

Franck Boulay

Reykjavík, 13. mars 2024  
UST202401-213/P.V.B.  
09.04.00

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

The Environment Agency of Iceland has received an application from Franck Boulay, dated January 19<sup>th</sup> 2024, for a permit to fly a drone within Dettifoss, Dyrhólaey, Fjallabak, Geysir, Goðafoss, Gullfoss, Hjalparfoss, Gjáinn, Háifoss and Granni, Hverfjall, Kerlingafjöll, Mývatn og Laxá, Skógafoss and Skútustaðargígar.

Dettifoss, Selfoss og Hafragilsfoss is protected as a natural monument, cf. regulation no. 457/1996. Construction work, disturbance to geological formations, interference with water flow in the river is subjected to a permit from the Environment Agency of Iceland.

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. According to the management plan regulations permission must be obtained from the Environment Agency for operating an unmanned aircraft/drone within the area.

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.

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.

Goðafoss is protected as natural monument, cf. regulation no. 647/2020. 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.

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.

Hjálparfoss, Gjáin, Háifoss and Granni are protected as natural monument, cf. regulation no. 110/2020. Disturbance to geological formations, vegetation and wild animal life in the protected area is prohibited. Permission must be obtained from the Environment Agency for organized events and projects that pose a risk of disturbance to geological formations, wildlife or guests in the area. Operating an unmanned aircraft/drone within the protected area is subjected to a permit from the Environment Agency of Iceland.

Hverfjall is protected as a natural monument, cf. regulation no. 1261/2011. Disturbance to vegetation and wildlife is prohibited. The guest should follow marked paths at any given time.

Kerlingarfjöll is protected as an area of landscape, cf. Regulation no. 822/2020. Disturbance to geological formations, landscape, hot springs, other springs and ecosystems in hot springs in the protected area is prohibited. 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, at events and ceremonies.

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, cinemaphotography 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.

Skútustaðargígar is protected as a natural monument, cf. regulation no. 399/1973. Disturbance to geological formations is prohibited.

West side of Dettifoss is not under the supervision of Environment Agency. The applicant needs to apply directly to Vatnajökull national park if he wishes to use the drone there.

**Description of the project:**

Permission is requested for a permit to fly a drone within Dettifoss, Dyrhólaey, Fjallabak, Geysir, Goðafoss, Gullfoss, Hjalparfoss, Gjáinn, Háifoss and Granni, Hverfjall, Kerlingafjöll, Mývatn og Laxá, Skógafoss and Skútustaðargígar. Information about where within the areas the drone flight would take place were received on February 9<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> 2024. There would be no need to go off paths. The flights would take place in the period of June 24<sup>th</sup> -July 8<sup>th</sup> 2024.

**Impact assessment:**

The Environment Agency of Iceland considers the project not likely to have negative effect on nature and conservation value on most of the sites if conditions of the permit are followed. The droneflight is considered to have negative effect on birdlife at Dyrhólaey and Skútustaðargígar wich is within Mývatn and Laxá. The project might have negative effect on other visitors experience of the site but if conditions of the permit are followed the Environment Agency considers that the effect can be reduced.

**Conclusions and conditions:**

The Environment Agency of Iceland hereby declines Franck Boulay request to fly the drone within Dyrhólaey, Skútustaðargígar and Mývatn and Laxá on the period requested.

After revision of the application, regulations for the sites and management plans it is concluded that no permission is needed to fly the drone within Dettifoss on the east side of the canyon, Hverfjall and Kerlingafjöll in the period requested if the flight does not disturb wildlife and other visitors experience.

The Environment Agency of Iceland hereby grants Franck Boulay permission on its behalf to fly a drone within Fjallabak, Geysir, Goðafoss, Gullfoss, Hjalparfoss, Gjáinn, Háifoss and Granni and Skógafoss as described above on June 24<sup>th</sup> -July 8<sup>th</sup> 2024 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.
- 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.**
- For safety reasons, unmanned aircraft are not allowed to fly below 50 m above Strokki.
- It is forbidden to fly drones next to bird cliffs in a closer proximity than 200 meters.
- If falcons or eagles are seen in the areas, it is not allowed to fly the drone there.

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/>).

A permission from the landowners and/or the municipality might be needed for the project.

**Conclusion**

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 constructions, droneflights, cinematography and/or photography is **83.2000 ISK** according to art. 29. b. in the agency's tariff no. 1410/2023.

**Supervision:**

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

Sincerely

Ragnheiður Björk Sigurðardóttir  
**advisor**

Þórdís Vilhelmína Bragadóttir  
**advisor**