



## Travelling in Hornstrandir Nature Reserve

### *The Environment Agency of Iceland wishes to point out the following*

*Hornstrandir nature reserve was established in 1975. The main purpose for establishing it as a nature reserve was for the protection of its ecosystems, wildlife and undisturbed landscape. To maintain its current state, it is very important that every visitor aims to minimise their impact on the area, so it can retain its value and provide visitors with an enjoyable experience.*

It is required to report your travel plans to the Environmental Agency at [hornstrandir@umhverfisstofnun.is](mailto:hornstrandir@umhverfisstofnun.is) if you plan on visiting the nature reserve between **April 15<sup>th</sup> and June 15<sup>th</sup>**, because of the fragile state at that time.

#### **Traveling in the area early season**

Traveling in the area early season poses a few obstacles, mainly in relation to the fact that large part of the nature reserve is in transition between winter and spring. During the winter, the prevailing wind deposits great amount of snow in mountain passes, some of which are often impassable early in the season. The river crossing points can easily change over the winter time and the state of the trails is unknown. In addition it is not recommended for large groups to travel in the area during this time of year, due to the impact they might cause. The Ranger visits the nature reserve early May. It is recommended to visit the area after the Ranger has visited the area and is in a better position to give correct information about its status.

#### **Camping**

Camp only at designated campsites. **Wild camping is prohibited** in the nature reserve. All campsites have dry latrines. Latrine doors are weighed down with heavy timber for a reason. Make sure the timber is replaced and the door is secured after use. Otherwise the risk of damage due to wind is near certain. **Campfires are prohibited**. Cooking equipment and disposable barbeques should be used with care.

#### **Leave no lasting signs of your visit**

Leave no lasting signs of your visit. Remove all rubbish from the area when you leave. Burying, burning or leaving it behind, placing it in latrines is **prohibited**, because it affects the biological processes in the compost. Do not engrave on rocks or buildings and do not build cairns, rearrange stones or in any other way leave visible signs of your visit. In addition we also ask you to watch where you set foot in order to protect the vegetation and avoid path-making. Please remember that you are a guest. Respect the flora, fauna, cultural remains and the privacy of house owners in the nature reserve.

#### **Do not pick flowers**

The vegetation in the nature reserve is very fragile and has limited time each year to grow. We ask you not to pick flowers or other plant and avoid stepping on flowers or plant beds if at all possible. It is permitted to pick berries, mushrooms, mountain lichens and herbs for consumption on the spot, but have in mind the vegetation has only few weeks each year to grow. Please be aware that some plant species growing in the wild in Iceland are protected, and may not be cut or otherwise disturbed.

#### **Do not take anything with you**

We encourage you to leave the nature reserve as it is. Cultural remains are protected. Watch where you walk and stand. Walk around and not in between objects. Do not take anything with you and do not attempt to rearrange objects. In addition we ask you to leave stones, bones, driftwood and other items where they are.

#### **Do not disturb the wildlife**

It is important to show caution when in vicinity of nesting birds or fox dens. Arctic Fox Dens are protected by law, so don't approach them, or dwell around them. The wildlife is very sensitive and can easily be disturbed and frightened. Do not feed the foxes, it is not beneficial for them to be fed by humans. Pets are best left at home. However, if they come along, keep them on leash and under control. Ensure you remove their droppings. Take notice, bringing a dog into the nature reserve will affect the experience of other visitors, dogs are not a part of the natural fauna, so the Arctic foxes will not be present in the same area as a dog will be. Please help us preserve the wildlife and be respectful towards it.

#### **Polar bear**

Polar bears might have entered the area early spring, having arrived on drift ice from Greenland. Be aware of this, check the surrounding and look for any indications of bear tracks. If you notice there is a polar bear in the area please report it as soon as you can, and keep your distance.

#### **Be safe**

Travel in the nature reserve may involve various risks. Be well prepared and take seriously that the elements in the area require that you **bring 4-season equipment!** Notice there is limited cellular coverage in the area, but VHF-Radios can be found in most emergency shelters. Only use the shelters if you truly need to. Leave the shelter as you found it. It is a good habit to sign your name in the emergency shelter guestbook, including your travel plans when you leave. We encourage you to register at [www.safetravel.is](http://www.safetravel.is) and leave a travel plan behind, as well as seeking further information regarding traveling in Iceland.

