

Pamela Brown

Reykjavík, 6th October 2023

UST202308-205/S.V.

09.04.00

**Subject:** Permission to fly a drone – Skógafoss and Mývatn

The Environment Agency of Iceland has received an application from Pamela Brown, dated, 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2023, and with corrected dates 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023, to fly a drone near Vík and within the natural monument Skógafoss and the protected area Mývatn.

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.

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, cinematography and events that can affect visitors experience in the area are subjected to a permit from the Environment Agency of Iceland. Operating an unmanned aircraft/drone within the protected area is subjected to a permit from the Environment Agency of Iceland.

Vík and the black sand beach are not protected areas, so a permit from the Environment Agency to fly a drone there, is not needed. A permission from landowners and/or municipality might be needed for the project.

***Description of the project:***

The applicant has requested to fly a drone for recreational use near Vík (black sand beach) and within Mývatn, namely by Geiteyjarströnd 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2023 and Skógafoss 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> October 2023. Attached to his application a detailed flight routes were described.

***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 on 19<sup>th</sup> September concerning the flight within Mývatn. The review was received on 28<sup>th</sup> September. In their review they do not oppose that the

permission will be granted since the most sensitive bird season is over. However, they point out that it is not unlikely that some birds are still staying on or near the lake and emphasize the importance of not flying the drone near birds.

***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.

***Conclusions and conditions:***

The Environment Agency of Iceland hereby grants Pamela Brown permission on its behalf to fly a drone as described above on 22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> October 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/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.
- All disturbance to animals and wildlife is strictly prohibited.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 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 drones in the canyon in front of the waterfall at Skógafoss due to wildlife protection.
- It is forbidden to fly drones next to bird cliffs in a closer proximity than 50 meters, if birds are in the cliffs.

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.

***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.

Sincerely

Dagbjört Jónsdóttir  
*director*

Sigrún Valgarðsdóttir

*advisor*

