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Permit to conduct research at hydrothermal vents

The Environment Agency of Iceland has received an application from Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research, dated May 19th 2021, for a research permit within Strýtan hydrothermal vent.

The Strýtan hydrothermal vents is protected cf. regulation no. 249/2001. Researches and collection of specimen are subject to a permit from the Environment Agency of Iceland. It is prohibited to disrupt the hydrothermal vent chimneys and attach any kind of sign on the vents.

Description of the project:

A remote operated vehicle (ROV) would dive at the Strýtan vents (15-65 meters dept). The ROV will be operated by people onboard of the research vessel Pelagia. The ROV would make videos and photos to study the distribution of fauna at the chimney. In order to verify the species seen on video and to perform genetic analyses in order to better understand the animals connectivity to the other vent fields and to the surrounding animals would be collected at three different depths, at each depth three samples. The ROV would collect the samples with very little disturbance. The area would be visited for maximum of three days in the period of June 30th -July 16th 2021.

Impact assessment:

The Environment Agency of Iceland, in consultation with Erlendur Bogason, caretaker of the natural monument, considers the research not likely to cause negative or permanent damage to the natural monument or its surroundings if conditions of the permit are fulfilled

Conclusions and conditions:

The Environment Agency of Iceland hereby grants the Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research permission on its behalf to conduct research within Strýtan hydrothermal vent as described above in the period of June 30th -July 16th 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.
- If the project dates or description changes the Environment Agency shall be notified as soon as possible.

- The project shall be done in cooperation with Erlendur Bogason and follow his instructions.
- All effort should be made to prevent the risk of collision during sampling, as the chimneys are very sensitive and ocean currents can cause difficulties in controlling of equipment (ROV) by the chimneys.
- The Environment Agency shall be informed as soon as possible if any accidental damages occur to the hydrothermal vent chimneys.
- The crew must follow rules of conduct that apply to the area.
- If any complications occur during the project, please contact the Environment Agency of Iceland, tel. +354 591 2000.
- This permit is only valid for research purposes. It does not include permit to utilize the samples for commercial purposes. The samples cannot be signed over to third party for commercial use.
- Every measure should be taken to avoid damage to the sites and unnecessary disturbance while collecting samples.

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 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.

Permit from the National Energy Authority is needed for researches in geothermal areas (www.os.is).

If you wish to export samples from Iceland a special permit is needed from the Icelandic Institute of Natural History (www.ni.is).

The Environment Agency of Iceland wishes to receive, free of charge, a copy of all reports and scientific articles that result from the research 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 researches is 39.400 ISK according to art. 24. b. in the agency's tariff no. 535/2015.

Sincerely

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advisor

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advisor