

Gavin Maloney

Reykjavík, 7. júlí 2022
UST202206-053/Þ.V.B.
09.06.01

Subject: permit to fly a drone at Skúturstaðargígur

The Environment Agency of Iceland has received an application from Gavin Maloney, dated June 3rd 2022, for a permit to fly a drone within Skúturstaðargígur and Mývatn and Laxá area.

Gavin Maloney 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. Permit is needed from the Environment Agency to conducting observations, monitoring or research on the nature of the protected area, such as sampling for research, collection of natural treasures, bird photography from hiding places, filming, bird marking, as well as other similar observations.

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

Description of the project:

Drone will be used at Skúturstaðargígur to film the craters. The drone will take off and land alongside the walking paths around the craters. Altitude will be within 120 m and flight time will be around 15 min. The drone will fly in north, east, south and west directions based on the best angle/light direction above the craters. The drone will not fly over people. The crew consists of 2 persons with one drone and the flight would take place sometime in the period of July 1st – 9th 2022.

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 and the Lake Mývatn Research station on June 28th 2022. The review from Icelandic Institute of Natural History was received on June 29th 2022. In their opinion they consider it unwise to grant a permit for drone flights within the protected area during the breeding season for birds, which is still in progress at the beginning of July. It is well known that drone flying disturbs birds and in areas where the density of nesting birds is very high, such as within the protected area of Mývatn and Laxá, and there is a significant risk in allowing drone flying in the area. The review from the Lake Mývatn Research station was received on June 28th 2022. In their review they have no comment on this drone flight.

Impact assessment:

The Environment Agency of Iceland considers the project likely to have negative impact on birdlife in the area and conservation value of the site. Density of nesting birds in the area near

Skúturstaðargígar. Birdlife is sensitive to disturbance at this time of year due to cold spring and summer.

Conclusions:

The Environment Agency of Iceland hereby declines Gavin Maloney request for a permit to fly a drone at Skúturstaðargígar within the protected area Mývatn and Laxá.

The decision may be appealed to the according to art. 26 of Act no. 37/1993 on Administrative Procedures, based on Art. 11 of Act 97/2004 on protection of Mývatn and Laxá within one month since the applicant knew about the decision.

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.

Sincerely

Inga Dóra Hrólfsdóttir
director

Ragnheiður Björk Sigurðardóttir
advisor