

Natural History Museum
C/O Dr. Magdalena Georgieva
Cromwell Road
London, SW7 5BD
United Kingdom

Vestmannaeyjum 28. janúar 2019
UST201812-041/Þ.V.B.

Subject: Research permitt hydrothermal vent chimneys

The Environment Agency of Iceland has received an application from the Natural History Museum in London, dated December 6th 2018, for research permit in Strýtur hydrothermal vent chimneys.

The Strýtur hydrothermal vent is protected cf. regulation no. 249/2001. Researches and collection of specimen are subject to a permit from the Environment Agency of Iceland. It is prohibited to disrupt the hydrothermal vent chimneys and attach any kind of sign on the vents.

Description of the project:

The project applied for is to investigate the importance of hydrothermal vent environments to the evolution of animal life in the oceans. A component of this project aims to explore how animals might be adapting to the conditions presented by hydrothermal vent environments and to gain understanding into the speed of the adaptation process. Approximately 20 individuals of three target species, i.e. mussels, a sponge and a bryozoan, both from the Strýta vent chimney and also from nearby non-vent areas in Eyjafjörður. Samples will be collected by divers. A small remotely-operated vehicle will also be used to carry out underwater photography and video surveys of the marine areas where we sample. These techniques are very low impact and therefore anticipated that disturbance to the Strýtur hydrothermal vent environment, geology and biology as a whole will be minimal. If disruption due to the collection of marine invertebrates appear, collecting methods will be changed or stopped from those particular regions to prevent any further disruption. The project will take place June 13-20th 2019. Number of participants on location is 6-7 persons.

Research reviews:

The Environment Agency of Iceland sent a request to the Marine and freshwater research institute of Iceland and to the Icelandic Institute of Natural History for impact assessment on the research methods in regard of the possible negative effects that the research method could have on the research area and on the conservation value of the area. The institutes did not have any comments on the research nor the methods. The Environment Agency also sent a request to the advisor committee for the nature monument for impact assessment on the research. The committee had no comments on the research or the methods.

Impact assessment:

The Environment Agency of Iceland considers the project not likely to have negative impact on the conservation value of the nature monument. According to application the research

project will be supervised by Erlendur Bogason and neither affect the Strytan chimneys or the biosphere of the protected area in unacceptable way.

Conclusions and conditions:

The Environment Agency of Iceland hereby grants a permission on its behalf according to information from the applicant on following conditions:

- Keep this letter with you on site during the project.
- If the dates of the project change the Environment Agency shall be notified as soon as possible.
- The Environment Agency should be informed if there will be any changes to the project description.
- This permit is only valid for research purposes. It does not include permit to utilize the samples for commercial purposes. The samples cannot be signed over to third party for commercial use.
- This permit is only valid for sample collection according to the application.
- Geological formations and landscape should not be disturbed.
- Every measure should be taken to avoid damage to the sites and unnecessary disturbance while collecting the samples.
- The permit conditions should be introduced to the staff before the work begins.
- All traces of the work must be removed carefully off the site by the end of the work/project.
- The divers will be under supervision from Erlendur Bogason who supervises the site on behalf of the Environment Agency.
- If any complications occur during the project, please contact the ranger or the Environment Agency of Iceland, tel. +354 591 2000.

If the developer causes damage to the 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. ordered the licensee to fix damage to the nature and vegetation and/or stop the project.

If you wish to export samples from Iceland a special permit is needed from the Icelandic Institute of Natural History (www.ni.is).

Request:

The Environment Agency of Iceland wishes to be secured, free of charge, a copy of all reports and scientific articles that results from the research project.

Supervision:

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

Sincerely,



Hildur Vésteinsdóttir
Director



Davíð Örvar Hansson
Advisor