The Flora and Fauna of the Lakagígar Area

The Elhúná is almost completely vegetated at the way from the coastal plain up to the rims of the crater at a height of 650m (2150 ft). The area was barren of course at the end of the eruption, but now we can see a textbook example of growth succession: first lava, then moss, followed by grass, then shrubs, and finally trees.

The development of flora and fauna in the Lakagígar area has been influenced by an eruption, allowing vernalization, the earlier arrival of ripening season, although rainfall is low, water flows through and the lava are very quickly and most plants have difficulty making use of it. Plant life characteristically consists of mosses and lichens. The moss in the Lakagígar area grows extremely fast, with new growth appearing on the upper part of the plants. Thus, the microphytic plants are very small, and the growth of vegetation is slow and not sufficient to support mammal or butterfly, although a number of terrestrial species visit the area here and there, including the snow-bunting, white wagtail, meadow pipit, and other birds.

The second type of habitat is volcanic, with lava flows and the lava themselves forming the main part of the vegetation. The vegetation here consists of mosses and lichens. The moss in the Lakagígar area grows extremely fast, with new growth appearing on the upper part of the plants. Thus, the microphytic plants are very small, and the growth of vegetation is slow and not sufficient to support mammal or butterfly, although a number of terrestrial species visit the area here and there, including the snow-bunting, white wagtail, meadow pipit, and other birds.

The “sermon of fire”

The year 1783-1784 was the second largest of the last 1500 years. The eruption had a large impact on the climate and environment of the entire world. The ash was blown into the atmosphere and spread over a large area, covering the earth. The temperature dropped significantly, and the weather became very cold. The cold spell lasted for several years, and the entire world experienced significant changes.

The effects of the Skjaldbreidur eruption on other countries

After the eruption, the climate in Iceland experienced significant changes. The temperature dropped significantly, and the weather became very cold. The cold spell lasted for several years, and the entire world experienced significant changes.

One theory suggests that the French Revolution was partly caused by the eruption. It is believed that the cold spell may have led to a decrease in agricultural productivity, which in turn caused economic difficulties and social tensions. These factors may have contributed to the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789.

The eruption of Laki in 1783-1784 was one of the most significant volcanic events in history. It had a significant impact on the climate and environment of the entire world, and it is still studied by scientists to this day.

Questions Frequently Asked by Visitors

Why are the stones different colors of lava and grass?

The stones are different colors because of the types of lava that were erupted. The red stones are basaltic lava, while the green stones are basaltic andesite.

What causes the different shapes and sizes of the stones?

The shapes and sizes of the stones are caused by the abundance of magnesium in the magma, which solidifies into different shapes and sizes.

Why do some stones have a smooth surface and others have a rough surface?

The smooth surfaces are caused by the presence of water, while the rough surfaces are caused by the lack of water.

What did the area look like before the eruption?

The area was covered in mud, debris, and ash, with only a few small rocks visible. The landscape was very different from what it is today.

What does the “black sand” come from?

The “black sand” is made up of volcanic ash that was blown into the atmosphere and spread over a large area. The ash was blown into the atmosphere and spread over a large area, covering the earth. The temperature dropped significantly, and the weather became very cold. The cold spell lasted for several years, and the entire world experienced significant changes.

What is moss and why does it change color?

Moss is a type of plant that grows on the surface of rocks, soil, and other surfaces. It is characterized by its small size and ability to grow in hard-to-reach places. Moss can change color due to changes in the environment, such as temperature, light, and water availability.

What is the weather like in the area?

The weather in the area is mild and the annual temperature is around 0°C (32°F). The cold spell lasted for several years, and the entire world experienced significant changes.

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What is the vegetation like in the area?

The vegetation in the area is characterized by the presence of moss and lichens. The moss and lichens are able to grow in hard-to-reach places, and they are able to survive in the harsh conditions of the area.

What is the effect of the eruption on the local environment?

The eruption had a large impact on the local environment. The ash and debris covered the area, and the temperature dropped significantly, leading to a decrease in agricultural productivity and economic difficulties.
Footpaths
There are five marked trails within the Nature Conservation Area. It is important to keep to the paths, each of which gives a different view of the area.

Red Trail (1 hour). The track leads up to the top of Laki (818 m, 2684 ft), which stands in the middle of the crater row around 200m (656 ft) above the surrounding area. During the Fires of the Skaftá River (Skaftáreldar), fissures opened on the slopes of Laki. These fissures are clearly visible on both the western and northern flanks. There are magnificent views from Laki, both over the crater row to Mt Hnúta in the southwest and to the northeast where the crater row reaches to the foot of Katlajökull glacier.

Yellow Trail (2–3 hours, round-trip). The track runs around the base of the mountain with occasional detours. There are fine views of the crater row and the slopes of Laki where the eruption burst through the surface. The contrast between Laki, the barren 10,000-year-old palagonite mountain, and the nearby 200-year-old moss-covered lava is clearly seen from the trail.

Blue Trail (20 minutes). The trail leads from the foot of Laki into a crater row that broke through the lower slopes of the mountain. From here it is possible to see how the ground opened and craters were formed.

Access to Lakagígar
This road to Lake leaves the Ring Road at Hunkubakki. It is a mountain road and vehicles must cross (ford) unbridged rivers that swell in heavy rain. Proceed with caution.

The Lakagígar road, passes Sallí, and continues to Laki, Bláglí and over Eldhraun, reaching Eldborg at Hnúta. The road is reasonably passable from the highway as far as Tjarnargígur, but the part from Tjarnargígur to Blágil is a rough track suitable only for 4-wheel-drive vehicles. As in all other areas, driving off designated roads and tracks is forbidden and visitors are strenuously requested to comply with this regulation as to keep this extremely sensitive environment intact for future generations to enjoy as well.

The conservation area is open to visitors throughout the year but access may depend on weather conditions. The road is officially closed during the period of thaw in the spring. It is usually open from the middle of June.

White Trail (20 minutes). This trail leads into a crater southwest of Laki. In the bottom of the crater is a small cave that was once connected to another cave that passes under the road. This is the collapsed opening of the lava channel leading out from the crater.

Bus Trips
Daily bus trips to Laki are operated from July 1 to August 31. Departure is at 08:00 from Skaftafell National Park and 09:00 from Kirkjubæjarklaustur. The bus arrives at Laki and leaves 16:00. It is back in Kirkjubæjarklaustur at 18:30 and Skaftafell 19:30. For information contact 545-1717 or www.austurleid.is.

Accommodation
Camping is not allowed within this area. There is a good camping area at Blágil, 40 min drive from Laki, with spring water and toilets. There are mountain cabins at Blágil and Hrossatungur, where basic accommodation is available at reasonable prices. Employees at the Skaftafellssýsla Parish Council offices see to bookings of the huts.

Rules of Conduct
Lakagígar is an extremely sensitive area. The gravel is very loose and will crumble at the least disturbance. Moss is very delicate, and every footstep leaves a long-lasting mark. Please keep to marked trails – this is the best way you can help us conserve this magnificent area.

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