

Ming Liu CHIA

Garðabær, 17. febrúar 2025  
202501-0078/P.V.B.  
10.02.01

**Subject: permit to fly a drone in protected areas-Snæfellsjökull National Park, Geysir, Gullfoss, Skógafoss, Dyrhólaey**

The Environment Agency of Iceland received an application from MING LIU CHIA, dated December 3<sup>rd</sup> 2024, for permit to fly a drone within Búðahraun, Dyrhólaey, Geysir, Gullfoss, Skógafoss, the beach at Stapi and Hellnar and Snæfellsjökuls national park. On January 1<sup>st</sup> 2025 a new agency, the Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland, took over management of all protected areas that were previously supervised by the Environmental Agency of Iceland. Processing the application was therefore redirected to the Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland.

Búðahraun is protected as a nature reserve, cf. regulation no. 357/1979. Disturbance to geological formations, vegetation and wild animal life in the protected area is prohibited.

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

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. Operating an unmanned aircraft/drone within the protected area is subjected to a permit from the Nature Conservation 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 Nature Conservation 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. Operating an unmanned aircraft/drone within the protected area is subjected to a permit from the Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland.

The beach at Stapi and Hellnar is protected as a nature reserve cf. regulation no. 284/1988. Disturbance to geological formations, vegetation and wild animal life in the protected area

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is prohibited. Operating an unmanned aircraft/drone within the protected area is subjected to a permit from the Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland.

Snæfellsjökull National park is protected as a national park cf. regulation no. 935/2021. Operating an unmanned aircraft within the national park is subjected to a permit from the Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland according to art. 7 in the Regulation during nesting season.

### **Description of the project:**

Permit is requested to fly the drone within Búðahraun, Dyrhólaey, Geysir, Gullfoss, Skógafoss, the beach at Stapi and Hellnar and Snæfellsjökuls national park for recreational purposes. Within Snæfellsjökul National park the flights would take place at Lóndrangar, Svörtuloft lighthouse and around the glacier. Number of employee would be 3 persons. The flights would take place in the period of March 20<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> 2025.

### **Impact assessment:**

The Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland considers the project not likely to have negative effect on nature and conservation value of the sites at the time requested. Droneflight might have negative impact on other visitors experience in the sites but the impact can be reduced if conditions of the permit are followed.

### **Conclusions and conditions:**

After revision of the application, regulations for the sites and management plans it is concluded that no permission is needed to fly the drone in Búðahraun and Snæfellsjökull national park in the period requested if the flight does not disturb wildlife and other visitors experience.

The Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland hereby grants MING LIU CHIA permission on its behalf to fly the drone within Dyrhólaey, Geysir, Gullfoss, Skógafoss, and the beach at Stapi and Hellnar as described above in the period of March 20<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> 2025 on the following conditions:

- Keep this letter with you on site during the project.
- 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 Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland, tel. +354 591 2000.
- All disturbance to animals and wildlife 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.

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- 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 Strokk.
- It is forbidden to fly drones next to bird cliffs in a closer proximity than 50 meters, if birds are in the cliffs.
- If falcons or eagles are seen in the areas, it is not allowed to fly the drone there.

If the licensee causes damage to nature, according to art. 87 in the Nature Conservation Act no. 60/2013, the Nature Conservation 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 Nature Conservation 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 Nature Conservation Agency can withdraw the permit if conditions of the permit are not complied to.

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Unmanned aircraft should take off and land in a safe distance from other visitors according to regulation 1360/2024 on unmanned aircrafts.

The usage of a drone shall be according to regulation no. 1360/2024 on the operation of remotely piloted aircraft (<https://www.icetra.is/aviation/drones/>).

Please note that all drones need to be registered at the Icelandic Transport Authority (Flydrone.is)

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

### **Permission fee:**

The Nature Conservation 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 **83.200 ISK** according to art. 29. b. in the agency's tariff no. 1410/2023.

### **Supervision:**

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

Sincerely

Ragnheiður Björg Sigurðardóttir  
**advisor**

Pórdís Vilhelmína Bragadóttir  
**advisor**