

SURTSEY RESEARCH PROGRESS REPORT

VII



THE SURTSEY RESEARCH SOCIETY · REYKJAVÍK, 1974

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VII
PRIMARILY
1971 AND 1972 FIELD SEASONS



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Introduction

The volcanic island, Surtsey, approximately 20 miles off the south coast of Iceland, is a reality. It will remain so for centuries to come. The island is unique as the most recent addition to Iceland. It is even more unique for the fact that it has from its birth been strictly protected as a nature reserve. Extensive scientific studies started as soon as the island was formed.

The Surtsey Research Society was formed shortly after the beginning of the Surtsey eruptions in November 1963. It is a private non-profit scientific society. Members are Icelandic scientists and, as associate members, scientists from various foreign countries, who have taken interest in the development of Surtsey. The objective of the Society is to strengthen the scientific work on Surtsey.

The research work on Surtsey was to begin with primarily concentrated in the geosciences. Gradually the work has shifted more towards the field of biology, but with continued observations of the geological and geomorphological processes. The overall development of Surtsey has slowed down. Although the island is still subject to changes, the process is now more evolutionary than before. The same is true with respect to its biological development. Life has established itself on the island and on its socle, but the process is in many respects slower now than it was at its beginning. In several fields of science it has therefore not been found necessary any longer to undertake yearly investigations.

The Surtsey Research Society has published progress reports on the scientific work on Surtsey from the time it began. This report is the 7th in

that series. In charge of this publication has been an editing committee consisting of the following scientists:

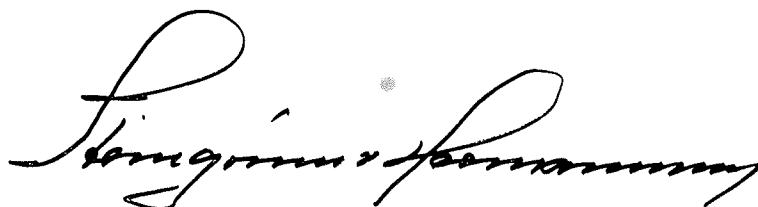
Aðalsteinn Sigurðsson, marine biologist
Eythór Einarsson, botanist
Sveinn Jakobsson, geologist

The report covers work done on Surtsey since the publication of the last report in April 1972. It is hoped that it will be found a valuable addition to the series.

The scientific work on Surtsey has been supported from several sources. The Icelandic government, research institutions, the Icelandic Coast Guard and others in this country have given support, either with financial appropriations, scientific personnel, facilities or transportation. Financial support has also been received from foreign agencies, especially the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission and the Max-Planck Gesellschaft. This is highly appreciated. It should though also be stressed that the scientific work on Surtsey would not have been possible without the unselfish work of several scientists from Iceland and from abroad and the excellent cooperation that exists between them.

It can be said that the scientific work on Surtsey has slowed down. This may be considered natural, as previously mentioned. It is though extremely important that the observations be continued on a long term basis. Hopefully this will be possible. The opportunity is unique. There is no doubt that through studies of Surtsey, important steps may be taken for better understanding of our environment.

On behalf of the Surtsey Research Society,



Steingrímur Hermannsson
Chairman