

Timea Filipcová

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10.02.01

Efni: permit to fly a drone in protected areas in Iceland

The Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland has received an application from Timea Filipcová, dated July 28th 2025, for permit to fly a drone in Dyrhólaey, the beach at Stapi and Hellnar, Fjaðrárgljúfur, Fjallabak, Geysir area, Gullfoss, Grábrók, Hveravallir, Kerlingarfjöll, Reykjanes country park, Skógafoss, Snæfellsjökull national park, Vatnajökull national park and Þjórsárdalur.

Dyrhólaey is protected as a nature reserve, cf. regulation no.101/1978. Construction work and disturbance to geological formations and wild animal life in the protected area is prohibited. According to the management plan regulations permission must be obtained from the Nature Conservation Agency for operating an unmanned aircraft/drone within the area.

Fjaðrárgljúfur is protected as a nature reserve, cf. regulation no 555/2024. It is prohibited to disturb vegetation or geological formation within the protected area. A permit from the Nature Conservation Agency must be obtained for planned events and projects that may cause disruption or require facilities, personnel, or the use of equipment within the protected area, such as for film production, art events, and gatherings.

Fjallabak is protected as a nature reserve, cf. regulation no. 354/1979. Construction work, extraction of minerals, disturbance to geological formations, vegetation and wild animal life in the protected area is prohibited. The use of unmanned aircraft (drones) within the nature reserve from June 15th – September 15th is subject to a permit from the Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland.

Geysir is protected as natural monument, cf. regulation no. 660/2020. Operating an unmanned aircraft/drone within the protected area is subjected to a permit from the Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland.

Gullfoss is protected as a nature reserve, cf. regulation no. 141/1979. Disturbance to geological formations, vegetation and wild animal life is prohibited. Operating an unmanned aircraft/drone within the protected area is subjected to a permit from the Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland.

Grábrókargígar is protected as natural monument, cf. regulation no. 216/1975. Disturbance to geological formations is prohibited.

Hjálparfoss, Gjáin, Háifoss and Granni are protected as natural monument, cf. regulation no. 110/2020. Disturbance to geological formations, vegetation and wild animal life in the protected area is prohibited. Permission must be obtained from the Nature Conservation Agency for organized events and projects that pose a risk of disturbance to geological formations, wildlife or guests in the area. Operating an unmanned aircraft/drone within the protected area is subjected to a permit from the Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland.

Landscape protected area north of Dyrfjöll is protected cf. regulation no. 850/2021. Disturbance to geological formations, vegetation and wild animal life in the protected area is prohibited. Permission must be obtained from the Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland for organized events and projects that need facilities, labour force or use of equipment within the protected area such as filming, at events and ceremonies.

Kerlingarfjöll is protected as an area of landscape, cf. regulation no. 822/2020. Disturbance to geological formations, landscape, hot springs, other springs and ecosystems in hot springs in the protected area is prohibited. Permission must be obtained from the Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland for organized events and projects that need facilities, labour force or use of equipment within the protected area such as filming, at events and ceremonies.

Reykjanes country park is protected cf. regulation 520/1975. Disturbance to geological formations is prohibited.

Skógafoss is protected as a natural monument, cf. regulation no. 477/1987. Disturbance to geological formations, vegetation and wild animal life in the protected area is prohibited. Photography, cinemaphotography and events that can affect visitors experience in the area are subjected to a permit from the Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland. Operating an unmanned aircraft/drone within the protected area is subjected to a permit from the Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland.

The beach at Stapi and Hellnar is protected as a nature reserve cf. regulation no. 284/1988. Disturbance to geological formations, vegetation and wild animal life in the protected area is prohibited. Operating an unmanned aircraft/drone within the protected area is subjected to a permit from the Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland.

Snæfellsjökull National park is protected as a national park cf. regulation no. 935/2021. Operating an unmanned aircraft within the national park is subjected to a permit from the Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland according to art. 7 in the Regulation during nesting season. Permit from the Nature Conservation Agency is needed for any kind of commercial activity and events within the national park according to art. 15 in the Regulation.

Vatnajökull National Park is protected according to act no. 60/2007. According to art. 14, it is prohibited to cause damage or disturbance to the wildlife, geological formations, landscape, and cultural heritage sites within Vatnajökull National Park. According to art. 15(a) of act no. 60/2007, it is prohibited to conduct commercial activities within the national park without a temporary usage agreement for such activities with Vatnajökull National Park.

According to art 15(a) of act no. 60/2007, permission must be obtained from the park ranger for organized events and projects that require facilities, manpower, or the use of equipment in the national park, such as film production, art events, gatherings, and research.

Jökulsárlón and Fellsfjara – Drone flying is only permitted early in the morning or in the evening, before 9:00 or after 18:00.

Dettifoss – Drone flying is only permitted before 8:00 or after 18:00.

Eldgjá/Ófærufoss – Drone flying is generally only permitted early in the morning or in the evening, before 10:00 or after 16:00 if there are not many visitors in the area. Please contact ranger in the area before you fly the drone.

Laki/Lakagígar – Drone flying is only permitted early in the morning or in the evening, before 10:00 or after 16:00, on and around the mountain Laki if there are not many visitors in the area. Drone flying is permitted elsewhere in the Lakagígar area. Please contact ranger in the area before you fly the drone.

Description of the project:

Permit is requested to fly a drone in Dyrhólaey, the beach at Stapi and Hellnar, Fjaðrárgljúfur, Fjallabak, Geysir area, Gullfoss, Grábrók, Hveravellir, Kerlingafjöll, Landscape protected area north of Dyrfjöll, Reykjanes country park, Skógafoss, Snæfellsjökull national park, Vatnajökull national park and Þjórsárdalur. At the beach at Stapi and Hellnar the flights would take place at Arnarstapi. In Fjallabak the flights would take place at Brennisteinsalda, Landmannalaugar, Stútur crater and Hnauapollur. In the Landscape protected area north of Dyrfjöll the drone flight would take place in Stapavík. In Reykjanes country park would the droneflight take place in Kríuvík Geothermal area. In Snæfellsjökull national park the droneflight would take place at Lóndrangar, Svalpúfu, Þúfubjarg and Svörtuloft lighthouse. In Vatnajökull national park the droneflight would take place at Dettifoss, Laki craters, Ófærufoss in Eldgjá, Jökulárlón and Svínafells glacier. In Þjórsárdal the flights would take place at Gjáinn and Háifoss. Maps showing flight areas and information about flight dates was included in the application. The drone flights would take place in the period of August 18th -30th 2025

Impact assessment:

The Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland considers the project not likely to have negative impact on nature and conservation value of Fjallabak, Geysir area, Gullfoss, Vatnajökull

national park and Þjórsárdalur. The agency considers that the flight might however have negative impact on other visitors but the impact can be reduced if conditions of the permit are followed except for Landmannalaugar. In Landmannalaugar is high density of people in the area requested to fly and for safety reasons droneflight is not allowed there. The agency considers the droneflight likely to have negative impact on birdlife and visitors experience in Dyrhólaey, the beach at Stapi and Hellnar, Skógafoss and Snæfellsjökull national park but the impact could be reduced if conditions of the permit are followed.

Conclusions and conditions:

The Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland hereby declines Timea Filipcová request to fly a drone at Landmannalaugar in Fjallabak.

After revision of the application, regulations for the sites and management plans it is concluded that no permission is needed from the Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland to fly a drone Fjaðrárgljúfur, Grábrók, Hveravellir, Kerlingafjöll, Landscape protected area north of Dyrfjöll and Reykjanes country park in the period requested if the project does not disturb wildlife and other visitors experience. In Vatnajökull national park no permit is needed to fly at Svínafellsjökul. For Dettifoss no written permit is needed to fly the drone before 8:00 or after 18:00 and at Jökulárlón before 9:00 or after 18:00. For Eldgjá and Laka no written permission is needed to fly the drone before 10:00 or after 16:00.

The Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland hereby grants Timea Filipcová permission on its behalf to fly a drone Dyrhólaey, the beach at Stapi and Hellnar, Fjallabak (Brennisteinsalda, Stútur crater and Hnauapollur), Geysir area, Gullfoss, Skógafoss, Snæfellsjökull national park, Vatnajökull national park and Þjórsárdalur as described above in the period of August 18th - 30th 2025:

- Keep this letter with you on site during the project.
- The applicant shall inform rangers in the area about their arrival and departure. This is to be done 24 hours before entering the area and again before leaving it.
- If the project dates or description changes the Nature Conservation Agency shall be notified as soon as possible.
- Applicant should always stay on authorized paths/tracks/roads.
- Applicant must follow rules of conduct that apply to the area.
- If any complications occur during the project, please contact the ranger or the Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland, tel. +354 556 6800.
- All disturbance to animals and wildlife is strictly prohibited.
- Off-road driving in Iceland is strictly prohibited.
- If the material is meant for public viewing it must be noted in the video/subtext that permission from the Nature Conservation Agency was obtained for the filming/photography.

- The applicant should be conscious of other guests on the sites and make sure that filming causes as little disturbance as possible to other visitors.
- An unmanned aircraft should never be flown in close proximity to people. Please take precaution not to disturb people's experience, their safety or personal privacy nor the general peace of the protected areas being filmed.
- According to Icelandic law it is forbidden to fly close to cliffs where birds nest. An unmanned aircraft should never be flown near animals or birds, neither in nesting areas nor during nesting season or any other seasonal time when animals or bird habitats are considered vulnerable.
- Flight time should be kept to a minimum and flight should be avoided during the area's busiest times of the day.
- If the use of unmanned aircraft causes disturbance to wildlife in the area, its use should be ceased at once.
- The conductor of the unmanned aircraft is responsible for the aircraft within the protected area. This includes taking responsibility of any possible risk of harm to people, fauna and nature and leaving no permanent marks on the site in question. Should the aircraft crash, all components from it must be collected and removed from the area.
- **It is forbidden to fly drones in the canyon in front of the waterfall at Skógafoss due to wildlife protection.**
- For safety reasons, unmanned aircraft are not allowed to fly below 50 m above Strokkur.
- It is forbidden to fly drones next to bird cliffs at Dyrhólaey, the beach at Stapi and Hellnar, Skógafoss and all areas in Snæfellsjökull national park in a closer proximity than 50 meters, if birds are in the cliffs. The drones need to take off at least 50 meters inland and reach maximum flight height before he starts to fly over the cliff edge.
- No droneflight is allowed at Landmannalaugar, at Dettifoss between 8:00 and 18:00 and at Eldgjá and Laki between 10:00 and 16:00.
- If falcons or eagles are seen in the areas, it is not allowed to fly the drone there.

If the licensee causes damage to nature, according to art. 87 in the Nature Conservation Act no. 60/2013, the Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland can, according to the Nature Conservation Act, f.e. order the licensee to fix damage to nature and vegetation and/or stop the project.

The Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland can according to art. 89 in the Nature Conservation Act no. 60/2013 change conditions of the permit, add new conditions or withdraw the permit in order to prevent damage to nature if environmental conditions change.

According to art 89. in the Nature Conservation Act no. 60/2013 the Nature Conservation Agency can withdraw the permit if conditions of the permit are not complied to.

Unmanned aircraft should take off and land in a safe distance from other visitors according to regulation 1360/2024 on unmanned aircrafts.

The usage of a drone shall be according to regulation no. 1360/2024 on the operation of remotely piloted aircraft (<https://www.icetra.is/aviation/drones/>).

Please note that according to the regulation all drones need to be registered at the Icelandic Transport Authority. You can register them at the webpage flydrone.is

The decision may be appealed to the Ministry for the Environment and Natural Resources according to art. 26 of Act no. 37/1993 on Administrative Procedures, based on Art. 91 of Act no. 60/2013 on Nature Conservation within three months from the date of this letter.

Permission fee:

Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland charges a fee for processing applications for permits in protected areas based on Article 92 of Act no. 61/2013 on Nature Conservation. The fee for constructions, droneflights, cinematography and/or photography is **83.200 ISK** according to art. 7. b. in the agency's tariff no. 354/2025.

Supervision:

The Nature Conservation Agency will supervise the project. The supervisor will be a ranger from the Nature Conservation Agency.

Ragnheiður Björk Sigurðardóttir
advisor

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