

Sascha Steiner

Reykjavík, 04. 08. 2023  
UST202307-245/G.G.  
09.04.00

**Subject: Permitt o fly a drone in Lake Myvatn area and Landmannalaugar**

The Environment Agency of Iceland has received an application from Sascha Steiner, dated 20<sup>th</sup> of July 2023, for flying a drone within Fjallabak (Landmannalaugar) and Mývatn (Skútustaðagígar) areas.

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 15<sup>th</sup> – September 15<sup>th</sup> is subject to a permit from the Environment Agency of Iceland.

Mývatn and Laxá area is protected according to act no. 97/2004. Permission from the Environment Agency of Iceland is needed for construction work and all activity that can affect wildlife, geological formations, vegetation and landscape in the area.

***Description of the project:***

The applicant has requested to fly a drone, for recreational use, at Landmannalaugar, within the nature reserve Fjallabak, and at Skútustaðagígar, within Mývatn-Laxá protected area, on 15<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> of September 2023. No props are needed. All the flights will be according to standard drone flying rules below 120m altitude. With no disruption to traffic or animal wildlife.

***Review:***

In accordance to art. 17. in regulation 665/2012 the Environment Agency of Iceland requested a review from the Icelandic Institute of Natural History and the Lake Mývatn Research station on 25<sup>th</sup> of July but no reply has been received.

***Impact assessment:***

The Environment Agency of Iceland considers the project to be minimal and not likely to have negative impact on the conservation values of the areas. Guests might be disturbed while the project is conducted but can be minimized if the flight time is kept to a minimum and flight avoided during the area's busiest times of the day.

The Environment Agency of Iceland also considers the droneflight might disturb birds on the lake Mývatn but as the nesting season is over it should be minimal and if conditions of the permit are followed the agency considers that the impact on birds and visitors can be reduced.

***Conclusions and conditions:***

The Environment Agency of Iceland hereby grants Sascha Steiner permission on its behalf to fly a drone within Skútustaðir area and Landmannalaugar as described above on September 15<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> 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.
- The applicant should always stay on authorized paths/tracks/roads.
- If any complications occur during the project, please contact the ranger or the Environment Agency of Iceland, tel. +354 591 2000.
- All disturbance to animals and wildlife is strictly prohibited.
- Off-road driving in Iceland is strictly prohibited.
- The crew should be conscious of other guests on the sites and make sure that filming causes as little disturbance as possible to other visitors.
- It is not allowed to fly the drone near birds at Lake Mývatn.
- 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.
- If the use of unmanned aircraft causes disturbance to wildlife in the area, its use should be ceased at once.
- Flight time should be kept to a minimum and flight should be avoided during the area's busiest times of the day.
- 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.
- The applicant is required to 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.

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 droneflight for recreational flight in up to two areas is **38.000 ISK** according to art. 29. b. in the agency's tariff no. 206/2023.

***Supervision:***

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

Sincerely,

Dagbjört Jónsdóttir

***advisor***

Guðbjörg Gunnarsdóttir

***advisor***