

9. ÚLFARSÁRDALUR VALLEY

Some of the largest wetland areas in Reykjavík are found along the Úlfarsá river. These wetlands are breeding sites for waders like snipe, dunlin, black-tailed godwit and redshank. Further up the valley are heathlands that are home to golden plovers, whimbrels and meadow pipits. The river itself attracts greylag geese, mallards, teal and tufted ducks all year round and geosanders flock there in winter. Ravens are conspicuous in winter as they are throughout the city during the coldest months.

10. BLIKASTAÐAKRÓ INLET

At the mouth of Úlfarsá River are vast mudflats of the Blikastaðakró Inlet. These mudflats and nearby rocky shores attract many birds all year round including visitors like red knot, turnstones and brent geese. Common gulls breed nearby. Other gull species and eider ducks are numerous.

11. ELLIÐAVATN LAKE AND HEIÐMÖRK

The Elliðavatn Lake area is a large wetland system where water and marsh birds breed such as the great-northern diver, whooper swan, greylag goose, teal, mallard, tufted duck and red-breasted merganser, and waders like dunlin, snipe and redshank. Arctic terns are common visitors during summer and in winter geosanders, scaup and widgeons flock on the lake. The vast Heiðmörk area is characterized by mossy heathlands home to meadow pipits, whimbrel, golden plover and wheatears with ptarmigan and raptors like merlin and gyrfalcon seen frequently. Large areas of planted birch and conifer forests attract redwing, redpoll and wren in addition to the rarer goldcrest and woodcock.

12. THE GARDEN AT HOME

Songbirds are popular visitors in gardens and many feed them in winter. Redwing, blackbird, redpoll, starling, white wagtail, snow bunting and raven are common. Rare but regular visitors include bohemian waxwing and blackcap.

Birds are very prominent in the nature of Reykjavík and the city is home to a diverse selection of birds and their habitats including gardenbirds, shorebirds, seabirds, waterbirds and heathland birds.

Opportunities for birdwatching are ample in the city and it has increasingly become a popular destination for avid birdwatchers.

This brochure provides information about the most important bird sites in the city and some of the more commonly seen bird species.



White wagtail

Mallard

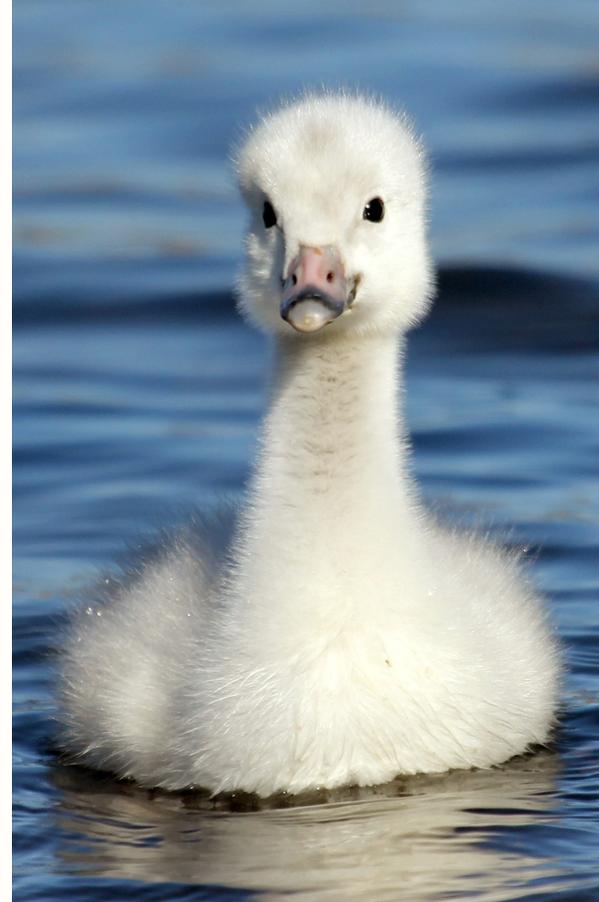


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BIRDWATCHING IN REYKJAVÍK

Overview of the best
birdwatching sites in Reykjavík.
Map inside.



WHERE TO WATCH BIRDS IN REYKJAVÍK !

There are numerous birdwatching sites in the city, from the coast to the heathlands, by lakes and rivers and in gardens. Some of the best and more accessible sites are listed in this brochure.

1. HOFSVÍK IN KJALARNES

There is vast birdlife in the rural Kjalarnes area including a puffin colony on Andriðsey island. The Hofsvík bay is a good site to watch cormorants and shags sit on skerries and many gull species dwell in the area. Eider ducks are also prominent and harlequin ducks are seen in winter. Oystercatchers and ringed plovers breed by the coast.

2. SKERJAFJÖRÐUR AND FOSSVOGUR

Skerjafjörður is a shallow fiord south of Reykjavík that is rich of biodiversity. It includes the sheltered Fossvogur bay. The coastline in the area is mostly untouched and includes a mixture of rocky and sandy shores. Common bird species include eider ducks, mallards, widgeons, long-tailed ducks, oystercatchers, ruddy turnstones, purple sandpipers, arctic terns and lesser black-backed gulls.



3. TJÖRNIN LAKE AND VATNSMÝRI

The Tjörnin lake in central Reykjavík is home to hundreds of birds all year round especially waterfowl like whooper swans, graylag geese, mallards and tufted ducks. The Vatnsmýri Wildlife Reserve attracts breeding ducks and waders and has a colony of arctic terns. Black-headed gulls and lesser-black backed gulls are also common in the area.

4. ISLANDS IN KOLLAFJÖRÐUR BAY

Kollafjörður Bay is an important bird area with puffin colonies in Akurey, Engey and Lundeey islands and the largest eider duck colony on Viðey island. Fulmars and both greater and lesser black-backed gulls breed on the larger islands. Viðey island is the largest and hosts numerous duck and wader species. Kollafjörður Bay also attracts numerous sea birds during winter including Iceland gulls, long-tailed ducks and red-throated divers.

5. ÖSKJUHLÍÐ AND FOSSVOGSDALUR

The planted spruce- and pine forests on Öskjuhlíð hill and in Fossvogsdalur valley are home to passerine birds such as the redwing, blackbird, redpoll, starling and the rarer goldcrest and crossbill. Rare visitors are often found in these areas including woodcock and long-eared owls.

6. REYKJAVÍK BOTANICAL GARDENS

The Botanical Gardens in Laugardalur valley is a peaceful green area that attracts many birds. Blackbirds and redwings breed there and goldcrests are seen regularly. Greylag geese and mallards visit small ponds in the Botanical Gardens.

7. ELLIÐAÁRDALUR VALLEY

This vast natural area is home to numerous bird species. The Elliðaár rivers attract waterfowl such as whooper swans, graylag geese and numerous duck species. Many waders breed in the area in the summer including golden plover, snipe and redshank. Songbirds such as redwings and redpolls are also very common.

8. GRAFARVOGUR BAY

Grafarvogur is a shallow bay with mudflats that is among the most important habitats for birds in the city. The rich invertebrate fauna that inhabits the mudflats is a rich source of food that attracts numerous birds all year round. In spring and autumn migrating waders arrive in thousands including dunlins, red knots and sanderlings from Greenland as well as large groups of Icelandic golden plovers, black-tailed godwits and redshanks. In the winter grey herons are common visitors.

