

Thomas Birbaum  
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**Subject: permit to film with a drone in protected areas**

The Environment Agency of Iceland has received an application from Thomas Birbaum, dated 7<sup>th</sup> of July 2021, for aerial shot using drone within *Þjórsárdalur*, *Fjallabak*, *Skógafoss*, *Strokkur* and *Dyrhólaey*.

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. According to the management plan regulations no. 10 permission must be obtained from the Environment Agency for using drones within the protected area from 15<sup>th</sup> of June to 15<sup>th</sup> of September.

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 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.

Hjálparfoss, Gjáin, Háifoss and Granni are in Þjórsárdalur nature conservation area, 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.

***Description of the project:***

An application to film aerial shots using a drone within the areas mentioned above. Two people, a pilot and a spotter. Maximum flight altitude is 120m. Attached to the application is a document with maps that show marked flightpaths and take-off and landing locations.

- 26.07.2021 - Fly in the ***Þjórsárdalur nature conservation area*** (1 flight of 15-20 minutes) and ***Háifoss*** (1 flight of 15 minutes).
- 27.07.2021 : Fly in the ***Fjallabak nature reserve*** on the following locations:  
***Landmannalaugar/Bláhnjúkur*** : flight over the mountain range,  
max 3 flights of 25 minutes each.  
***Ljótípollur*** : flight over the crater lake and its surroundings,  
1 flight of 25 minutes  
***Bláhylur*** : flight over the crater lake and around the craters next to road F208 north of the lake (64.064901,-19.044798) 2 flights of 15-20 minutes each
- Between the 26th and the 31.07.2021 (depending on the weather)  
***Skógafoss*** 1 flight of 15-20 minutes - will stay away from the cliffs where birds are nesting and stay above 40m altitude to not disturb other tourists
- 30.07.2021 : ***Strokkur*** (Geysir) : 1 flight of 10-15 minutes at above 50m altitude and  
***Gullfoss*** : 1 flight of 15-20 minutes
- 31.07.2021 : ***Dyrhólaey*** - 2 flight of 15-20 minutes each.

***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 Dyrhólaey and Skógafoss.

***Conclusions and conditions:***

The Environment Agency of Iceland hereby grants Thomas Birbaum permission on its behalf to fly a drone within the protected areas as described above on 25<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> of July 2021 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
- The crew must follow rules of conduct that apply to the area.
- An unmanned aircraft should never be flown near or above 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 a drone over Strokkur at an altitude lower than 50 m
- 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. For rest of the year it is not allowed to fly in a closer proximity to bird cliffs than 50 meters, if birds are in the cliffs.

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 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

Hákon Ásgeirsson  
advisor

Freyja Pétursdóttir  
advisor