



ICELAND

# ANOTHER YEAR WITH THE GIANTS

For some years back, I did annual reports on my fishing in Iceland. In 2011, I named one ANOTHER YEAR WITH THE GIANTS. After the 2016 season, there is a good reason to make a follower ...

 Nils Folmer Jørgensen

Iceland without doubt one of the most unique places to fish in the world. Besides the breaking nature, high quality river, it's known for huge numbers of salmon, mainly grilse. And yes, grilse do fill a lot and in big numbers along the west coast. But we have big salmon here, and trout. I will now take you through my 2016 season which might give you a picture land of fire and ice.

My season does not start in Iceland. Reason, all inland fishing is banned during winter. Some Trout rivers and lakes open in April and close in October. All wild Salmon rivers are by law only aloud to be fished 90 days within June to September. So, for a fishing junkie like me, that means I HAVE to fish for species like Bonefish, Tarpon, Permit and Sailfish and the warmer part of the world during the winter. But always with looking forward the the Icelandic summer.

A few rivers opened the 1st April. Most popular ones are Huseyjarkvisl and Tungelækur target Sea Trout. I started my fishing in early April on Huseyjarkvisl. I started my season on Huseyjarkvisl. The fish are at this time in the lower part of the river which is not the most interesting part of but can at times be full of fish. Being the first time there, I ended up walking quite far to find pools but no. Flat, sandy and not looking very fishy. In the junction area where the river joins a larger glacier river, there were however some nice spots and lots of Sea Trout. I managed to land three Sea Trout the first evening with a big one of 82 cm. Opposite salmon fishing, you need sinking lines to get action so a Meridian armed with a SONAR TITAN 1/S3/S5 did the trick. Anyways, Iceland 2016 was on!

The next day was a lot of scouting, trying to crack the middle part of the river. I had a hotline, Valli who is the river keeper. I picked up a fish here and there but did not really get a feel with the river. In fact I decided to take off one day earlier than planed but ended up with 9 Sea Trout which I believe is no reason to be sad. I took a look at the upper part of the river which is sold as Salmon Beat. That looked very interesting and something I have to try. On the way back, I stopped and fished some hours in the famous salmon river Vididalsa. The goal was Trout but the salmon/kelt attacked the fly big time! Seven of them in fact which proofs they survive the spawning. All where between 82 and 92 cm, silver and ready to return to the sea. I did manage to get a nice a fat Trout though which was a bit more challenging than the hungry kelt. So a fantastic four hour stop before returning to town.



First fish of the season, 82 cm Sea Trout from Huseyjarkvisl

Next trip was on lake Thingvallavatn on the ION beats which has become very famous for its huge wild Brown Trout. The ION area is private and only fished with 4 rod. First visit was just a evening trip with my good friend Jóhann Hafnfjörð. It was cold and only some of the area was free of ice. But the hot springs under the bank kept an area ice free. We saw a few fish break the surface which always awakens the hunting instinct. Only after a few cast with my Olive Ghost fly and I was in! These fish fight like no other freshwater species, great to feel that power again. Like most fish here, it was big, fat and impressive in every way. And 74 cm of it. I landed 4 Trout in the first 45 minutes with some nice runs underneath the ice. But suddenly the fish seemed to pull out of the bay. Jóhann got one more but otherwise it was over. But a fantastic evening and great warm up to May where it is prime time on this location.



Crazy spring Bown Trout fishing from Thingvallavatn





May started with Bahamas Bonefish, Florida Tarpon but then excited back to Iceland for prime time on Thingvallavatns Brown Trout. Last year was cold and windy but now perfect. Six days of fishing, only two of them windy which is quite decent here in Iceland. For the fishing, it meant a lot of sight fishing with dry flies, nymphs and sometimes a streamer. It was quite simply world class! I don't know of anywhere in the world where you can experience the kind of fishing! On beat I, the Trout were and the good days cruising around in the surface like Tarpon. Not really eating but a Woolly Bugger or some ugly looking dry fly could get them curious enough to bite. On Beat II, the fish were behaving different and eating from the surface.

It would only be boring to read about the numbers of fish each day, there were many! Already on the first evening, I got this seasons first 20 lb Brown Trout after a very long fight with over 100 meters of backing running off. One day I hooked a fish that took almost all my 200 meters of backing! I thought it was hooked in the tail but no. - Just a 96 cm long lean fighting machine. Note that I fish with #6 rods and rather thin tippet. Also small flies.

By the end of the week, I had landed God knows how many Trout with 4 over 20 lb. So this is the absolute best wild Brown Trout fishing I have tried or know of for that matter. One thing is the amount of fish but the average size is beyond anything. Most of the fish here are between 60 and 75 cm. Quite many from 75 to 88 cm. Then there are the big ones in 90+. Finally the monsters which pop up now and then. My friend Magnus was almost knocked over by a fish jumping right besides him on a windy morning. - 30 lb plus. In 2016, I landed a 101 cm Trout here and Stefán Kristjánsson one of 100 cm. So there are some serious big fish here.

June, the month where the Salmon start to arrive and I normally swap into the Salmon gear. I only have a yearly trip to my little dream stream Svarta for Brown Trout but instead did more fishing and some guiding on Thingvallavatns ION instead. The place was in fire with endless insanely strong Brown Trout which is difficult saying no to. All foreigner that visited here normally get a PR with their first fish. So you get to see a lot of happy anglers here. Otherwise all Salmon anglers are excited to see what are in the rivers on the opening. Are there any early springers? The first Salmon rivers to open in Iceland are Blanda and Nordura. The opening was exceptional good! The first group on Blanda landed 99 salmon in only 2,5 days on four rods! That must be a record. The stories were the same for the rivers that opened later in June. It was quite clear that the Salmon had arrived very early, the rivers was already full of fish and producing like it was prime time. Salmon anglers are always excited to hear about the first days on Laxa i Adaldal, Icelands Alta. A big river that is not known for the amount of fish but size. The Nes beat on Adaldal opens the 1st July and this year cleaned the table. - 91 Salmon was caught the first 3 days on 8 rods which has not been recorded in the history of this river! But what stroke me when I saw the pictures pop-up on the web was that the big Salmon already were quite colored which indicates that they have been a long time in the river. It's normally hard work to catch just one fish per day at this times and they should be fresh and sea liced. It certainly looked like these fish already arrived in May.

Back to June, the fishing slowed down after anglers had been fishing on these early arrivers. I did however have a great trip on Blanda. The Salmon were running and many of them. I picked up a few on traditional downstream fishing with a Jock Scott tube but then decided to fish the more intense and challenging riffling hitch. I had never tried that on Blanda but it made the fishing far more interesting. - The Salmon went nuts on a mediums sized Kolskeggur hitch tube. I ended up with 26 Salmon up to 96 cm. So absolute great start to the Salmon season. Only minus and a big one was



that the water was colored and in the afternoon. There river is regulated by a power plant that opened the dam in the morning which costs the fishing in the afternoon. Besides that, great fun. Prime time on Blanda beat I is mid June tip mid July.

I went from Blanda out to meet the owners of West Ranga which like the other rivers had an great opening, in fact the best ever! Normally they only have fish on the lower river at this time and you have to work for them. But 2016 showed fish all over the river. My visit ended up with fishing of course. Normally Ranga anglers use sink tip lines and weighted tubes but I continued my path from Blanda with the riffling hitch. It turned out to be an absolute winner. I landed 7 Salmon and rose quite a few in one morning. Fishing the hitch rose the entertainment a lot. The trip was completed with a sea liced beauty of 102 cm which turned out to be the second biggest of the season on this river which normally does not produce 100 cm Salmon. I had my good fishing on the so called free beat. This is a area between the home pool and the lower waterfall. The main river is wide and rather slow. The free beat is a area where the river is splits up into several small streams and for me much more interesting to fish.

July. All Salmon rivers are open now. It was now clear that the Salmon had arrived at least one month earlier which means slower runs now when it should be picking up. On the opening of River Vididalsa the 24th June, there was already 50-80 salmon standing in the uppermost pool in tributary river Fitja. This is something that normally is first seen in August.

I started my July in River Vididalsa. A top river with lots of space per rod, big fish, great lodge and staff. My three days got hit by a cold front a long with not many running fish. It was tough fishing but being in Iceland on a prime river does not mean impossible like I have experienced in my years in Norway and Scotland. I had a morning with three Salmon on riffling hitch below the old bridge. It was all grise since the big ones already was in the river it seemed like. I got a bigger one up in the pool we call Lower Cooler which was starting to pack with Salmon. A male of 94 cm that had been in the river around a week. A fun catch on a single hand rod which is bar far the most used rod for Salmon fishing in Iceland. For me a Radian 9,6 feet line 7.

In the tributary river Fitja, I spotted lots of salmon from the cliffs in the upper part of the river. I landed a few but many were easily spooked off. Smaller rivers, challenging sight fishing, thats my kind of thing so I was in heaven. On my three days, I ended up with 12 Salmon which was very satisfying under the circumstances but the dream of hitting the July run of big Vididalsa Salmon did not happen for me in 2016.

My next trip was quite and adventure, driving south to north east straight over Iceland. This is a unpopulated and rough area, properly like no other place on earth. You need a proper 4 X 4 to make it to the other side.

On the way over the highlands, my friend Kasper and I stopped to fish Arctic Char in river Tungnaa. Im not really a Char angler but this river is different. Beautiful river were the water is as clear as it gets and the Char love dry flies. We fished two rather short periods in between heavy rain but the Char were on the surface right away taking our CDC flies. Most of the fish are between 50 to 63 cm. We also tried a river nearby called Kaldakvisl which was yet a beauty. Different from the Tungnaa with faster water and more rough scenery. But rough weather made us chicken out.

We drove straight over the bumpy highlands till the car started falling apart. But we made it up to one of Icelands most beautiful but raw salmon rivers, Hafralonsa where I fish every year. Hafralonsa is a fast flowing river with endless space fished only with four rods. It had unlike the other rivers not kicked in, last group only had 5 Salmon in three days.

Hafralonsa is challenging and you need to know it, especially the upper area above the middle canyon. When I started fishing Iceland, Kiddi guide once told me when fishing Midfjardara that he had seen the biggest fish in Iceland on the upper Hafralonsa. The stories always gives us drive ... Both Kasper and I got Salmon the first evening so the trip was

saved. All Salmon were sea liced which is a good sign of our timing on the river. The water level was a bit lower than normal at this time. Normally higher water levels holds the Salmon back in the canyon on the middle river. But the Salmon was running through now. In the morning, there could be around 25 Salmon in the pool Gusti, at noon five. I had rather good fishing on the riffling hitch and my own fly Autumn Hooker. Since the fish were running over the middle falls, we decided to try the upper river which really is endless space and pools. You have to be very optimistic to try finding the fish this early at season up there. But Kiddi guide said the biggest ones are up there early adding some excitement to it. I tried a few pools which I knew but did not feel or see anything. Kasper landed a nice male of 84 cm on a Tin Tin fly in the upper Arnot pool.

At the end of our 3 days, I had landed 12 Salmon. I did not see any monsters or land any big ones. My biggest was a beautiful sea liced male of 89 cm.

I went directly to Laxa i Adaldals Nes beat. Icelands big fish river number one. Not many fish but biggest average size. Like I wrote earlier, the opening gave outstanding good fishing but lots of colored Salmon. Naturally the fishing had slowed down. Unusual many big Salmon had been caught already and I thought this it be a easy to get a 100 cm plus. The fishing for me went beyond





anything I had tried here. I landed no less than 19 Salmon in three days which is record for me. There was fish rising for the fly in most pools. There is no hocus locus here. - Floating lines, long leaders, double hook flies and Salmon that rise to the surface over and over again. - Sometimes even taking the fly. The Salmon loved my own fly patterns Lagsi, Autumn Hooker and Radian which turned out to be the best catching big fish fly of the season. I might had caught a lot of fish but statistically speaking, I was unlucky size wise, only one was over 100 cm which was very strange since some many had been landed already. But any Adaldal Salmon should be praised as a victory. I did however get 11 sea liced salmon topped with a 94 cm perfect bar of silver, the fish that stands strongest in my memory. At the end of July and beginning of August, I guided on Laxa i Adalsals Nes beat. The fishing slowed a bit down but was stabile. More stabile than many other rivers.

Mid August took me to Jökla fishery in the East Iceland. This is a fishery of for different rivers, all with different character. If you want variation, Jökla is the place. Besides its also the best value fishing in Iceland I would say.

Jökla had a great early season but fishing had dramatically slowed down in August, same story once again. We had to work hard. Last year at this time I was pooling fresh Salmon all over but not now. The Salmon had disappeared far up in there river system only leaving a few good pools with fish on the lower part. The famous pool Holafllud on the middle part og Jökla was almost



Hafralónsa magic

empty, the Salmon ran straight through. Last year it held around 200 salmon at this time. I worked hard to get my 9 Salmon on this trip but got rewarded with a 96 cm male which is a big Salmon on this river. He had been in the river for a long time and fits story of Icelandic salmon fishing 2016.

I went back to the West Ranga to fish for a day where the fish also were getting colored and tricky to catch. Like in the spring, I put on a medium sized ruffling hitch and the Salmon went berserk. No matter where I put the fly, something attacked it. It ended up in 15 Salmon I think. I did start with the Ranga standard, sink tip and a tube fly. But only got one fish which was nothing compared with how many I was seeing. Hitch was the medicin!

September, the "crocodile" month. The males have grown a long mouth looking like crocodiles. They are dark in the color with red patterns on their sides. At times aggressive getting into spawning mode. The big males are what many anglers hope to catch and on a big fish year like 2016, Laxa i Adaldal, Vatnsdalsa and Vididal-sa is where you want to be.

I started early September on Laxa i Adaldal. I had one evening on the Arbot area which has not been fished much this summer. I ran into Salmon of 85 and 101 cm on the pool Sponhyllur which Adaldal legend Pétur Steingrímsson told me. It was the first time ever I fished here so a pleasant way to start.

The next three days I spend on Adaldals Nes beat. The first evening gave me five Salmon up to 92 cm which is a very good result. The Salmon took double hooked sizes 8 and 10 flies with my own patterns Mentalizer and Radian.

In the morning, I had the two pools Oseyri and Stiflan for myself which hold a lot of fish now. These two pools are on two different beats but I had two rods for myself giving me the possibility to really rest the pools and thereby hopefully get much better fishing. I made a plan to start in Oseyri and then Stiflan. Afterwards the in between pools and finally Oseyri again. Right away I hooked a small fish of 61 cm got followed by a 91 cm on the first run through the pool. Salmon were showing in the top of the pool where I already had fished so I decided to give it a go again. A few cast into to upper part of the pool, a big Salmon broke the surface while stripping the fly in and took hard. - It was the big one I had hoped for a long time, finally! A big dark crocodile flew out of the water but I had good control for some time. I was close to land it several times but the angry male used its size and weight the head for the neck in the back of the pool. I followed and stopped him from going over. He was hanging out there in the strongest part of the current. - Tired but almost impossible to move. I managed sometimes to pull him up in the pool again but then the current pulled him back. That went on for some time but finally the net went under him and it was the one I had worked 25 Adaldal Salm-on this year to get, 105 cm! All Salmon took my own Oseyri fly in size 8. Yes, the fly has the same name as the pool, not a coincident.

Three Salmon already and now the pool Stiflan. I started above the main pool fishing a shallow sand bar and a deep channel close to the bank. Right away I rose two fish on out on the sand bar but they did not take. Out on what I call Hilli's corner which is a little point coming out from the bank, I just knew that the fly would get taken when it came in along the bank. The fly made its swing and when it stopped along the bank, I stripped it slowly to keep it mo-



Laxa i Adaldal



ving. First strip - bang! An agresive huge fish flew out of the water and ran out in the middle of the main pool and jumped two times. Another big crocodile was on. I had good control over him and successfully landed a 102 cm male. Like all the other fish, I few pictures and safe return.

Further down in the main pool another big fish took the fly just outside the boat we use to cross the river. It was another monster in the right side of 100 cm! He wanted to go over the neck in the back of the pool but the gear was strong and I stopped him. That is also why I was a big surprised that the leader broke just as I was landing the fish. If I had blanked this morning I would be broken but who can complain with a 102 and 105 cm Salmon caught already?

In the absolute lower part of the pool where the water runs off, a 82 cm female took the fly and gave in the my 12 foot double hand rod.

I went upstream and tried the pool above the upper bridge where a 75 cm male salmon had to give in. I was running out of time before the lunch break but just had to try Oseyri again. A fat female of 85 cm became the last fish of the morning. But what a crazy morning! 7 Salmon in a morning on Laxa i Adaldal.

After lunch, I started in the pool Hornflud. I did not get any action in the pool itself but towards the next, a huge fish showed several times almost on the other side of the river. I waded out and cast as far as I could with my custom build T3H named Adaldal. At some point, the Lagsi fly got taken right when hitting the water followed by a series of deep pulls. The fish went down to the next pool named Vitaðsgjafa. When crossing one of the hot spots, another big male salmon jumped, properly annoyed by our presence. My fish I guessed around 95 cm but lost feel with it because weed was starting to collect on the lin. The weed pile grew and became so heavy that the current just pulled the fish down stream towards the next pool Presthyllur. I could not much. My friend Andrey tried to wade out and net the fish but we just kept on going down stream. At some point we could not wade further because of too deep water. At this point I thought it was over and just decided to go on the bank and pull until the hook would pull or line brake. Andrey could not see anything in the disturbed and no colored water. But he put down the net and lifted. Second time, there was a huge pile of weed and inside a Salmon. - Bigger than we thought. We measured it to 104 cm. This day was madness!

I tried Hornflud again where a smaller Salmon of 65 cm fell for the same fly.

I went up to the pool Mori which was said to hold a huge fish. Several guides had seen him during July and August. I did not really know the pool Mori. It is a area where the river is wide, flat and with slow moving water. No features so very boring to say the least. Not for all, Krauni who is a local guide came by and told how great place this was and also helped me out. He also stuck his hands in my fly box and confident said, "this one". He picked another of my own patterns called Husky. He held it to the evening sky and was not in doubt. Wise choice. Not long after I had a fat female Salm-on in the net of 85 cm. A bit further down, a big wave followed the flight a bit until it eventually got taken close to the bank. A massive weight pulled steady down stream until I was close to the next pool Hornflud. I had not seen the fish yet but knew that a 80 cm could not do it. In the calm water close to the bank, I saw the salmon for the first time, it was massive! I desperately waded further out thinking it would be easier to land the fish. But as many others before me has experienced, that is not how it works. Back to the bank, armed with patience, the huge fish came to the net. It was bigger than anything that day and measured 108 cm. That was salmon number 11 of the day which is a record for me on this river. At the

same time it was Salmon number 4 over 100 cm in one day which is also a record. An absolute crazy catch on this river which most likely will be once in a lifetime. Did I mention this was my birthday? What a day!

Next morning I started in Presthyllur. There was no wind leaving a mirror on the river. Sun was baking and some fish were showing. And all over the area, not just in the usual spots you would fish but all the way across the river, I had never seen it like this before. This is a boat pool so I started out close to the bank and fished my way out to the middle. Two Salmon of 95 and 81 cm fell for the Lagsi fly and a small cone tube. I lost one all the way down in the tail of the pool, a place I had never seen fish before. It shows that the Salmon is filling this big area and well spread out here closer to the spawning season.

I rowed up the the area called Skerflud and dropped down along the usual spots. I did not see any fish even though this was a top spot in July but did pick two smaller Salmon up of 72 and 76 cm on the Oseyri fly.

I also tried the stunning pool Kirkjuholmkvisl which is one of the most beautiful spots on the river. I went along with a different looking fly from Pétur Steingrímsson called Bill Young. It was a feather wing version tied on a size 8 hook he made for me this spring. I had to work myself down to the island before a Salmon went for it, a small male of 62 cm.

The afternoon took me to the lower beats the hold a lot of big fish this year. I got a Salmon in two connected pools Grundahorn and Grundakvisl. The last pool is a little stream running behind an island where I love to fish. I hooked a fish on a short line which surprisingly was 100 cm male. It took another of Pétur Steingrímsson's flies called Copper Killer which I got earlier from him the very same day. Pétur lives besides the river.

I spend the evening in Hofdahylur where I landed 3 Salmon up to 85 cm, again on the Oseyri fly. I tried to fish the pools around Knutstadir but could not get the fish to take.

Next morning I had the pools Oseyri and Stiflan again so excited I put the Oseyri fly on and swung it. I fished the pools for 5 hours and only landed one small salmon. But I have had the fishing of







my life on this river. I had landed 27 salmon with 4 over 100 cm in three days in one of the most challenging rivers in Iceland.

Next stop on a coming to an end list 2017 salmon list was River Vatnsdalsá (salmon beat). Another fantastic river I look forward to fish every year. This autumn's Vatnsdalsá trip unfortunately offered a lot of rain, cold, wind and very slow fishing. We pushed ourselves to go out late morning for two days. I ended up with 7 Salmon which but went home one day earlier than planned. We all were tired of the weather already and got more and more stuck to the soft couches at the warm lodge.

The fishing generally got very slow all over Iceland. The reason is most likely that the Salmon arrived one month earlier this year and had settled in already in July. This gave a rather slow August but September were things should pick up was also very slow. The fish had been in the rivers for so long time, seen all the flies and are just stuck to the bottom. I feared that the fish would get into early spawning due to the early arrival but no. I did not catch one September Salmon with milk coming out. So early arrival of Salmon does not change their spawning times.

Normally I don't fish Trout at this time of the season but I had Jim Bartschi from Scott and Jarle Kristiansen from Flyfish Europe coming for a visit. Jim was more into a big Brown Trout rather than Salmon so we tried something I had never tried before, Thingvallavants ION in the autumn.

We started our trip one evening on the little River Varma. Jim and Jarle went to upper part of the river, Ryan and I the lower. Right away I heard from Jarle who brought the news that Jim already had nailed a 70 cm plus Sea Trout.

I was helping Ryan into some action in the famous pool Stodvarhylur. He got Brown Trout, Sea Trout and Char some very happy man. We split out on the river and picked up smaller Sea Trout here and there. The next two days was dedicated to ION's monsters which I have never tried at this time of the season. Where the fish in the area this time? Did the river on beat II attract the Trout? Yes to all! The fish were there, jumping like mad, behaving totally different than in the spring. They were jumping all out of the water like Salmon. - Big colored males showing off. The only problem was that heavy rain had flooded the small river and pushed the fish far into the lake where we could not reach them. We worked hard an eventually Ryan hooked a fat Trout of 74 cm on a nymph, his trip was complete. Next evening I got some action, two fish of 62 and big colored male of 82 cm.



Laxa / Adaldal 100 cm plus madness



River Vididalsá and its Salmon was next on the menu. The weather was better here in the north. The story was the same as Vatnsdalsá which is the neighbour river, slow fishing. I was sharing beat with Jim and Jarle on beat III. I went to the upper area and started scouting for Salmon in the pool Snagskýlur. I could see at least 4 salmon and a bunch of Char so I went down and cast a 0,5" Autumn Hooker tube fly upstream, stripped it in and bang! First cast, 78 cm female. Another smaller one followed down in the pool Upper Valhýlur. But that was it for me that evening. My friends Sturla, Teitur and Birgir did great down on beat II with 5 Salmon up to 90 cm! So not impossible.

Next morning we were on beat II. Jim had been unlucky on ION but it that was not enough. - He was trying a new reel he was given which almost exploded into pieces after hooking a huge Salmon on the right side of 100 cm.

That day was my first ever on Vididalsá without a Salmon. I had one on for a few seconds in the famous pool Dalsaros but that was it.

The next morning I was in the tributary river, Fitja. Small river with lots of sight fishing. There were fish in more or less every little pocket in the upper part of the river. But it was very difficult to get to them without spooking them. The first pool I went to was the pool Bjarnafoss close to the uppermost waterfall. I literally just put my head out over the cliff and spooked all the Salmon, about 50 of them. I walked the river and cast to all the fish I saw. I landed 6 Salmon that morning up to 92 cm. It seems like a lot but I spooked of more. Even in faster water, the shadow from the fly line spooked them even before the line landed. This is where the Brown Trout skills come in handy.

The evening gave me nothing but the last morning 2 very nice Salmon in the pools Dalsaros and Hardeyjarstrengur. 81cm and a fat female of 95 cm and a small size 14 Autumn Hooker fly. The rain and cold had now hit the north and I was glad that the salmon season had for me come to the end. - Finally!

Many Salmon rivers close around the 21st September, a few run the the 31st September. Only the artificial Ranga rivers are open longer than the 90 day rule for wild salmon rivers allow, they are fished to the 20th October.

I had also had enough fishing and was happy to clean the lines and store the salmon tackle. Now it was time to focus

on work again only disturbed by tropical fishing. But in the last day of September, I got a call from Thorir who invited me to fish Stora Laxa beat IV. I had never tried this but heard its one of the most beautiful places to fish. Not many salmon, extremely rough terrain but a feeling of raw beauty that you can't experience anywhere else. I had to see that. A switch rod was brought out of winter retirement.

I got late out of town and only having a few hours to fish. I met Tómas Sigurðsson and Johann Gunn at the river. They turned out to be really very helpful. We drove all the way up through the rough landscape, crossed the river and continued till we could not get further. We were deep into our island here in the north, far away from the sea. I walked 20 minutes further up to the most upper pool of the river called Armot.

The river was nice indeed! Medium sized river, long classic pools, gin clear water. It was quite easy to read but still you wonder where the fish are when visiting the first time. It takes many years to learn the actual spots under changing circumstances. I big male revealed himself while I was scouting from the cliffs. I ran over to upper part of the pool fast which I later learned from Tómas was the actual taking spot. I did however land a small Salmon of 65 cm close to where I saw the big male in the middle part. I was down by the spot where the big fish had shown. I did not get any pulls and did something I don't do normally, I went though many flies and technics. In smaller rivers, you normally only get one chance before the fish are spooked. Bigger rivers with fast water, you get more unless you walk into their faces. I tried changing into a weighted black fly which got taken on the first cast while sinking. The fish went deep back and forth in the pool for a long time. I was not in doubt it was a big fish over 90 cm. After 20 minutes, the guys came and saw the fish and said, "20 lb". I pressured the fish more and it came up in the surface but got stuck in rock out in the middle of the river. Now we could see it and it was big! But stuck, line wrapped around rocks and it was too deep to wade out. After almost giving up, it suddenly came free. With the risk of a damaged leader after the contact with the rocks, I took it easy but Tómas got it in the net shortly after. 98 cm male Salmon, joy! This was one of my biggest moments this season since I did not expect to catch anything and then to start like this.

I drove down to the lower part of the Beat IV and saw some absolute stunning pools but it was getting dark and time to call it off. That was the last fishing day for me in Iceland in 2016. It has been a fantastic season for me. Like mentioned earlier, the Salmon came very early this year and it was as many predicted a big fish year. In my time on Laxa i Adaldal, I have never seen anything like it. On Adaldal alone, I landed 7 Salmon over 100 cm which is something I have never even thought would happen. With the 102 cm from Ranga, that's 8 over 100 for me. Vatnsdalsá gave a giant of 110 cm. Adaldal had 3 over 110 cm I think. If anybody should visit these river, note this is not normal catches!

2016 will be remembered as a big fish year and for the early arriving Salmon. The catch number was average but the size of the fish takes the attention.

If you are dreaming of fishing Iceland, here a few tips. The most expensive places are not always the best. Ask people who have fished the rivers you are thinking of if they are as good as advertised. Decide if you want to fish single hand and small rivers, double hand and larger rivers. Do you want full service or self catering lodging? I recommend getting a guide on your first trips. Check if your guide has lots of fishing experience on the river before booking. Hiring a guide costs the same as renting a 4X4 car. With a guide you both get the ride and help to get fish.



Fitja sight fishing



First salmon in Stora Laxa



Jim on the last day of the season on Thingvallavatn

