

Matthew Koenig

Reykjavík, 17. maí 2023
UST202305-008/S.V.
09.04.00

Subject: Permit to fly a drone within Hornstrandir nature reserve

The Environment Agency of Iceland has received an application from Matthew Koenig, dated, May 2nd 2023 for a permit to fly a drone within Hornstrandir nature reserve.

Hornstrandir is protected as a nature reserve by act no 60/2013 on nature conservation, cf. Regulation no 332/1985. Disturbance to geological formations, vegetation and wild animal life in the protected area is prohibited. According to the management plan for Hornstrandir, filming and photography that can affect wildlife and visitor experience and flying an unmanned aircraft/drone within the boundaries of the protected site is subjected to a permit from the Environment Agency.

Description of the project:

This backpacking trip would take place during July 21 – July 24, 2023. As the applicant shows the hiking route on a map with the application, the hike would start at Hesteyri and end at Veiðileysufjörður, over the course of 3 days. The applicant plans to begin his hike on the Hlöðuvík trail, go to the north coast, then head east to the Hornvík trail, and continue south to Veiðileysufjörður Campsite to return to the ferry. There are no plans to leave designated trails to record or intention to use the drone for purposes of wildlife photography.

Impact assessment:

The Environment Agency of Iceland considers the project not likely to have negative impact on nature and conservation value of the site if conditions are followed. There are seven internationally important bird areas in this part of Iceland. Hornbjarg and Hælavíkurbjarg are the largest of them. There are about and over 50% of three species that breed in the cliffs; kittivake (*rissa tridactyla*), common guilliemot (*uria aalge*) and Brunnich's Guillemot (*uria lomvia*). It is not aloud to fly a drone enywhere close to the cliffs this time of the year, as this is a very sensitive time of the year. From the farmhouse at Horn, and while on the path up to Horn over Miðfell and back down from the cliff, drones are forbidden.

Attention is drawn to that guiding light for this nature reserve is to protect quietness.

The Environment Agency conciders that drone flight might have negative affect on other visiors and it is ephazised that other people will not notice it when it is flown.

This area is one of few in Iceland where the arctic fox is protected and the habit is dense.

Conclusions and conditions:

The Environment Agency of Iceland hereby grants Matthew Koenig permission on its behalf to fly a drone within Hornstrandir as described above in the period of July 21 – 24, 2023 to the following conditions:

- Keep this letter with you on site during the project
- The applicant shall inform rangers in the area about his arrival and departure. This is to be done 48 hours before entering the area and again before leaving
- If the project dates or description changes the Environment Agency shall be notified as soon as possible
- The applicant must follow rules of conduct that apply to the area, such as it is only allowed to camp at designated campsite
- When it is necessary to go off-path, extra care must be taken not to cause damage to terrain, including vegetation, soil and geological formation. All traces of activity must be removed afterwards
- If any complications occur during the project, please contact the ranger or the Environment Agency of Iceland, tel. +354 591 2000
- 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
- It is not allowed to use the drone if falcons and eagles are in the area
- All disturbance to animals and wildlife 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.
- Flight time should be kept to a minimum.
- If the use of the drone causes disturbance to wildlife in the area, its use should be ceased at once.
- The conductor of the drone is responsible for it 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 drone crash, all components from it must be collected and removed from the area.

If the applicant 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 cinematography and/or photography for recreational purposes for up to two areas is ISK. **38.000.** according to art. 29. c. in the agency's tariff no. 206/2023.

For further information about Hornstrandir nature reserve, see [Umhverfisstofnun | Hornstrandir \(ust.is\)](#)

Sincerely,

Kristín Ósk Jónasdóttir
teamleader

Sigrún Valgarðsdóttir
advisor