



Strasbourg, 29 August 2024

T-PVS/Files(2024)73

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

44th meeting
Strasbourg, 2-6 December 2024

Bureau of the Standing Committee

10-12 September 2024
Strasbourg

Complaint on Stand-by: 2017/06
Possible negative impact on Breiðafjörður Nature Reserve's authentic birch
woods from new road infrastructure
(Iceland)

- COMPLAINANTS' REPORTS -

Document prepared by
Landvernd



Secretariat of the Bern Convention

Council of Europe

Sent through email to bern.convention@coe.int

Reykjavík, 28.08.2024

Letter in regard to complaint 2017/06 on possible negative impact on Breiðafjörður Nature Reserve's authentic birch woods from new road infrastructure

First, a minor correction: Currently, construction is ongoing and planned for two additional fjords, not just Gufufjörður as mentioned in the letter. There is ongoing work in Djúpifjörður, where road construction is nearly complete, and in Þorskafjörður, where the landfill is finished. Djúpifjörður will also see a bridge and landfills on both sides of the fjord.

While monitoring is beneficial, many pre-construction studies were outdated and, in some cases, redundant. The encroachment on the Breiðafjörður Nature Reserve continues, with the Icelandic Road Administration proceeding with a new Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for Álftafjörður, where they plan to build dams and a small bridge similar to the ongoing projects in Teigsskógur. These projects, including the completed landfill and bridge over Þorskafjörður, have significantly altered tidal currents, impacting marine life and birds. Unfortunately, we at Landvernd have received little to no information from the Icelandic Road Administration about these new plans for Álftafjörður and Vatnsfjörður.

The Álftafjörður tidal area is home to thousands of Whooper Swans, Brent Geese, Red Knots, and many other waders and seabirds. This sensitive habitat is at risk from the planned developments.

Unfortunately, we have no information on the process of appointing the Breiðafjörður area onto the Emerald Network of nature reserves.

Sincerely,

Þorgerður M Þorbjarnardóttir

Chairperson of Landvernd