

# Global Geoparks in Iceland

*Global Geoparks are listed in order of acceptance into the Global Geoparks Network*

[Katla](#)..... 2

[Reykjanes](#)..... 4

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# Katla Global Geopark, Iceland

**Geology:** Katla Global Geopark is situated on the Eastern Volcanic Zone (EVZ), one of the most volcanic active areas in Iceland representing high geological diversity of great geological heritage value. The geographic region is characterized with central volcanoes, eruption craters and fissures, lava fields, SW-NE trending hyaloclastite ridges (formed by lava flowing or intruding into water) and tuff mountains. Glaciers are prominent in the landscape covering the highest mountains, and volcanoes in the area, with subsequent glacial formations: outlets, moraines and ice-dammed lakes, glacial rivers and outburst floods generally associated with subglacial geothermal areas or subglacial eruptions forming outwash plains. Sites of international importance: Eyjafjallajökull central volcano, Katla, central volcano covered by Mýrdalsjökull ice sheet, it's complex volcanic system including the eruptive fissure swarm Eldgjá which formed Álftaver pseudocraters (rootless vents). Mýrdalssandur outwash plain which is a result of subglacial Katla eruption. Lakagígur cone-row which formed the lava fields Skaftáreldahraun. Langisjór lake, Fögrufjöll and Grænifjallgarður, hyaloclastite ridges.

**Geography:** The geographic location of Katla Global Geopark is in central South Iceland, reaching from the south coast with its black beaches into the highlands in the north with the majestic glaciers. The area stretches from the town Hvolsvöllur in the western most part of the Global Geopark to the glacier Skeiðarárjökull in the eastern part. The boundaries of Katla Global Geopark are the same as the boundaries of the three municipalities within the area of the park, namely: Skaftárhreppur in the east, Mýrdalshreppur in the centre and Rangárþing eystra in the west.

**Education and Sustainable Development:** Over 40 information panels have been made and positioned at 24 geosites, along with improved hiking trails and sign systems. Educational trails have been formed and enhanced with a number of educational panels. Three hiking maps of the area have been developed and are sold within Katla Global Geopark. Numerous courses have been held by Katla Global Geopark including courses on local guiding, local innovative food products and other courses emphasizing sustainable development of the area. The area is now a popular tourist destination, especially for foreign tourists, and initial efforts to increase whole year employment within the tourism industry by developing the geopark concept have already been quite successful. Katla Global Geopark has also been influential in encouraging product development of local produce.

## Dates

Year of GGN membership entry: 2011

Subsequent Revalidation: 2017

## Official Website

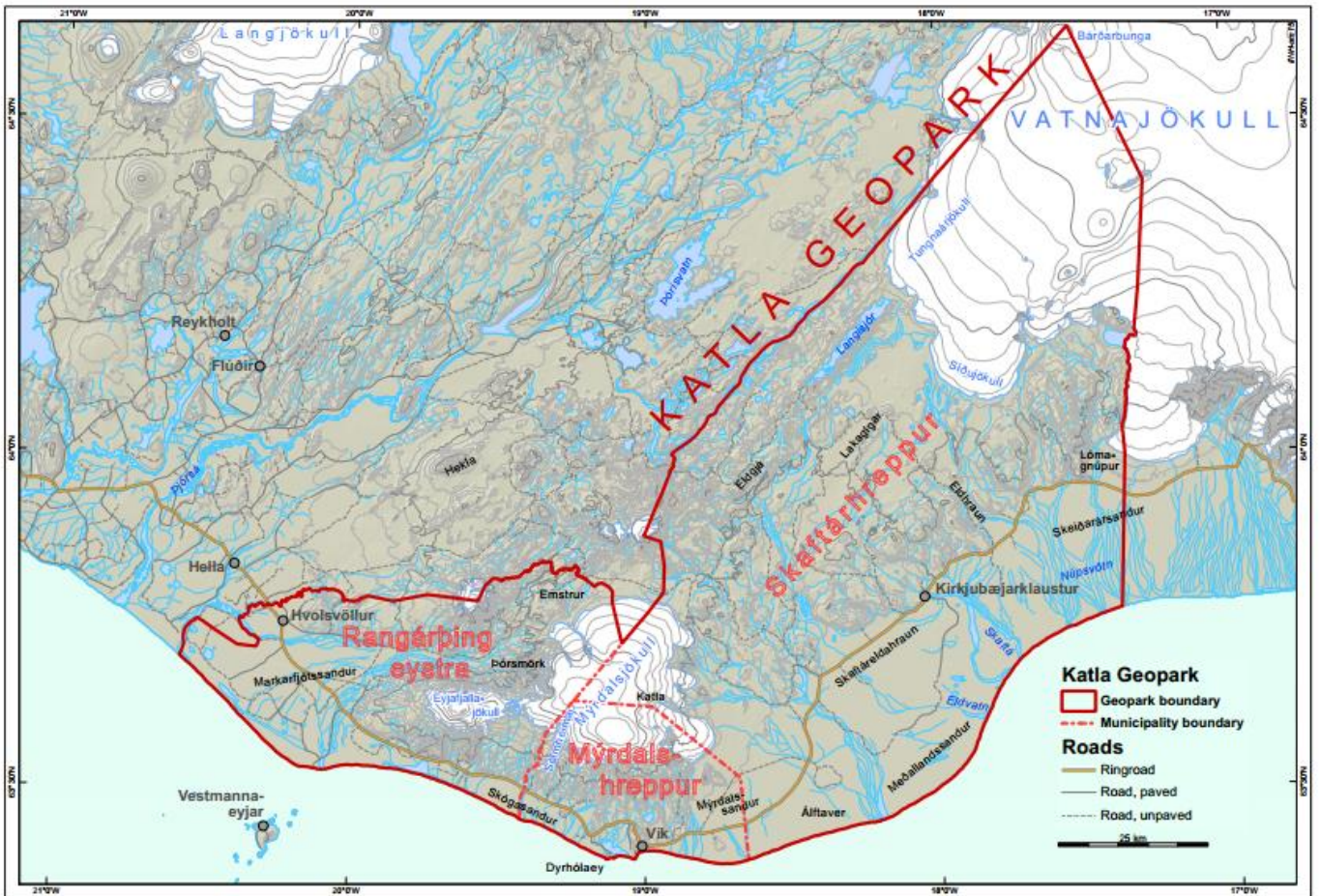
<http://www.katlageopark.com/>

## Contact

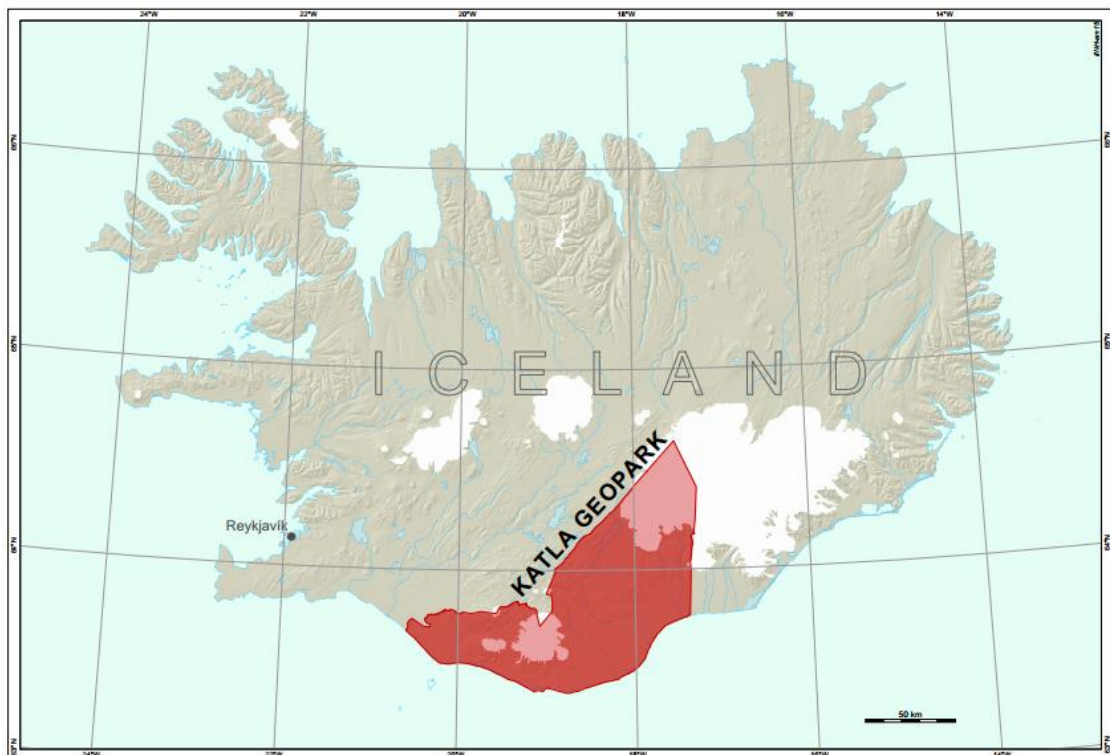
Brynja Davíðsdóttir, email: [brynja@katlageopark.is](mailto:brynja@katlageopark.is), phone: +354 8447633

Sigurður Sigurðsson, email: [sigurdur@hfsu.is](mailto:sigurdur@hfsu.is), phone: +354 897 2814

Map of Katla Global Geopark



Map of Iceland showing location and size of Katla Global Geopark



# Reykjanes Global Geopark, Iceland

**Geology:** The Reykjanes Peninsula is a young section of Iceland. It is a land-born, volcanic counterpart of the North Atlantic Ridge where two tectonic plates are spreading apart at an average rate of 2.5 cm/yr. The peninsula contains late Quaternary volcanic palagonite tuff and pillow lava formations as fells and mountains from the last glacial periods. Also widespread basaltic lava flows and volcanic structures from interglacial periods, especially from the last 11,500 years (the Holocene). Four elongated volcanic systems and fissure swarms line the peninsula from SW to NE. They contain open fissures, normal faults, high-temperature geothermal fields and numerous volcanic fissures. These are lined with various, monogenetic craters. Many small and large lava shields are found in the area, some made of primitive mantle melt (picrite). Eruptions have occurred in the three westernmost systems during the past millennium, all in all three series, in the 10/11th centuries, in 1151-1180 and 1210-1240.

**Geography:** Reykjanes Global Geopark is located in SW-Iceland, close to the capital area and has a total administrative area of 825 km<sup>2</sup> which is 0,85% of Iceland. It covers five municipalities (Grindavík, Reykjanesbær, Sandgerðisbær, Sveitarfélagið Garður and Sveitarfélagið Vogar). Within the park limit there are five smaller towns and fishing villages with a total of about 22.000 inhabitants. About 99% of the population lives in towns and villages.

The area is a peninsula which offers a variety of landscapes, including fissures, lava fields and geothermal activity. Large parts of the lowland are covered by extensive lava fields allowing little vegetation. The lava is mostly covered with moss which doesn't require much soil. The area is relatively flat with the highest point being 391 meters. The lava fields contain many cracks and fissures both below and at the surface.

**Education and Sustainable Development:** The Reykjanes Global Geopark has a strong relationship with all educational institutions located within the park, with all of them being an active partner or taking part in the Global Geopark, either directly through the municipalities or indirectly through cooperation. Reykjanes Global Geopark will create educational material for all school levels. Its main activities support and promote geotourism in the area; promote effective co-operation between independent partners, local governments and international partners; make inhabitants and guests become aware of the Global Geopark and its main policy; engage with local communities and stimulate sustainable development through the use of the geological heritage; co-ordinate, organize and develop activities to promote tourism e.g. in the areas of education, training, publication, consulting, intervention and provision; preserve of nature for tourism development; and raise funds for projects and operational costs.

## Dates

Year of GGN membership entry: 2015

Subsequent Revalidation: 2019

## Official Website

[www.reykjanesgeopark.is](http://www.reykjanesgeopark.is)

## Contact

Eggert Sólberg Jónsson, [eggert@heklan.is](mailto:eggert@heklan.is), +354 4203291, +354 8650023

Map of Reykjanes Global Geopark



Map of Iceland showing location and size of Reykjanes Global Geopark

