



Surtsey, Iceland

Key facts

Recommended by IUCN for inscription on the World Heritage List in July 2008 at the World Heritage Committee in Quebec City, Canada, for its ongoing biological and ecological processes.

Surtsey is a new island, formed by volcanic eruptions in 1963-67.

It has been legally protected from its birth and provides the world with a pristine natural laboratory, free from human interference.

It has been the site of one of the few long-term studies worldwide on primary succession, providing a unique scientific record of the process of colonisation of land by plants and animals.

Part of the evolution of Surtsey is the process of coastal erosion which has already halved the area of the island and over time is predicted to remove another two thirds, leaving only the most resistant core.

Key quotes

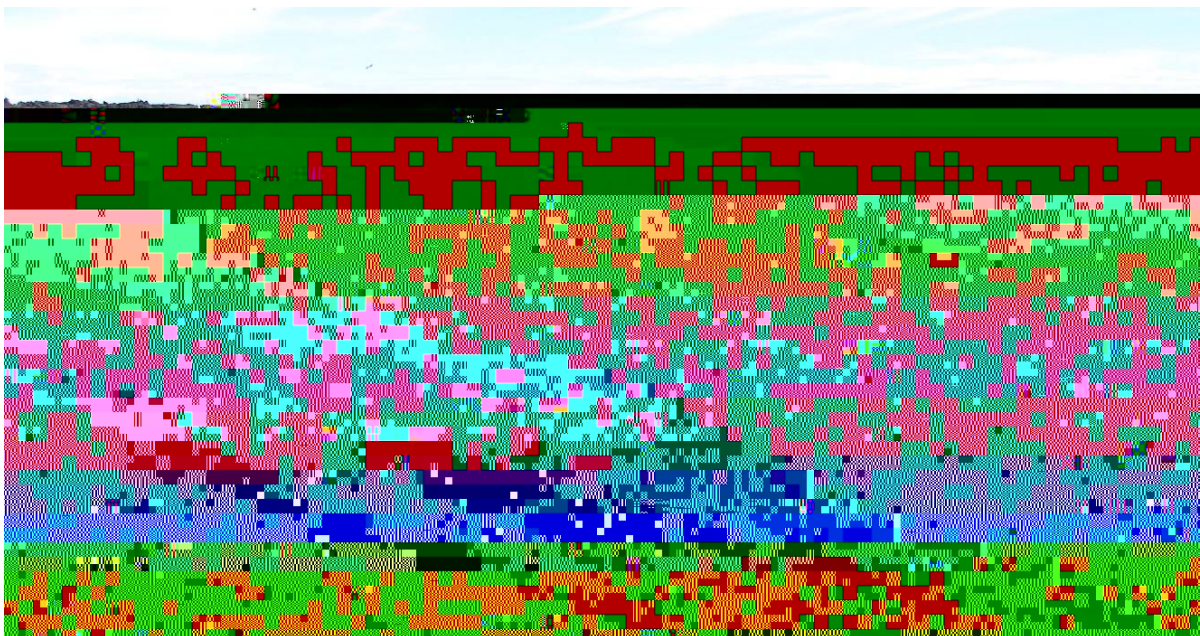
*“Not only is Surtsey geographically isolated, but it has been legally protected from its birth, providing the world with a pristine natural laboratory, free from human interference,” says **Tim Badman, World Heritage Advisor of IUCN’s Protected Areas Programme.** “Above all, because of its continuing protection, Surtsey will continue to provide invaluable data on biological colonisation long into the future.”*

Media Contact

Borjana Pervan, IUCN Communications Officer, t +41 22 999 0115, m +41 79 857 4072 e borjana.pervan@iucn.org

Photos

For photos of Surtsey, please visit <http://data.iucn.org/temp/wh2008/>. Please note the images are copyright protected and can only be used to illustrate press releases in relation to IUCN’s recommendations to the World Heritage Committee.



Surtsey, Iceland © IUCN/Chris Wood