

Geographic Names of Iceland's Glaciers: Historic and Modern

By Oddur Sigurðsson and Richard S. Williams, Jr.

Prepared in cooperation with the
National Energy Authority (Iceland)

Icelandic sagas (13th century) provide the first written documentation of geographic names of Iceland's glaciers, but most of the glacier names originated after 1890. This illustrated gazetteer documents 269 modern glacier names used today in Iceland for its 14 ice caps, 2 contiguous ice caps, 109 outlet glaciers, 8 ice-flow basins, 3 ice streams, 55 cirque glaciers, 73 mountain glaciers and 5 valley glaciers. Iceland has 38 named snow patches, 21 surge-type glaciers (not including 7 other possibilities), and 14 jökulhlaup deposits, locally called "jökull." During the last half of the 20th century, 6 named glaciers "disappeared": 3 mountain glaciers melted and 2 distributary outlet glaciers and 1 outlet glacier receded into the parent outlet glacier or ice-cap margin.

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Preface

This is the second of three books about Iceland's glaciers to be authored by Oddur Sigurðsson and Richard S. Williams, Jr. The three books are the result of a long-term collaboration between the two authors and cooperation between their two governmental institutions, the National Energy Authority (Orkustofnun) (<http://www.os.is>) and the U.S. Geological Survey (<http://www.usgs.gov>) under a Memorandum of Understanding between the Icelandic Centre for Research (Rannsóknamiðstöð Íslands, or RANNÍS) (<http://www.rannis.is>) and the U.S. Geological Survey.

The first book, *Icelandic Ice Mountains*, was published by the Icelandic Literary Society (Hið íslenska bókmenntafélag) (<http://www.hib.is>) in 2004 in cooperation with the Icelandic Glaciological Society and the International Glaciological Society:

Williams, R.S., Jr., and Sigurðsson, Oddur, eds., 2004, *Draft of a physical, geographical, and historical description of Icelandic Ice Mountains on the basis of a journey to the most prominent of them in 1792–1794 (with four maps and eight perspective drawings)* by Sveinn Pálsson: Reykjavík, The Icelandic Literary Society, in association with the Icelandic Glaciological Society (Reykjavík) and the International Glaciological Society (Cambridge, England), 183 p.

This second book, *Geographic Names of Iceland's Glaciers: Historic and Modern*, is being published in both English and Icelandic editions and in both printed and digital formats. The English edition, U.S. Geological Survey Professional Paper 1746, is Web accessible through the following URL address of the U.S. Geological Survey: <http://pubs.usgs.gov/pp/pp1746>

The third book, *Glaciers of Iceland*, is the 11th chapter (Chapter D) to be published in the U.S. Geological Survey Professional Paper 1386–A–K series (1988–2009) (see <http://pubs.usgs.gov/fs/2005/3056>) under the Glacier Studies Project (<http://www.glaciers.er.usgs.gov>). The *Glaciers of Iceland* includes a 1:500,000-scale map, *Map of the Glaciers of Iceland*.

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