

# SURTSEY RESEARCH PROGRESS REPORT

1968 FIELD SEASON · V



THE SURTSEY RESEARCH SOCIETY · REYKJAVIK, MARCH 1970

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## Introduction

On the 14th of November 1963 a submarine eruption began approximately 20 miles off the south coast of Iceland. It created an island, Surtsey, which has become well known both among scientists and the general public. This eruption continued in different places on and around Surtsey until in July 1967. Two other islands were created a few hundred meters east and west of Surtsey itself but they both disappeared after those eruptions ceased. Surtsey alone remains and will remain for an unforeseeable future.

This new island immediately caught the interest of scientists, who found their a unique opportunity to study both geology in the making and the settlement of life on a relatively sterile piece of land out in the ocean. Scientific studies have since continued with the emphasis changing somewhat from geological studies to the biological side when the volcanic activities ceased.

In order to strengthen and coordinate the scientific work, the Surtsey Research Society was formed. The Society has built a research station on the island, placed a guard and an assistant out there during the summers, obtained funds for the scientific studies, coordinated trips to the island and in many other ways promoted the scientific work. Progress reports have also been collected every year from every scientist working on or in connection with Surtsey and these are being published by the Society as the Surtsey Research Progress Reports. This one is

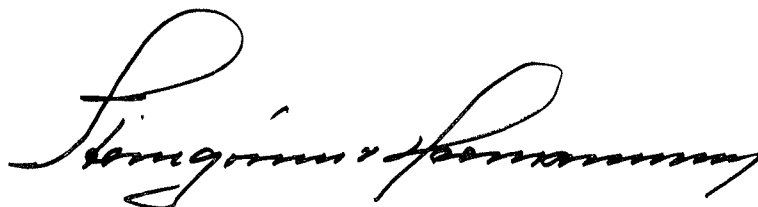
the fifth in that series. It covers the work done in 1968.

Previous reports have been mimeographed. But with increasing demand for quality, especially because of pictures and other illustrations and also in order to meet the increasing demand for these publications, it was decided that this report should be printed.

The scientific work on and connected with Surtsey would not have been possible without support and assistance from several sources, such as the Icelandic Government and research institutions, the Icelandic Coast Guard and many others in this country. Also, financial support has been received, as previously, from various foreign agencies, especially, The U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, The U.S. Office of Naval Research, and The Bauer Scientific Trust. All of this is highly appreciated. Finally, one must have in mind that the Surtsey research program has been made possible primarily by the unselfish work of many scientists from Iceland and from abroad and their fine cooperation.

Much has already been learned on Surtsey, but there is more to come, if the work can be continued until a balance has been reached in the island's development. We trust that this will be possible with continued understanding of the importance of this unique opportunity for studies of environmental development and assistance from Iceland and abroad.

For The Surtsey Research Society



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*Steingrímur Hermannsson*  
Chairman