

Eric Castilla

Reykjavík, 23. ágúst 2024  
UST202408-155/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 Eric Castilla, dated, August 19<sup>th</sup> 2024, for permit to fly a drone within Fjaðrárgljúfur, Fjallabak, Fjallsárlón, Gullfoss, Háifoss, Hálsanefshellir, Hengifoss, Kerið, Kvernufoss, Lómagnúpur, Múlagljúfur, Seljalandsfoss, Sigöldugljúfur, Skaftafellsjökull, Skógafoss, Sólheimajökull (Jokulhaus Glaciers), Sólheimasandur plane wreck, Stokksnes, Stuðlagil, Svartifoss and Svínafellsjökull

Fjaðrárgljúfur is protected as natural monument, cf. regulation no. 555/2024. Disturbance to geological formations, vegetation and wild animal life in the protected area is prohibited. Permission from the Environment Agency of Iceland is needed for construction work in the area. 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.

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.

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.

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.

Fjallsárlón, Skaftafellsjökull, Svartifoss and Svínafellsjökull are not under the supervision of Environment Agency. The applicant needs to apply directly to Vatnajökull national park.

Hálsanefshellir, Hengifoss, Kerið, Kvernufoss, Lómagnúpur, Múlagljúfur, Seljalandsfoss, Sigöldugljúfur, Sólheimajökull (Jokulhaus Glaciers), Sólheimasandur plane wreck, Stokksnes, and Stuðlagil are not protected areas. Permit might be needed from landowner/municipality of the area.

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

Permit is requested to fly a drone at Fjaðrárgljúfur, Fjallabak, Gullfoss Háafoss and Skógafoss. At Fjallabak the flight would take place at Hnausapollur (Bláhylur), Ljótipollur, Stútur crater and Landmannalaugar. The flights would take place in the period of September 1<sup>st</sup> -8<sup>th</sup> 2024. Number of employee would be 1 person.

### **Impact assessment:**

The Environment Agency of Iceland considers the project not likely to have negative impact on nature and conservation value of the sites if conditions of the permit are followed. The flights might have negative impact on other visitors experience in the areas but the impact can be reduced with following conditions of the permit.

### **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 at Fjaðrárgljúfur in the period requested if the flight does not disturb wildlife and other visitors experience.

The Environment Agency of Iceland hereby grants Eric Castilla permission on its behalf to fly a drone within Fjallabak, Gullfoss, Háifoss and Skógafoss as described above on the period September 1<sup>st</sup> -8<sup>th</sup> 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.
- Applicant 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.
- Off-road driving in Iceland 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.

- 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 applicant 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.
- **It is forbidden to fly drones in the canyon in front of the waterfall at Skógafoss due to wildlife protection.**
- **Flying drones is not allowed in direct vicinity of the hut areas in Landmannalaugar and campsites within the nature reserves. No-fly zones can be seen on the maps included with the permit.**
- It is forbidden to fly drones next to bird cliffs in a closer proximity than 50 meters, if birds are in the cliffs.

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.

**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**

Þórdís Vilhelmína Bragadóttir  
**advisor**