

Aavee fotografie
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Reykjavík, 5. september 2024
UST202408-090/P.V.B.
09.04.00

Subject: permit to fly a drone Fjallabak, Háifoss and Mývatn

The Environment Agency of Iceland has received an application from Aavee fotografie, dated August 11th 2024, for permit to fly a drone within Fjallabak nature reserve, Háifoss, and Mývatn.

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 15th - September 15th is subject 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.

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.

Description of the project:

Within Fjallabak nature reserve the drone flights would take place at Hnausapollur, Ljótípollur and braided rivers at end of track near Ljótípollur. Within Hjálparfoss, Gjáin, Háifoss and Granni the flight only takes place at Háifoss. At lake Mývatn the flights would take place at Höfði and over Stakholtstjörn and Skútustaðargígar. Purpose of the droneflight is to photograph landscapes. The flight radius would be within 500 meters or line of sight from tracks and viewpoints. The drone would take off and land when no people would be around. There would be no need to go of paths. Number of employees would be one and the flights would take place in the period of September 11th - 18th 2024.

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 August 16th 2024 for the drone flights at lake Mývatn. The review from Icelandic Institute of Natural History was

received on August 30th 2024. In their review they write that it is unwise to grant permission for drone flights within the protected area during a period when birdlife is highly sensitive, particularly during the nesting and molting seasons. The proposed timing, September 14th -16th, falls outside this sensitive period; however, it should be noted that waterfowl are present at Lake Mývatn year-round. The Icelandic Institute of Natural History does not oppose granting the permit, provided that care is taken not to disturb the birdlife and that other visitors are not inconvenienced.

Impact assessment:

The Environment Agency of Iceland considers the project not likely to have negative impact on conservation value of all the sites or nature at Fjallabak and Háifoss. The drone flight might have negative impact on birdlife at lake Mývatn. If conditions of the permit are followed the impact on bird life can be reduced. The droneflight might have negative impact on other visitors experience in the sites but if conditions of the permit are followed the impact can be reduced.

Conclusions and conditions:

The Environment Agency of Iceland hereby grants Aavee fotografie permission on its behalf to fly a drone within Fjallabak nature reserve, Háifoss and Mývatn as described above on the period of September 11th - 18th 2024 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.
- Licensee should always stay on authorized paths/tracks/roads.
- If any complications occur during the project, please contact the ranger or the Environment Agency of Iceland, tel. +354 591 2000.
- The licensee 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.
- Off-road driving in Iceland is strictly prohibited.
- 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.
- If falcons or eagles are seen in the area, 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 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.

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

Sincerely

Daníel Freyr Jónsson

advisor

Pórdís Vilhelmína Bragadóttir

advisor