

Ron Ball Photography

Garðabær, 17. July 2025

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10.02.01

Permit to use a drone within protected areas in Iceland

The Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland has received an application from Ron Ball Photography, dated 20. June 2025, for a permit to use a drone within protected areas in Iceland during the period of July 17-24, 2025.

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. Any activities that could lead to disturbance, including construction, land disturbance, and other changes to the land within the protected area, require permits from the Nature Conservation Agency, the municipality, landowners, and, where applicable, other relevant laws. 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.

Goðafoss is protected as natural monument, cf. regulation no. 647/2020. Disturbance to vegetation, wildlife and geological formation is prohibited. 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.

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. Operating an unmanned aircraft/drone within the protected area is subjected to a permit from the Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland.

Hverfjall is protected as a natural monument, cf. regulation no. 1391/2024. Disturbance to vegetation and wildlife is prohibited. Permission must be obtained from the Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland for organized events and projects that pose a risk of disturbance to geological formations, wildlife or guests in the area.

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.

Vatnajökull National Park is protected according to act no. 60/2007. According to art 15(b) a 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. The park ranger is authorized to set any conditions for the granting of permits that are deemed necessary.

Using a drone in Skaftafell is prohibited. An exception is made for flying drones in front of Skaftafellsjökull, but only early in the morning or in the evening, before 9 am or after 6 pm.

Using a drone at Svínafellsjökull is permitted.

Kerið, Kvernufoss, Lómagnúpur, Múlagljúfur, Seljalandsfoss, Sólheimajökull, Stokksnes, Stuðlagil, Grafarkirkja, Kirkjufell and Rauðfeldsgjá are not within protected areas and are therefore not subject to a permit from the Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland.

Description of the project:

The project applied for is for flying a drone. The flight paths of waterfalls and natural landmarks will be conducted at a safe distance and below 120 meters altitude. The intent is to capture broad, sweeping views. Canyon areas would require lower flights. Every attempt will be made to ensure the safety of the people in the areas and not to disturb visitors' experience or wildlife. Flight durations will be short. No restrictions will be on pedestrians or motorized traffic. The drone will only be launched away from people and only when safe to do so.

Impact assessment:

The Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland considers the project not likely to have negative impact on conservation value of the sites and nature. The flights might disturb other visitors and thus have negative effect on other their experience. The Nature Conservation Agency considers that the impact can be reduced if conditions of the permit are followed.

Conclusions and conditions:

The Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland hereby grants Ron Ball Photography permission on its behalf to use a drone within the above-mentioned areas as describe here above on the following conditions:

- Keep this letter with you on site during the project.

- The applicant shall inform rangers in the areas 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 of Iceland shall be notified as soon as possible.
- Crew members should always stay on authorized paths/tracks/roads.
- The crew 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 disturbances to animals and wildlife are strictly prohibited.
- Off-road driving in Iceland is prohibited.
- The project's staff are required to prevent all disturbance to the environment and make sure that all litter is removed from the sites.
- 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 crew 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 near people. Please take precautions 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 for 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.
- For safety reasons, the pilot of an unmanned aerial vehicle must wear marked clothing so that the person can be identified.
- **It is forbidden to fly drones in the canyon in front of the waterfall at Skógafoss due to wildlife protection.**
- It is forbidden to fly drones next to bird cliffs in a closer proximity than 200 meters during nesting season.

- It is forbidden to fly drones next to bird cliffs in a closer proximity than 50 meters, if birds are on the cliffs.
- If falcons or eagles are seen in the area, 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 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 aircraft. 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.

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 construction, drone flights, 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 of Iceland will supervise the project. The supervisors will be rangers from the agency.

Sincerely

Valdimar Kristjánsson

Advisor

Ingibjörg Marta Bjarnadóttir

team leader