



**Icelandic Museum
of Natural History**

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WATER in Icelandic Nature

Náttúruminjasafn Íslands

The Icelandic Museum of Natural History (IMNH)

EMYA/judge Christophe Dufour visit
Reykjavík, June 24th 2021

The roots

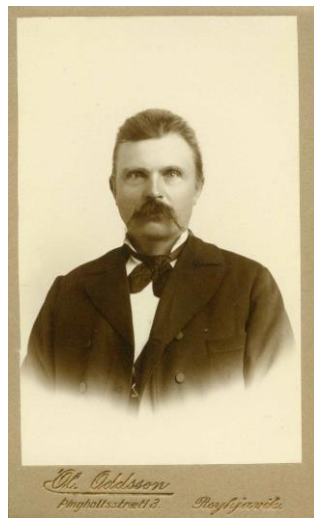
- IMNH founded in 2007 – offspring of Icelandic Society of Natural History (1887-89)
- One of 3 principal Museums (+ National Museum and National Gallery)
- Act of IMNH 35/2007 and Museums Act 141/2011
- Main role: Information sharing/dissemination:
 - „shed light on nature in Iceland, natural history, nature conservation and use of natural resources by exhibits, publication and other means of information sharing, in order to ensure sustainable use, public access and preservation of the natural heritage in Iceland.“
- Main tasks/activity:
 - collection, documentation, preservation, research, dissemination

The roots

- Icel.Nat.Hist.Soc. founded 1887-89 in Copenhagen/Reykjavík
- Main objective:
...„maintain a permanent exhibition on Icelandic nature for the nation...”
- The founders studied at **University of Copenhagen** with access to University Zoological Museum, The Royal Natural History Museum and, from 1862, The Zoological Museum



Benedikt Gröndal writer, nat. hist.
(1826–1907)



Björn Bjarnarson attorney
(1853–1918)

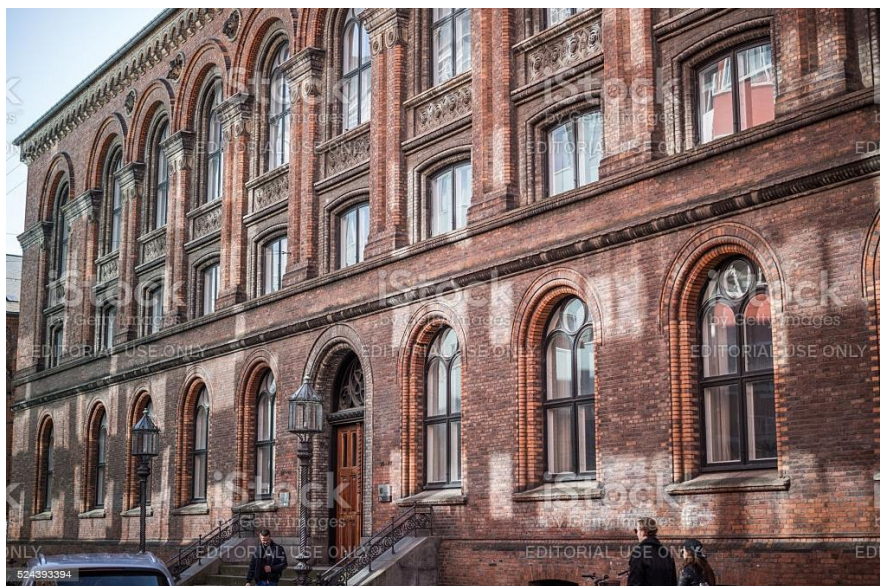


Stefán Stefánsson botanist
(1863–1921)



Þorvaldur Thoroddsen geogr., geol.
(1855–1921)

The roots



The Zoological Musuem
University of Copenhagen
Late 19th century. Centre of nat. hist.



The roots



In Iceland

During 1889–2008 the precursor to IMNH relocated 8 times.
Sister-institute of IMNH (Icel. Inst. of Nat. Hist.) established in 1951,
but facilities for exhibitions insufficient until 2018!

WATER in Icelandic Nature

VATNIÐ í Náttúru Íslands



First permanent exhibition from scratch by IMNH
Opened December 1st 2018
Visitors 2019: 188.191 (~ 500.000 in the Pearl) – record .
Visitors 2020: ca. 30.000 due to COVID-19

Collaboration/Operation

- The Pearl is leased from Reykjavík city by private company *The Pearl Museum Ltd.*
- Contract with IMNH to operate on 350 m² 2nd floor for 15 years
- Starting cost (~ 2 million EURO) financed by IMNH/State + yearly running cost (ca. 130–170.000 Euro), including salaries, maint. of equipm. and temp. exhibitions.

IMNH pays no rent and is free of el., heating, water, cleaning and security
+ gets annual payment from *The Pearl Museum Ltd.* amounting to salaries of 2 teachers/guides.

- WIN-WIN situation! – cooperation between private sector and state

Why WATER?

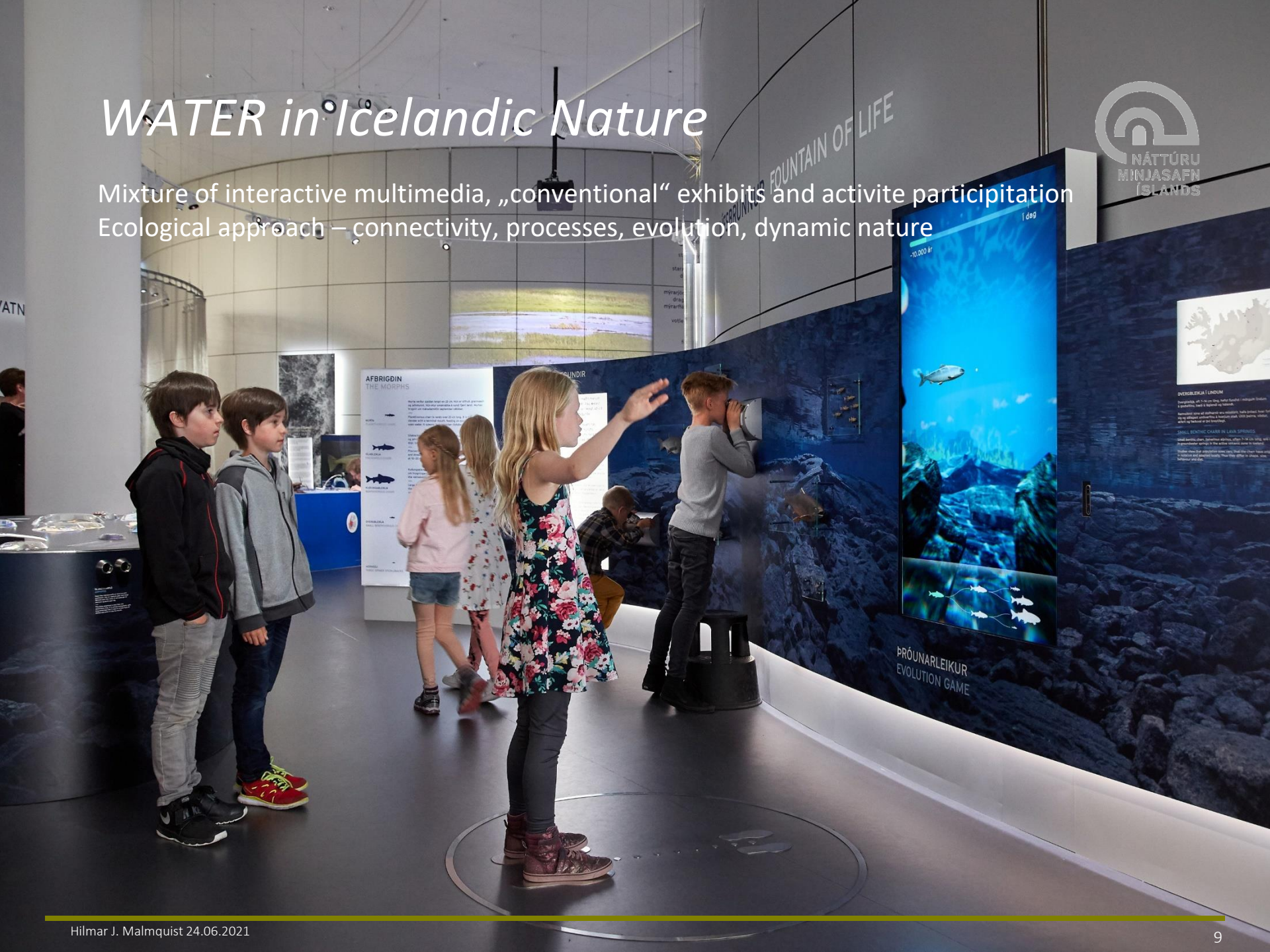


Our vision and mission

- Life originated in water
- Not a commercial product, but a natural heritage
- Freshwater is one of Iceland 's most precious natural resource
 - diverse types of water – unique types - high biodiversity
- The exhibition shall reflect the diversity, beauty and wonders of the resource, thereby enhancing environmental awareness and respect for Nature
- Visitors take home better understanding of ecological interactions and processes and the importance of sustainable use of freshwater

WATER in Icelandic Nature

Mixture of interactive multimedia, „conventional“ exhibits and active participation
Ecological approach – connectivity, processes, evolution, dynamic nature





WATER in Icelandic Nature

- Intensive service to the schoolsystem - organized visits, teachers, prepared projects, interactive projects, special events during weekends, e.t.c.
- Presentation of info connects with criterias in the School Curriculum
- Main aim: Nature literacy and respect for nature

Examples of subjects:

Freshwater as a resource; Biodiversity in freshwater; Water and climate change; Water as a shaping factor of landscape; Water and weather; Evolution of life.

Outreach/Dissemination

- Website (nmsi.is) – Facebook – Instagram
- Scientific papers/journals
- Publication
 - *Náttúrufræðingurinn* (*The Natural Historian*). Periodical published with the Icel.Nat.Hist. 4 issues a year.
 - Books: *Jón Guðmundsson lærði* (2016), *Sigurður Þórarinnsson. Mynd af manni* (2021)



Research

Basic, academic research fundamental to museums

Two main fields:

- Icelandic nature – characteristics, peculiarities - biodiversity, climate change
- Natural history – literarian and historian studies – nature vision in the medieval

Projects

- BIODICE (biodice.is), national/international collaboration
 - 1) Research; 2) Transfer of knowledge to education and policy for conservation and management;
 - 3) Capacity building for research and transfer of knowledge.

Emphasis on freshwater ecology

intraspecific diversity – plasticity - speciation
fish, invertebrates, waterfowl, ecosystems

- Zooarcheology - archeology

Walrus studies (*Odobenus rosmarus*) + „Arfabót“ & „Stöð“
N-Atlantic right whale – collaboration with Nat.Hist. Denmark
Remains of oldest wooden boat in Iceland – Lake Þingvallavatn

- Medieval Nature vision

Jón Guðmundsson lærði (1574–1658) – place in Nordic/European scientific history
Nature vision in old literature (Edda verses, Book of Settle. + others), 9.–16. century



„Molecules to Ecosystems“
5 year program 2022-26

Future plans

New IMNH headquarters in Seltjarnarnes

To be opened 2023



Future plans

New IMNH headquarters in Seltjarnarnes

Protected area – nature reserves

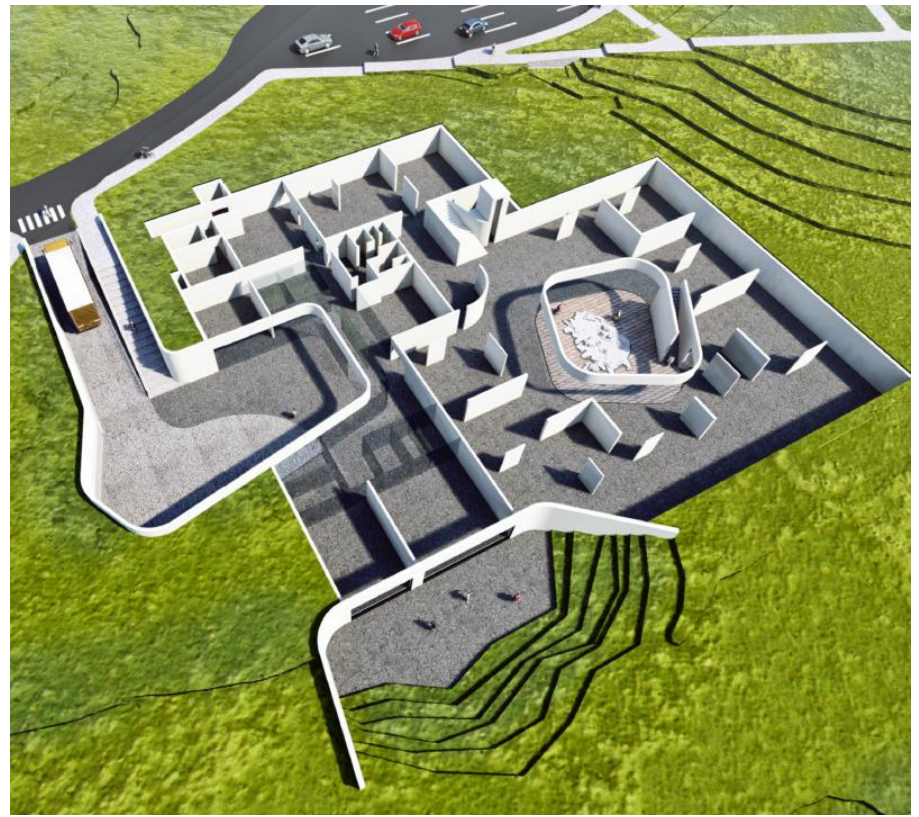


Future plans

New IMNH headquarters in Seltjarnarnes

Areal: 1363 m² (937 + 426 m²) + Gróttta + enlargement (+1.800 m²)

Start-up cost 10–12.5 million Euros. To be opened 2023.



Other plans

STEINARÍKIÐ – mineral collections
Exhibition by IMNH in Breiðdalsvík, E-Iceland
Start-up cost ~ 240.000 Euro. To be opened in 2022?

Other plans

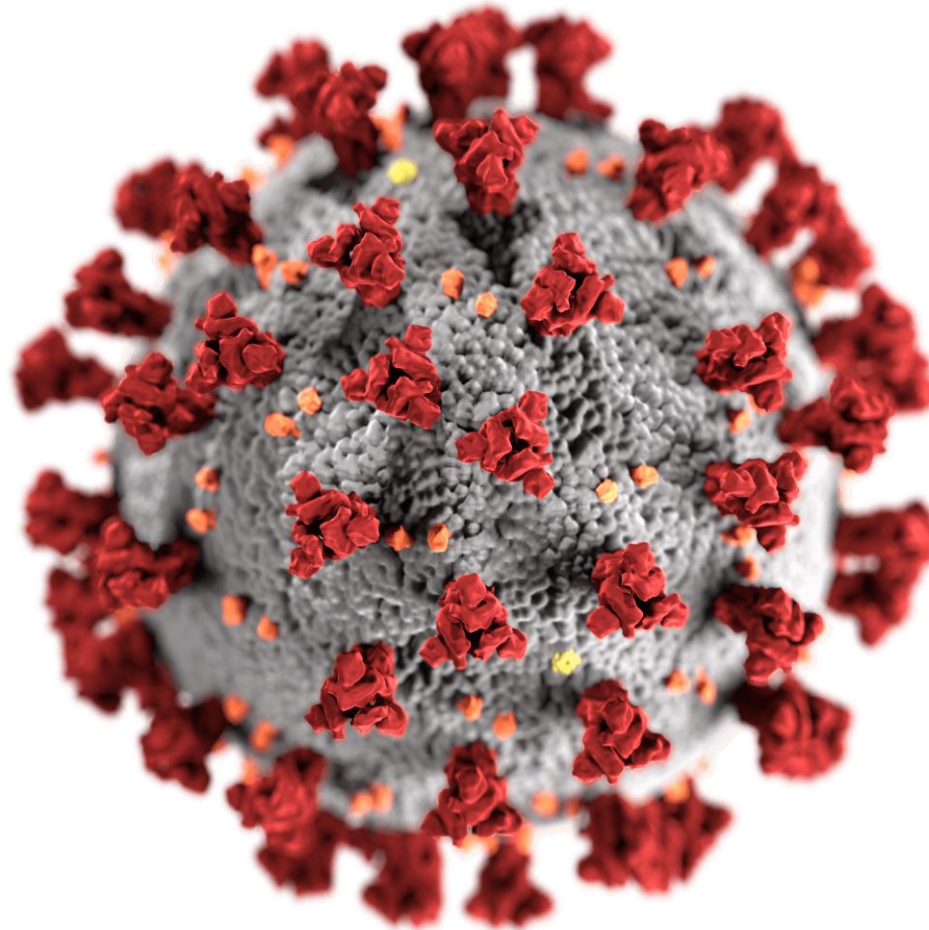


Volcano Musuem – Eldfjallasafnið

Stykkishólmur, Snæfellsnes, W-Iceland

For sale! IMNH strives to acquire it

THANK YOU!



SARS-COV-2 virus
Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2