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Reykjavík, miðvikudagur, 10. ágúst 2022  
UST202207-204/F.P.  
09.06.01

**Subject: Permit to fly a drone within various protected areas in Iceland.**

The Environment Agency of Iceland has received an application from Alberto Jimenez Iglesias, dated July 20<sup>th</sup> 2022 for a drone flight within Dyrhólaey, Gullfoss, Geysir, Skógafoss, Goðafoss, Skútustaðargíggar and Fjallabak nature protection areas.

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. A permit from the Environment Agency is needed for camping inside the nature reserve. This includes tents, motorhomes and campers.

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.

Geysir is protected as natural monument, cf. regulation no. 660/2020. All disturbance of geological monuments is prohibited, incl. any inscriptions and disturbance of the activity and water level of the hot spring area, disturbance of hot springs, hot springs, soils and rocks, without permission. Helicopters and other manned aircraft may not land within the area without the permission of the Environment Agency. Operating an unmanned aircraft/drone within the protected area is subjected to a permit from the Environment 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 Environment Agency of Iceland.

Goðafoss is protected as natural monument, cf. regulation no. 1261/2011. 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 Environment Agency of Iceland.

Skúturstaðargíggar is protected as a natural monument, cf. regulation no. 399/1973. 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. Camping overnight is only allowed in a designated campsite. This includes tents, motorhomes and campers. Photography, cinematography and events that can affect visitors experience in the area are subjected to a permit from the Environment Agency of Iceland.

***Description of the project:***

A permit is requested to fly a 570 gr. drone in various protected areas. The applicant will carry out aerial photography for the purpose of personal use. The maximum flight altitude will not exceed altitude of 50 metres. Flight at each location will be 10-15 minutes maximum. The applicant will stay on paths.

The places and dates requested are as follows:

- August 30th 2022: Gullfoss, Geysir and Skógafoss
- August 31st 2022: Dyrhólaey and Landmannalaugar
- September 4th 2022: Skútustaðagígar
- September 6th 2022: Goðafoss

***Review:***

In accordance to art. 17. in regulation 665/2012 the Environment Agency of Iceland requested a review from the Icelandic Institute of Natural History and the Lake Mývatn Research station on August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022 for Skútustaðagígar. The review from Icelandic Institute of Natural History was received on August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022. In their review it is considered safe to allow the drone flight in Skútustaðagígar, as the bird breeding season has ended and therefore there are fewer birds in the area. Their conditions are that that the drone must only be flown directly over the pseudo craters and groups of birds must be avoided at all costs. The review from the Lake Mývatn Research station was received on August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022. In their review they have no comment on this drone flight.

***Impact assessment:***

The Environment Agency of Iceland considers the project to be minimal and not likely to have negative impact on the area. It might temporarily disturb other guests. To minimise disturbance, it's important to keep flight time to a minimum, keep the drone away from guests and wildlife and avoid flying during the area's the busiest time of day

***Conditions:***

The Environment Agency of Iceland hereby grants Alberto Jimenez Iglesias permission on its behalf to fly a drone within Dyrhólaey, Gullfoss, Geysir, Skógafoss, Goðafoss, Skútustaðagígar and Fjallabak as described above on August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022 – September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022 on the following conditions:

- Keep this letter with you on site during the project. The permit conditions should be introduced to the staff of the project before work begins.
- 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 Environment Agency shall be notified as soon as possible.
- The applicant should always stay on authorized paths/tracks/roads. • The applicant must follow rules of conduct that apply to the area.

- 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. If the material is meant for public viewing it must be noted in the video/subtext that permission from the Environment Agency was obtained for the filming/photography.
- 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.
- 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 security reasons, it is prohibited to fly drone less than 50m above Strokkur and Geysir.**
- **It is forbidden to fly drones next to bird cliffs in a closer proximity than 200 meters.**
- **In Landmannalaugar it is forbidden to fly over campsite and the hot pool bathing area.**
- All disturbance to animals and wildlife is strictly prohibited.
- Off-road driving in Iceland is strictly prohibited.

If the developer causes damage to nature, according to art. 87 in the Nature Conservation Act no. 60/2013, the Environment 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 Environment 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 Environment 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 990/2017 on unmanned aircrafts.

The usage of a drone shall be according to regulation no. 990/2017 on the operation of remotely piloted aircraft (<https://www.icetra.is/aviation/drones/>).

Please note that according to the regulation all drones used for commercial flight need to be registered at the Icelandic Transport Authority.

***Permission fee:***

Environment 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 cinematography and/or photography is 52.600 ISK according to art. 24. b. in the agency's tariff no. 535/2015.

***Supervision:***

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

Sincerely

Valdimar Kristjánsson  
advisor

Freyja Pétursdóttir  
advisor