

Rannsóknasetur Háskóla Íslands á Húsavík
Hafnarstétt 3
640 Húsavík

Reykjavík, 25. mars 2021
UST202103-271/P.V.B.
09.05.01

Subject: permit to study common murre within Látrabjarg nature reserve

The Environment Agency of Iceland has received an application from University of Iceland research center in Húsavík, dated March 11th, for research permit within Látrabjarg nature reserve.

Látrabjarg is protected as a nature reserve, cf. regulation no. 300/2021. 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 subject to a permit from the Environment Agency of Iceland. Overnight stay or camping is not allowed within the nature reserve. Nature studies conducted by parties other than the Icelandic Institute of Natural History or the Marine and freshwater research institute are subject to permit obligations. Disturbance to vegetation and wildlife is prohibited both on land and in the sea. Disturbance to geological formation is prohibited except with permission. Permission must be obtained from the Environment Agency of Iceland for organized events and projects that need facilities, labour force or use of equipment within the protected area such as filming, events and ceremonies.

Description of the project:

The purpose of this study is to generate data on the in-air hearing capabilities of a population of common murres (*Uria aalge*) by measuring in-air hearing thresholds. Between 5 and 15 common murres (goal: 10) will be captured and sedated while non-invasive electrophysiological hearing data are collected. Birds will be captured and tested during the day using the established “pole-noose” method within a range of approximately 3 km from the portable testing site (onshore). Murre handling will follow animal care and use guidelines from the Ornithological Council. The capture effort will be led by Aðalsteinn Örn Snæþórsson and Yann Kolbeinsson (Northeast Iceland Nature Research Centre), who have extensive experience capturing and handling multiple species of Icelandic birds, including the common murre. One individual bird will be captured and tested at a time and released at the same place where it was captured after it has recovered from the sedation. It is estimated that one or two birds will be captured per day. The study will take place in the period of 31st of May until 12th of June. Permission from MAST has been obtained.

Impact assessment:

The Environment Agency of Iceland considers the project not likely to have negative effect on the area. Catching the birds might have impact on visitors' experience but since it is for research purposes the effect will not be negative if conditions of the permit are followed.

Conclusions and conditions:

The Environment Agency of Iceland hereby grants the University of Iceland research center in Húsavík permission on its behalf to conduct research within Látrabjarg nature reserve as described above during the period of 31st of May until 12th of June 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.
- When it is necessary to go off-path, extra care must be taken not to cause damage to terrain, including vegetation, soil and geological formation. All traces of activity must be removed afterwards.
- 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.
- This permit is only valid for research purposes.
- Every measure should be taken to avoid disturbance to other birds on the site while capturing the common murre that will be tested.
- Time common murre spend in captivity should be minimized as possible.
- If the study is causing too much stress to the wildlife in the area it must be stopped at once.
- All participants in the project must wear high-visibility clothing during field work, labelled with the identity of the researcher or the research institute.
- 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 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.

A permission from the landowners might be needed for the project.

Permit from the Icelandic Food and Veterinary Authority is needed if you wish to use animals for the project (mast.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.

Sincerely

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advisor

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advisor