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09.04.00

Subject: permit to fly a drone in protected areas

The Environment Agency of Iceland has received an application from Ronald Söthje, dated January 17th 2024, for a permit to film and fly a drone within Dynjandi, Dyrhólaey, Friðland að Fjallabaki, Geysir, Goðafoss, Gullfoss, Skógafoss, nature monuments in Þjórsárdalur (Gjáin, Háifoss, Granni and Hjalparfoss), Ströndin við Stapa og Hellnar, Snæfellsjökull national park (Lóndrangar, Svalpúfa, Snæfellsjökull and Saxhólsbjörg), Látrabjarg, Dimmuborgir, Hverfjall/Hverfell and Skútustaðagígar protected areas in Iceland.

Dimmuborgir is protected as a natural monument, cf. regulation no. 1262/2011. Disturbance to geological formations, vegetation and wild animal life in the protected area is prohibited. Events and commercial filming is subjected to a permit from the Environment Agency of Iceland.

Dynjandi is protected as a natural monument, cf. regulation no. 348/1971. Construction work, disturbance to geological formations and other changes to landscape is subjected to a permit from the Environment Agency of Iceland. According to the rules of conduct operating an unmanned aircraft/drone within the protected area is subjected to a permit from the Environment Agency of Iceland.

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 Environment Agency for operating an unmanned aircraft/drone within the area.

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 Environment Agency of Iceland.

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.

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.

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.

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 Environment 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 Environment Agency of Iceland.

Hverfjall is protected as a natural monument, cf. regulation no. 1261/2011. Disturbance to vegetation and wildlife is prohibited. The guest should follow marked paths at any given time.

Látrabjarg is protected as a nature reserve, cf. regulation no. 300/2021. 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. Photography, cinemaphotography and events that can affect visitors experience in the area are subjected to a permit from the Environment Agency of Iceland. Operating an unmanned aircraft/drone within the protected area is subjected to a permit from the Environment 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 Environment 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 Environment Agency of Iceland according to art. 7 in the Regulation during nesting season.

All nature-related research, that is not legally endorsed by a research institution is subject to permission from the Environment Agency of Iceland.

Description of the project:

It is requested to film and fly a drone at the protected areas Dynjandi, Dyrhólaey, Fjallabak, Geysir, Goðafoss, Gullfoss, Skógafoss, nature monuments in Þjórsárdalur (Gjáin, Háifoss, Granni og Hjálparfoss), Ströndin við Stapa og Hellnar, Snæfellsjökull national park (Lóndrangar, Svalþúfa, Snæfellsjökull and Saxhólsbjörg), Látrabjarg, Dimmuborgir, Hverfjall/Hverfell and Skútustaðagígar. Filming will take place from March 5th 2024 to december 20th 2028. The drone flight will take place from March 5th 2024 to April 4th each year and August 27th until Desember 20th each year. Exact dates will be depend on general weather forecasts. There will be no droneflights at Friðland að Fjallabaki before september 15th. This project is a continuation of a permit issued on October 20th 2022. Description of the droneflight was received on March 3rd 2022 for the original application for a permit to fly in these areas in 2023 with information about flightroutes, altitude, take off and landing places and distance from birdcliffs. The film crew consists of two people and if necessary local guides. There are no changes in the project except the dates.

Impact assessment:

The Environment Agency of Iceland considers the project to be minimal and not likely to have negative impact on the areas. 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 busiest time of day. Location of takeoff and landing should be far from guests in the areas.

Conclusions and conditions:

After revision of the application, regulations for the sites and management plans it is concluded that no permission is needed to film in all sites if it does not disturb wildlife and other visitors experience. No permission is needed to fly the drone at Snæfellsjökull national park, Dimmuborgir, Hverfjall and Skútustaðargígar in the period requested.

The Environment Agency of Iceland hereby grants Ronald Söthje permission on its behalf to fly a drone within the sites Dynjandi, Dyrhólaey, Fjallabak, Geysir, Goðafoss, Gullfoss, Skógafoss, nature monuments in Þjórsárdalur (Gjáin, Háifoss, Granni og Hjálparfoss), - Ströndin við Stapa og Hellnar, and Látrabjarg as described above from March 5th to April 4th 2024 and August 27th until Desember 20th 2024 with the possibility to renew it after that 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.
- 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 Environment Agency of Iceland, tel. +354 591 2000.
- The project's staff is 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 Environment Agency was obtained for the filming/photography.
- All disturbance to animals and wildlife is strictly prohibited.
- Off-road driving in Iceland is strictly prohibited.
- 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 wildlife protection.**
- **For safety reasons, unmanned aircraft are not allowed to fly below 50 m above Strokki.**
- **It is forbidden to fly drones next to bird cliffs in a closer proximity than 50 meters, if birds are in the cliffs.**
- **If falcons or eagles are seen in the area, it is not allowed to fly the drone there.**

If the applicant 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 in order 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.

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 constructions, droneflights, cinematography and/or photography is **83.200 ISK** according to art. 29. b. in the agency's tariff no. 1410/2023.

Supervision:

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

Sincerely

Ragnheiður Björk Sigurðardóttir
advisor

Pórdís Vilhelmína Bragadóttir
advisor