

Birdlife

Hornafjörður has rich birdlife throughout the year and a great number of species can be seen foraging both on the shore and in the fjord. Standing on the Óslandshæð hill and walking along the nature trail give good opportunities to watch the birds of the area.



Pseudomorphs

Near the trail prehistoric pseudomorphs of trees can be observed. They are located at the tideline and therefore only can be seen during low tide. Please note these are very fragile and unique relics and should be treated with care.

The boulder park

About 1.5 km walk away from the *Sun* is an area aside the Nature trail with several large boulders. This geo park is dedicated to rocks that characterize the bedrock of Southeast Iceland.

The nature trail and the solar system model

Along the western shore of Höfn is a trail with scenic views towards the glaciers of Vatnajökull National Park. During the wintertime the starry night sky and the northern lights can also be enjoyed from the trail. The South East Iceland Nature Research Center, in cooperation with the municipality of Hornafjörður, dedicate the trail to nature, hence its nickname "Náttúrustígur", the "Nature trail".

Along the trail is a model of the solar system, scaled down more than 2.1 billion fold, with sizes of the planets and distances between them in right proportions. The *Sun* (diameter 65 cm) is situated at the Óslandshæð hill, at the southernmost part of Höfn (see map), with the planets distributed along the trail. The diameter of the planets ranges from 1 mm to 6,5 cm. They are moulded on top of a metal poles, based on a gabbroic boulders from the nearby Litlahorn mountain. Each boulder also has a sign with information on the planet.

The distance from the *Sun* to the planet *Neptune* is 2.8 km and it takes less than hour to walk it one way. Information about the dwarf planet *Pluto* are placed there, as officially the trail ends there. The enthusiastic can still continue to a point where the mean distance of *Pluto's* orbit is situated. This part of the walk crosses the Silfurnes golf course so be aware of golf balls!



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www.nattsa.is



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Litlubrú 2, 780 Höfn, Iceland
Telephone: 470 8060 / 4708061



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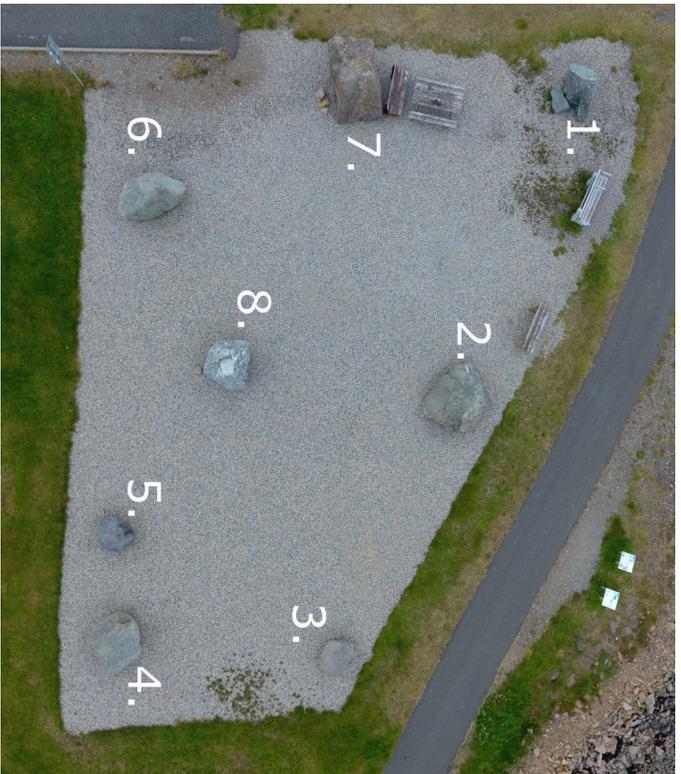
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The Nature trail

Tour the solar system





The boulder park

These boulders come from different places in Southeast Iceland. Use this map to navigate between the boulders. The origin of each is in the brackets.

1. Gabbro from Litlahorn (plutonic).
2. Gabbro from Geitafellsbjörg (plutonic).
3. Fine grained gabbro from Breiðamerkursandur (plutonic).
4. Dark gabbro from Breiðamerkursandur (plutonic).
5. Dolerite from Breiðamerkursandur (lava flow).
6. Gabbro from Breiðamerkursandur (plutonic).
7. Porphyritic basalt from Borgarfarnareiði (lava flow).
8. Gabbro from Hvalnesfjall mountain (plutonic).

Pluto

Even though Pluto no longer categorizes as a planet, it is represented here as a reminder of that the solar system extends far beyond the orbits of the outer planets. The distance between Neptune and Pluto is 980 m. The model's size of Pluto is similar to a chia seed (0.15% of the Sun's size). It takes the light 5.5 hours to reach Pluto after leaving the Sun.

Jupiter

Jupiter is the largest planet in the solar system. Its modelled size is similar as a tennis ball (10% of the Sun's size). The distance between Ceres and Jupiter is 228 m. The light needs 43 minutes to travel from the Sun to Jupiter.

Ceres

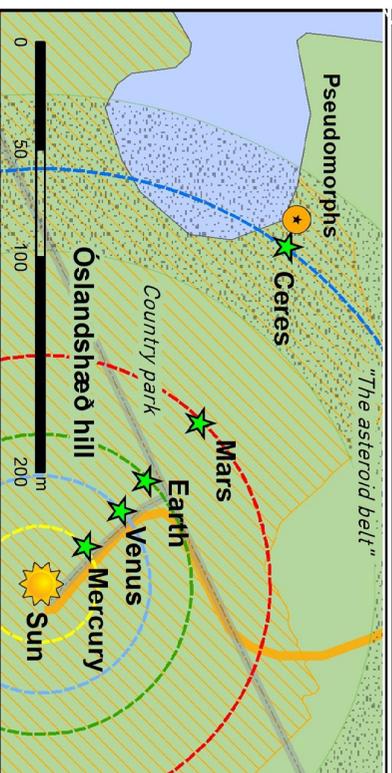
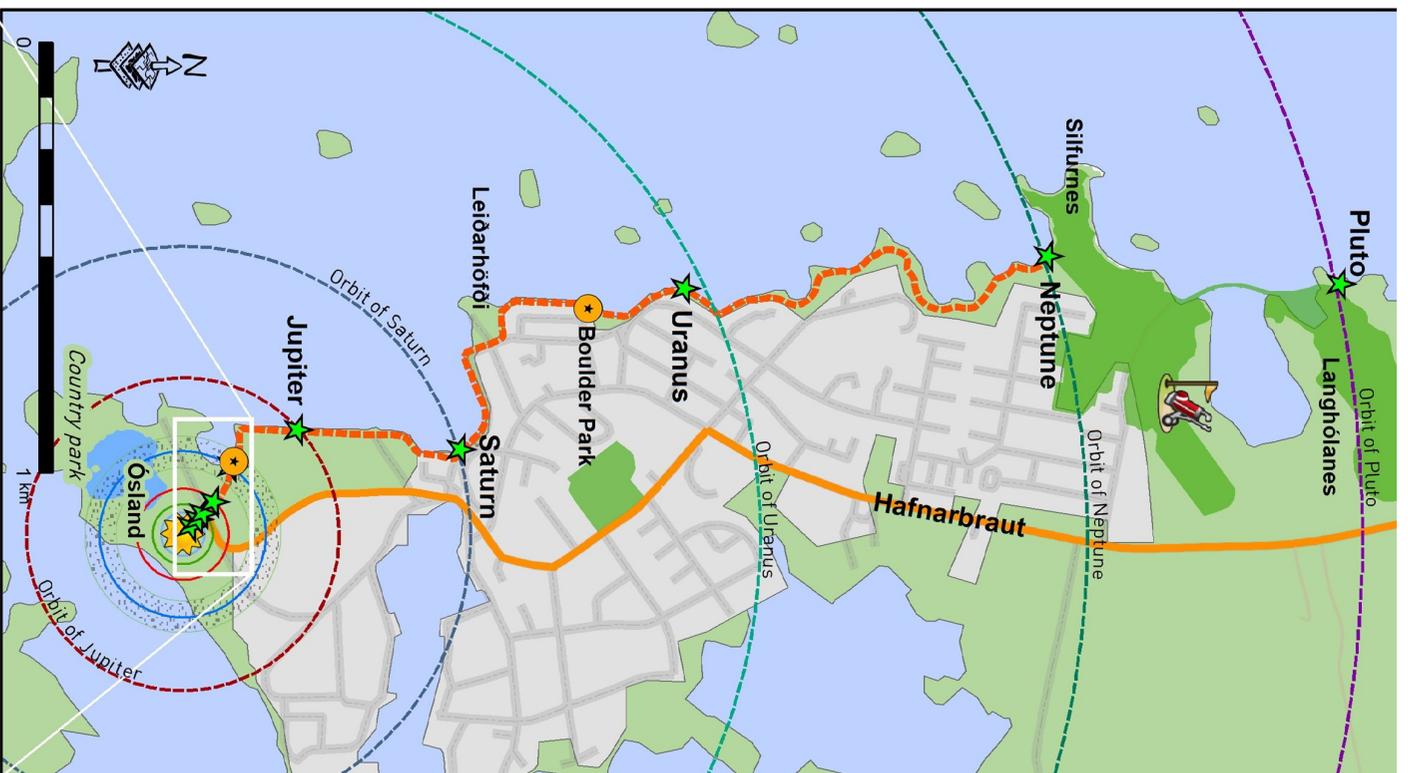
This is the largest asteroid in the asteroid belt and categorizes as a dwarf planet. The size of the model is similar to the tip of a sewing pin (0,0006% of the Sun's size). The distance between Mars and Ceres is 93 m. The light travels from the Sun to Ceres in 23 minutes.

MARS

The distance from Earth to Mars is 37 m and now the Sun is 106 m away. The tiny Mars resembles fine grained sand (0,5% of the Sun's size). The light, travelling from the Sun, reaches Mars in 13 minutes.

Mercury

The distance between the Sun and Mercury on the trail is just about 27 m. The model of Mercury is the size of a coarse grain of sand (0,4% of the Sun's size). It takes the light 3,2 minutes to travel from the sun to Mercury.



The Sun

The Sun is situated on Óslandshæð hill. The actual diameter of the Sun is 1,4 million km but is scaled down to 65 cm diameter. The velocity of light is 300 000 km/sec. Despite such enormous speed, hours pass after the light leaves the Sun before it approaches the most distant planets.

Neptune

The distance from Uranus to Neptune is 1070 m. The size of Neptune is similar to Uranus (3,5% of the Sun's diameter). The light travels from the sun to Neptune in approximately 4,2 hours.

Uranus

The distance between Saturn and Uranus is 870 m. The downscaled size of the planet is a bit less than one Euro [€] coin (4% of the Sun's size). The light reaches Uranus 2,6 hours after leaving the Sun.

Saturn

The distance between Jupiter and Saturn is 406 m. The planet size in the model is similar to a clementine (8% of the Sun's size). Saturn rings are not presented but would encircle the planet up to about 6 cm distance. It takes the light 1,3 hours to reach Saturn after leaving the Sun.

Earth

The distance from Venus to Earth is 19 m. The scaled down Earth is only little bit larger than Venus (0,9% of the Sun's size). The light travels from sun to Earth in 8,3 minutes. To walk the downscaled distance between the Earth and the Sun takes less than a minute but if the light travelled at such speed the velocity of light would be tenfold faster than it really is.

Venus

The distance from Mercury to Venus is about 23 m. The scaled down planet Venus is just like a bean in the model (0,9% of the Sun's size). The light travels from the Sun to Venus in approximately 6 minutes.