

Living - Foto Michael Liebmann
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Subject: Application for flying a drone within protected areas

The Environment Agency of Iceland has received an application from Michael Liebmann, dated 5th of July 2021, for filming with a drone within the protected areas of Geysir, Gullfoss, Fagradalsfjall Volcano, Suðlagil Canyon, Svartifoss, Goðafoss and Skógafoss on 12th of July - 18th of July 2021.

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.

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, cinemaphotography and events that can affect visitors experience in the area are subjected to a permit from the Environment Agency of Iceland.

Fagradalsfjall Volcano, Suðlagil Canyon is not protected, and Svartifoss is under the supervision of Vatnajökulsþjóðgarður. The applicant needs to apply directly to the landowner/municipality of the area.

Description of the project:

The project includes 2 persons that will take arial photography in these locations. Some short flights will be carried out in and around the locations points with maximum 120m over ground.

Impact assessment:

The Environment Agency of Iceland considers the project not likely to have negative effect on the areas if the conditions of the permit are followed. To prevent disturbance to nesting birds a drone should not be flown within 200 m proximity to bird cliffs in Skógafoss and should not be flown in the canyon in front of the waterfall at Skógafoss.

Conclusions and conditions:

The Environment Agency of Iceland hereby grants Michael Liebmann permission on its behalf to fly a drone within Gullfoss, Geysir, Goðafoss and Skógafoss as described above on 12th of July – 18th of July 2021 on the following conditions:

- 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 Environment Agency shall be notified as soon as possible.
- An unmanned aircraft should never be flown near 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.**
- It is forbidden to fly drones next to bird cliffs in a closer proximity than 200 meters during nesting season. All disturbance to animals and wildlife is strictly prohibited.
- Due to security reasons, it is prohibited to fly drone less than 50m above Strokkur and Geysir.
- Off-road driving in Iceland is strictly prohibited.

- The project's staff is required to prevent all disturbance to the environment and make sure that all litter is removed from the sites.
- Crew members should stay on marked paths the whole time.

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.

A permission from the landowners and/or the municipality might be needed for the project.

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.

Sincerely

Magnús Freyr Sigurkarlsson
Director

Þórdís Björt Sigþórsdóttir
Advisor