

JVN Photography ehf.
Andrésbrunnur 10
113 Reykjavík

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Efni: permit to fly a drone - Fjallabak, Þjórsárdalur and Þjórsárver

The Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland has received an application from JVN Photography ehf., dated february 7th 2025, for permit to fly drones within Fjallabak, Háifoss and Þjórsárver.

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 Nature Conservation 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 Nature Conservation 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 Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland.

Þjórsárver is protected as a nature reserve, cf. regulation no. 870/2017. Traffic around and in the vicinity of the breeding grounds of the pink-footed goose is prohibited from May 1st to June 20th. Flying below 3,000 feet over the nature reserve outside the glacier is prohibited from May 10th to August 10th.

Description of the project:

The applicant requests a permit for maximum 4 persons fly a drone in week period in a photograph workshop within Fjallabak, Þjórsárdalur and Þjórsárver. There would be three workshops and in total it would be 12 persons flying a drone in the period requested. Part of the workshop would take place at Háifoss in Þjórsárdalur and in Fjallabak near Frostastaðarvatn, Tungnaá, canyon behind Bláhnúk, Rauðaskál, Stútur, Hnausapoll and Ljótípollur. In Þjórsárver the flights would take place near Múlajökul. Screenshots of aerial photos where areas the applicant and his clients intend to fly was attached to the application. Drones would take off and land near the parking lot or where it is possible to park the car. Flight altitude would be below 120 meters. It is estimated that maximum 4 drones will be flying at the same time. Workshop 1 would take place on July 3rd - July 5th

2025, Workshop 2 would take place on August 8th - August 10th 2025 and Workshop 3 would take place on August 26th - August 28th 2025. The schedule of the workshop depends on weather. Workshop participants would only fly for one day at each location.

Impact assessment:

The Environment Agency of Iceland considers the project not likely to have negative impact on conservation value of the sites and nature. The flights might have negative effect on other visitors experience of the site due to number of drones flying at the same time. The Environment Agency considers that 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 from the Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland to fly the drone in Þjórsárver in the period requested if the project does not disturb wildlife and other visitors experience.

The Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland hereby grants JVN Photography ehf. permission on its behalf to fly a drone within Fjallabak and Þjórsárdal as described above on July 3rd - July 5th 2025, August 8th - August 10th 2025 and on August 26th - August 28th 2025 on the following conditions:

- Keep this letter with you on site during the project. The permit conditions should be introduced to the staff of the project before work begins.
- 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 Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland shall be notified as soon as possible.
- Members of the project 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. +354 556 6800.
- 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. If the material is meant for public viewing it must be noted in the video/subtext that permission from the Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland was obtained for the filming/photography.
- All disturbance to animals and wildlife is strictly prohibited.
- Off-road driving in Iceland 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.
- 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.

Náttúruverndarstofnun

- 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.

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.

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 according to the regulation all drones need to be registered at the Icelandic Transport Authority. You can register them at the webpage flydrone.is

Permission fee:

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:

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

Daníel Freyr Jónsson

advisor

Þórdís Vilhelmína Bragadóttir

advisor