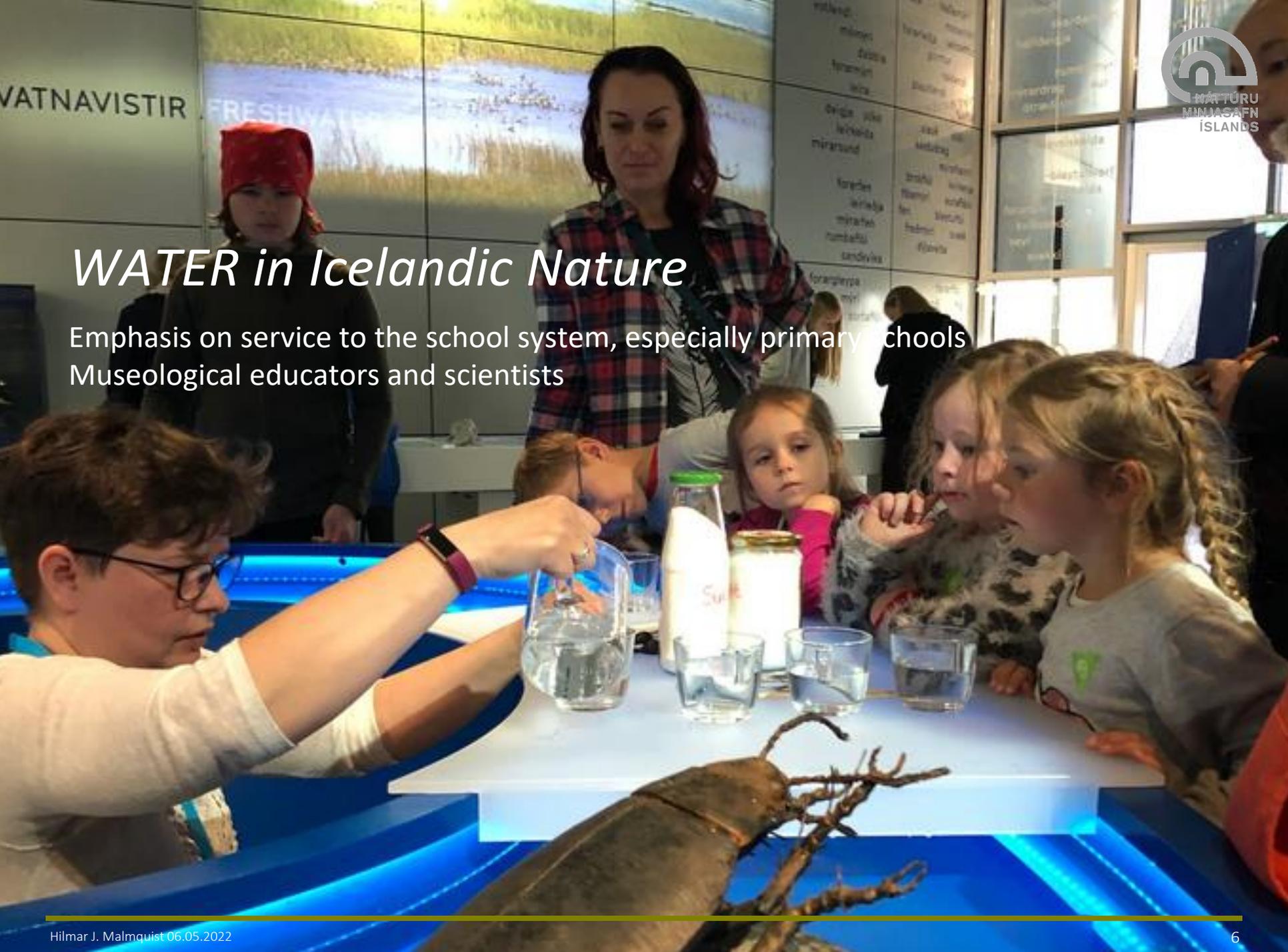
Layered presentation, tailored for young guests

Ecological approach – connectivity, processes, evolution, dynamic nature



# *WATER in Icelandic Nature*

Emphasis on service to the school system, especially primary schools  
Museological educators and scientists



# *WATER in Icelandic Nature*

- Children oriented
- Family friendly
- Special events every month
- Outdoor events



## The Ecoscope

# *Scientific RESEARCH*

Integrated part of IMNH activity

Reliable, novel dissemination of information rests on high quality work

Main subjects: Biodiversity, Freshwater ecology, Natural philosophy and history



**BIODICE**

**BIODICE** Promoting greater awareness and understanding of biodiversity in Iceland



[biodice.is](http://biodice.is)

# Scientific RESEARCH

Integrated part of IMNH activity

Reliable, novel dissemination of information rests on high quality work

3D scanning project on North Atlantic right whale (*Eubalaena glacialis*) from Iceland  
Collaboration with Danish Natural History Museum/Univ. of Copenhagen and others  
*aDNA* study on zooarchaeological remains of *E. glacialis* in Iceland/under way

# THANK YOU!

The future is bright!

Welcome to Iceland, to our forthcoming headquarters  
to be opened in 2024–25