

Jacob Earl

Reykjavík, 21st July 2023
UST202307-204/S.V.
09.04.00

Subject: Permit to fly a drone within Hornstrandir Nature Reserve

The Environment Agency of Iceland has received an application from Jacob Earl, @Jake_Treks, dated 15th July 2023, for flying a drone within Hornstrandir Nature Reserve.

Hornstrandir is protected as a nature reserve by Act no 60/2013 on nature conservation, cf. Regulation no 332/1985. Disturbance to geological formations, vegetation and wild animal life in the protected area is prohibited. According to the management plan for Hornstrandir, filming and photography that can affect wildlife and visitor experience and flying an unmanned aircraft/drone within the boundaries of the protected site is subjected to a permit from the Environment Agency.

Description of the project:

The applicant is applying to fly a drone within Hornstrandir Nature Reserve at Látrar (Aðalvík), Álfsfell (Hlöðuvík), Höfn (Hornvík) and Hornbjarg cliff with a drone of the type DJI Mavic 3 Pro. The project duration is planned to be July 25th – July 29th 2023. The applicant would hike with one traveling companion and intends to camp in the campsites of Látrar, Höfn in Hornvík and Hlöðuvík. He has neither intention to film animals nor to disturb geological features, soil or fauna. Enclosed with the application is an aerial showing intended flightpaths.

Impact assessment:

The applicant requests a permit to fly a drone in four locations within the Nature Reserve. Within three of them, the project is assessed as not having an impact on nature if conditions below are followed. In the case of the fourth flightpath at Hornbjarg, the project is deemed as possibly affecting cliff birds and their flightless young in a negative way, where flying a drone near the cliffs may cause disturbance in the settlement. It is not allowed to fly a drone anywhere close to the cliffs this time of year, as it is highly sensitive in the sense that flightless young and fledgelings may still depend on their parent for feeding. From the farmhouse at Horn, and while on the path up to Horn over Miðfell and back down from the cliff, drones are forbidden.

The Environment Agency stresses that full consideration is taken with regards to the fact that the guiding light for Hornstrandir Nature Reserve focuses on protecting a vast area with unique nature and wildlife where tranquility reigns. The Environment Agency considers drone flights as having possible negative effects on other visitors and it is emphasised that utmost care is taken so others will not notice, when it is flown. Furthermore, Hornstrandir Nature Reserve is one of few in Iceland where the arctic fox is protected and its habitat is dense so full care must be taken with regards to not disturbing the fox in any way.

Conclusions and conditions:

The Environment Agency of Iceland hereby declines Jacob Earl's request to fly at Hornbjarg within Hornstrandir Nature Reserve during the period of July 25th – July 29th 2023.

The Environment Agency of Iceland grants Jacob Earl permission to fly a drone within Hornstrandir Nature Reserve as described above in the same period, pending that the following conditions are met:

- Keep this letter with you on site during the project
- The applicant shall inform rangers in the area about his arrival and departure. This is to be done 48 hours before entering the area and again before leaving
- If the project dates or description changes, the Environment Agency shall be notified as soon as possible
- The applicant must follow rules of conduct that apply to the area, such as it is only allowed to camp at designated campsites
- 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
- If any complications occur during the project, please contact the ranger or the Environment Agency of Iceland, tel. +354 591 2000
- 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
- It is not allowed to use the drone if falcons and/or eagles are in the area
- All disturbance to animals and wildlife is strictly prohibited
- The applicant is required to prevent all disturbance to the environment and make sure that all litter is removed from the sites
- Flight time should be kept to a minimum.
- If the use of the drone causes disturbance to wildlife in the area, its use should be ceased at once.
- The conductor of the drone is responsible for it 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 drone crash, all components from it must be collected and removed from the area.

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 may, 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 may 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.

For further information about Hornstrandir Nature Reserve, see ust.is/english/visiting-iceland/protected-areas/westfjords/hornstrandir/

Sincerely

Edda Kristín Eiríksdóttir
Advisor

Sigrún Valgarðsdóttir
advisor