

Puneet Verma

Reykjavík, 24. júní 2022  
UST202206-145/Þ.V.B.  
09.06.01

**Subject: permit to fly a drone in protected areas**

The Environment Agency of Iceland has received an application from Puneet Verma, dated June 15<sup>th</sup> 2022, for permit to fly a drone in protected areas within Dyrhólaey, Fimmvörðuháls, Goðafoss, Gullfoss, Haukadalur, Gaukshöfði, Landmannalaugarvegur, Skógafoss and Þjórsárdalsvegur.

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.

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 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.

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.

Skógafoss is protected as a natural monument, cf. regulation no. 477/1987. Disturbance to geological formations, vegetation and wild animal life in the protected area is prohibited. Camping overnight is only allowed in a designated campsite. This includes tents, motorhomes

and campers. Photography, cinemaphotography and events that can affect visitors experience in the area are subjected to a permit from the Environment Agency of Iceland.

Gaukshöfði near the roða Þjórsárdalsvegur and part of Haukadalur and Fimmvörðuháls is not protected/under the supervision of Environment Agency. The applicant needs to apply directly to the landowner/municipality of the area. Here you can find a link to a map viewer that shows boundaries of protected areas <https://kortasja.ust.is/mapview/?application=FRID>

***Description of the project:***

Drone flight will take place at Dyrhólaey, Goðafoss, Gullfoss, the lookout Gaukshöfði at Þjórsárdalsveg, Haukadal, the road to Landmannalaugar, Skógafoss and Fimmvörðuháls. The applicant will spend 30 minutes at each location and estimated flight time will be 10 min at each location to take a family picture. The drone will not be used at the centre of attraction where people click their pictures. The drone will only fly up and down, he will not be used to fly away from site og circling around the site. Maximum flight altitude will be 20-30 meters. Drone flight will take place in the period June 26<sup>th</sup> -29<sup>th</sup> 2022. There is no need to go off paths and roads.

***Impact assessment:***

The Environment Agency of Iceland considers the project likely to have negative impact on birdlife in Dyrhólaey and in the canyon in front of Skógafoss. When the flight takes place nesting season is still in progress and difficult to avoid nesting areas in Dyrhóley during this time of year. The Environment Agency considers the project not likely to have negative impact in other areas if conditions of the permit area followed

***Conclusions and conditions:***

The Environment Agency of Iceland hereby declines Puneet Verma request to fly a drone within Dyrhólaey nature reserve.

The Environment Agency of Iceland hereby grants Puneet Verma permission on its behalf to fly a drone at Landmannalaugarvegur within Fjallabak nature reserve, Goðafoss, Gullfoss, Geysir area within Haukadalur, and Skógafoss as described above in the period June 26<sup>th</sup> -29<sup>th</sup> 2022 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.
- Applicant 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 applicant should be conscious of other guests on the sites and make sure that filming causes as little disturbance as possible to other visitors. 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.
- Off-road driving in Iceland is strictly prohibited.

- The project's staff is required to prevent all disturbance to the environment and make sure that all litter is removed from the sites.
- 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.
- 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. Map with information about the no fly zone is attached to this letter.**
- **Due to security reasons, it is prohibited to fly drone less than 50m above Strokkur and Geysir.**
- It is forbidden to fly drones next to bird cliffs in a closer proximity than 200 meters during nesting season.

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.

The decision may be appealed to the Ministry for the Environment and Natural Resources according to art. 26 of Act no. 37/1993 on Administrative Procedures, based on Art. 91 of Act no. 60/2013 on Nature Conservation within three months from the date of this letter.

***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

Valdimar Kristjánsson  
*advisor*

Þórdís Vilhelmína Bragadóttir  
*advisor*