

General information about hiking in Mykines:

Mykines is a truly amazing place. It is without a doubt the most sacred and fragile of all the places in the Faroe Islands that people can go. It is filled with everything unspoiled nature has to offer and is one of the few Ramsar areas. With thousands of wild seabirds, Puffins, Guillemots, Razorbills, Fulmars, Kittiwakes, Gannets and many many more. Not to mention all the landbased birds that live there as well.

It is now illegal to hike through the puffin land and to the lighthouse on your own. Because of the growing pressure from the steadily increasing number of travellers from all over the world wanting to go to this small delicate area, there has been installed safety measures to protect this wildlife (many of them endangered species).

Rules have been set into place to try to limit the number of people going to this Ramsar area in Mykines. You can read about this on the Visit Faroe Islands page:

<http://www.visitfaroeislands.com/plan-your-stay/transport/new-guidelines-mykines/>

One rule is that there has to be a 100kr fee that goes to the protection of the wildlife with research and maintaining the hiking path etc.

A second rule is that everyone going walking through the Ramsar area needs to be accompanied by a certified guide. The path is very narrow and at times tough to follow because in places it is very steep and twisted. Travelers tend to walk outside of the path, especially when it is rainy, and the path gets muddy. The path can get slippery and dangerous. However, it is very important that people stay on the path because the puffins nest underneath the earth. They nest up to 10-20 cm from the path and sometimes right in the path. Therefore, as soon as you step off the path you are walking in top of the puffin nests. These nests are their homes where they have their babies. It's not just the 120 people a day that are stomping on top of them that makes them feel unsafe, and when the puffins feel unsafe they move away. It is also that the puffins can't return to their babies with the food they caught on the sea, because people are standing too close to the nests and when the babies don't get their food they die. If the puffins can't return to their babies and the babies are unaccompanied they also die (if they get too cold or if a predator hears them they get eaten). This leads to a decreasing number of puffin babies surviving to become adults and themselves having babies.

A third rule is that at certain times during the day there needs to be no people in the Puffin area. This to give the birds a few breaks during the day. Many people want to stop for longer periods of time in the puffin populated area to have their lunch and so forth. This is very harmful to the puffins in the long run. Because as previously mentioned the puffins stay away if someone is too close to their nest.

We always recommend people use a local guide to support the job market in Mykines, which is close to zero with only one job post as the engine man. Which is very little considering there live 12 people in Mykines. This will also add to the good will from the people in the village (They and their homes get photographed a lot). So the community will see these travellers as a positive input rather than a nuisance.