

Akshansh Garg

17. febrúar 2025
202501-0148/P.V.B.
10.01.01

Subject: permit to fly a drone - Fjallabak, Geysir, Goðafoss, Gullfoss, Háifoss and Skógafoss

The Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland has received an application from Akshansh Garg, dated January 28th 2025, for permit to fly a drone within Fjallabak nature reserve, Geysir, Goðafoss, Gullfoss, Háifoss and Skógafoss.

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.

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. Helicopters and other manned aircraft may not land within the area without the permission of the Nature Conservation Agency. Operating an unmanned aircraft/drone within the protected area is subjected to a permit from the Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland.

Goðafoss is protected as natural monument, cf. regulation no. 647/2020. Disturbance to vegetation, wildlife and geological formation is prohibited. 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.

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.

Náttúruverndarstofnun

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

Description of the project:

According to the application the trip would take place in the period of June 21st -July 8th 2025. Droneflight at Gullfoss and Geysir would take place on June 22nd 2025. Drone flight at Háifoss would take place on June 23rd 2025. Within Fjallabak nature reserve it is requested to fly the drone at Bláhylur crater, Brennisteinsalda, Jökulgil, Rauðaskál and Stutur crater on June 23rd-24th 2025. Droneflight at Skógafoss would take place on June 26th 2025 and at Goðafoss it would take place on July 3rd 2025.

Impact assessment:

The Environment Agency of Iceland considers the project not likely to have negative impact on conservation value on all sites. The Environment Agency of Iceland considers the project not likely to have negative impact on nature except at Skógafoss if the drone flight is too close to the canyon in front of the waterfall. The Environment Agency of Iceland considers the project likely to have negative impact on other visitors experience on all sites but if the impact can be reduced if conditions of the permit are followed.

Conclusions and conditions:

The Nature Conservation Agency of Iceland hereby grants Akshansh Garg permission on its behalf to fly a drone within Fjallabak nature reserve, Geysir, Goðafoss, Gullfoss, Háifoss and Skógafoss as described above in the period of June 21st -July 8th 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 Nature Conservation Agency shall be notified as soon as possible.
- Applicant should always stay on authorized paths/tracks/roads.
- The applicant 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.
- Off-road driving in Iceland is strictly prohibited.
- If the material is meant for public viewing it must be noted in the video/subtext that permission from the Nature Conservation 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.

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- 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.**
- For safety reasons, unmanned aircraft are not allowed to fly below 50 m above Strokki.
- It is forbidden to fly drones next to bird cliffs in a closer proximity than 200 meters.
- 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 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

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

Náttúruverndarstofnun

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:

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

Sincerely

Valdimar Kirstjánsson
advisor

Pórdís Vilhelmína Bragadóttir
advisor