

## Introduction

In 2023, 60 years had passed since the volcanic eruption that created Surtsey started, an extraordinary natural event that granted Iceland, and the world, a once in a lifetime scientific laboratory. Since its birth from the sea, Surtsey has remained one of the most remarkable places on Earth for the study of primary ecological succession, geological processes, and the delicate interplay between nature and time. Its strict protection from human interference has made it uniquely valuable; Surtsey is not only a place of scientific discovery but also a powerful reminder of the importance of protecting natural environments.

The 16th volume of Surtsey Research includes 9 papers in the fields of terrestrial biology, climatology and geology. The papers are written by 24 authors taking part in the research on Surtsey. For the first time some articles in the journal are marked as “peer-reviewed articles”, when they were first sent out to anonymous reviewers in the same field before being reviewed and accepted for publication by the editorial committee. When not marked, the review was done as before, directly by the members of the editorial committee who had the closest scientific backgrounds to the article in question. Authors were given a choice for which review form they opted for.

Interest in Surtsey continues to extend beyond Iceland’s shores. Recently, The Guardian published an article highlighting the island and the ongoing research it inspires, yet another reflection of how Surtsey, despite 60 years of age, captures global interests. This enduring curiosity also underlines the importance of sharing knowledge.

The Surtsey Research Society has taken important steps to preserve our collective record. The National Archives of Iceland have classified the Society’s archival collection, as a private collection. They are unquestionably a national treasure, given the historical and scientific importance of Surtsey. Documentation related to Surtsey is currently scattered across various institutions connected to the Society’s mission. We have encouraged archivists at these institutions, and our own members, to submit their Surtsey related materials to the National Archives. This includes scientists’ and technicians’ documents such as diaries, working papers, emails, photographs, and visitor logs. By gathering these materials in one place, we ensure that they are accessible, and safeguarded for future generations.

I took on the role as Chair of the Surtsey Research Society at the Annual General Meeting in April 2025. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to our former Chair, Hallgrímur Jónasson, for his dedicated service and leadership for the past 16 years. His contributions have strengthened the Society and the mission we continue today. It is with sadness that I acknowledge the passing of Viggó Þór Marteinsson, who served on the Society’s board and the editorial committee of Surtsey Research. His work has left a lasting mark.

I wish to thank the editorial committee: Bjarni Diðrik Sigurðsson, Olga K. Vilmundardóttir, Lilja Gunnarsdóttir, Kristján Jónasson and Lovísa G. Ásbjörnsdóttir for their diligent and selfless efforts in producing the journal, which continues to be an essential platform for sharing research on Surtsey.

Thank you all for your commitment to protecting and understanding this extraordinary island. May our work continue to merit the legacy of Surtsey and the people who have dedicated themselves to its research.

On behalf of the Surtsey Society

Hólmfríður Sigurðardóttir  
Chairman 2025