

Vatnsmýri Wetland Walk (subject to weather)

June 4th 16:00-17:15 Field excursion around the Vatnsmýri area where we meet experts
- focusing on the ecology, the hydrology, the history, and the urban planning of the area.

1. Guide Haraldur Rafn Ingvarsson – Aquatic Life (Location: yellow circle) *The Reykjavík Pond has undergone a remarkable transformation. From turbid, vegetation-free waters into a thriving ecosystem. This indicates a positive trajectory of successful ecological succession and stabilization process.*

Haraldur is a freshwater ecologist at the Marine and Freshwater Research Institute of Iceland.

2. Benedikt Traustason & Þórólfur Jónsson – Birdlife and Conservation (Location: red circle) *Birdlife was the original reason for protecting this area. Here we highlight land-use planning, conservation efforts, and ongoing actions to improve water quality, especially through the LIFE Icewater project.*

Benedikt and Þórólfur work for the City of Reykjavík and are actively involved in urban ecological restoration.

3. Ágúst Guðmundsson – Hydrology (Location: green circle) *A decade-long hydrological study has tracked the effects of urbanization in Vatnsmýri wetlands. The research supports sustainable planning by modelling water flow and retention in response to urban development.*

Ágúst is a hydrologist and branch manager at Vatnaskil in Akureyri, specializing in watershed modelling.

4. Stefán Pálsson – History and Heritage (Location: blue circle) *The history of Vatnsmýri is rich and fascinating—from farming and failed gold rushes to the beginnings of Icelandic aviation and the rise of local tax havens. This talk connects these episodes to the architectural and cultural development of the University district.*

Stefán is a historian known for his research on Reykjavík's urban and technical history.

5. The Vatnsmýri Bird Reserve – Nature Conservation in the City (Location: pink circle)

The idea of protecting the Vatnsmýri wetlands dates to 1980. In 1984, a 5-hectare area was formally designated as a bird reserve. It remains a vital sanctuary for nesting birds in the heart of Reykjavík. The area is monitored year-round and has recorded over 100 bird species.

Jóhann Óli is one of Iceland's leading ornithologists and bird photographers.

