



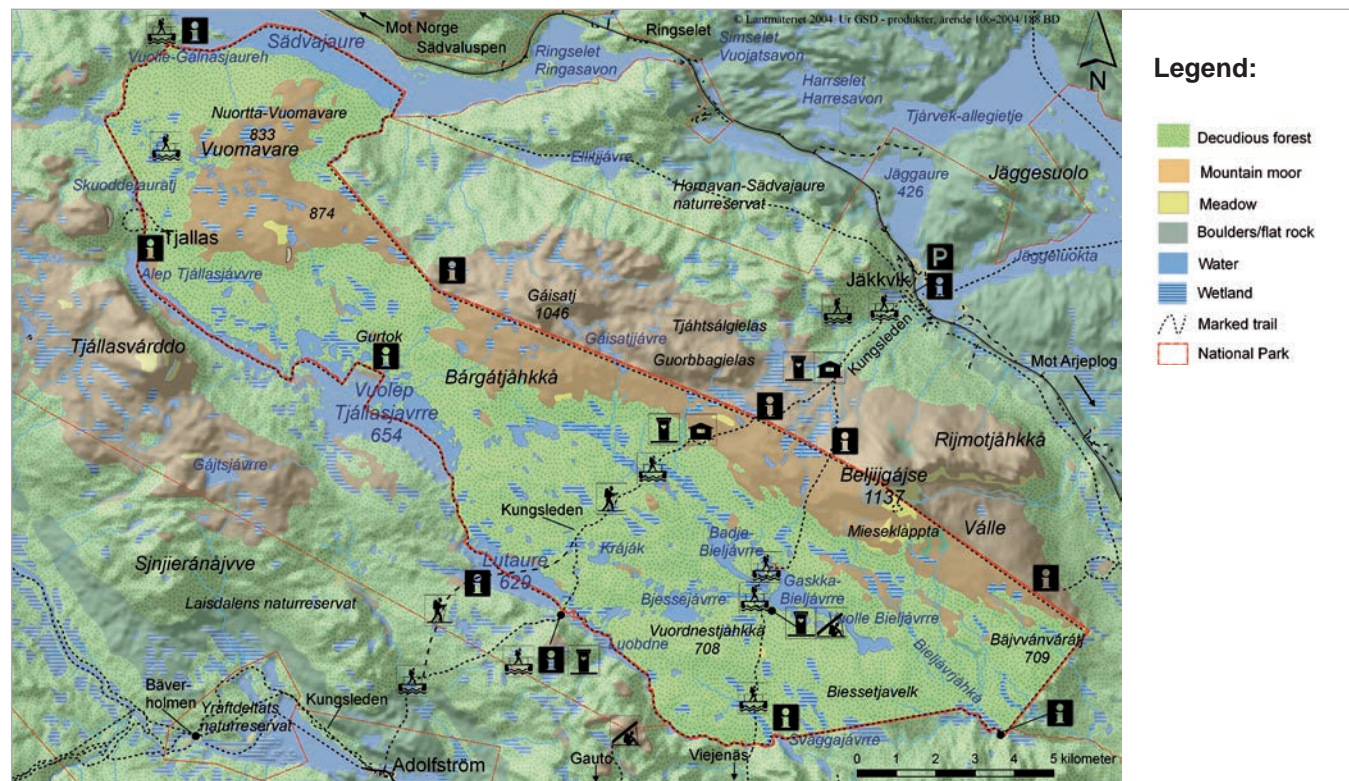
NATIONAL PARK IN NORRBOTTEN COUNTY



Pieljekaise

The moose enjoys dense willow.

The Globeflower is the characteristic species of the national park. Front page: Autumn colours in the Pieljekaise birch forest.



Getting there. From Arjeplog, take road 95 and drive 60 km towards Jäckvik, a good starting point for a visit to Pieljekaise. If you instead turn towards Adolfström (10 km further), you can enter the national park from the south.

Year round. In summer, hiking into the national park is from Jäckvik, Adolfström or Viejenäs. In winter, skis are the best means of transport. There is a signposted skiing track alongside the King's Trail. Snowmobiles may be used as far as the park boundary, but not in the national park.

Trails and cabins. Trails lead from Jäckvik into the national park. After three kilometres, just before the park boundary, there is an open stopover cabin with a wood stove. It is 27 km from Jäckvik to Adolfström along the King's Trail. From Jäckvik to the park boundary is 6 km and from Adolfström to the park boundary, 9 km. Inside the national park, the Pieljekaise cabin is always open for stopovers. The key to the sleeping quarters may be borrowed at the shops in Jäckvik and Adolfström. There is also a 22 km hiking trail from Jäckvik to Viejenäs. Along it there is an open stopover cabin with a wood stove, but without beds.

Pieljekaise National Park was established in 1909

Pieljekaise is one of the smallest national parks in Norrbotten County, covering 155 sq km. The national park is managed by the County Administrative Board in Norrbotten County and is also included in the EU network of protected areas, Natura 2000.

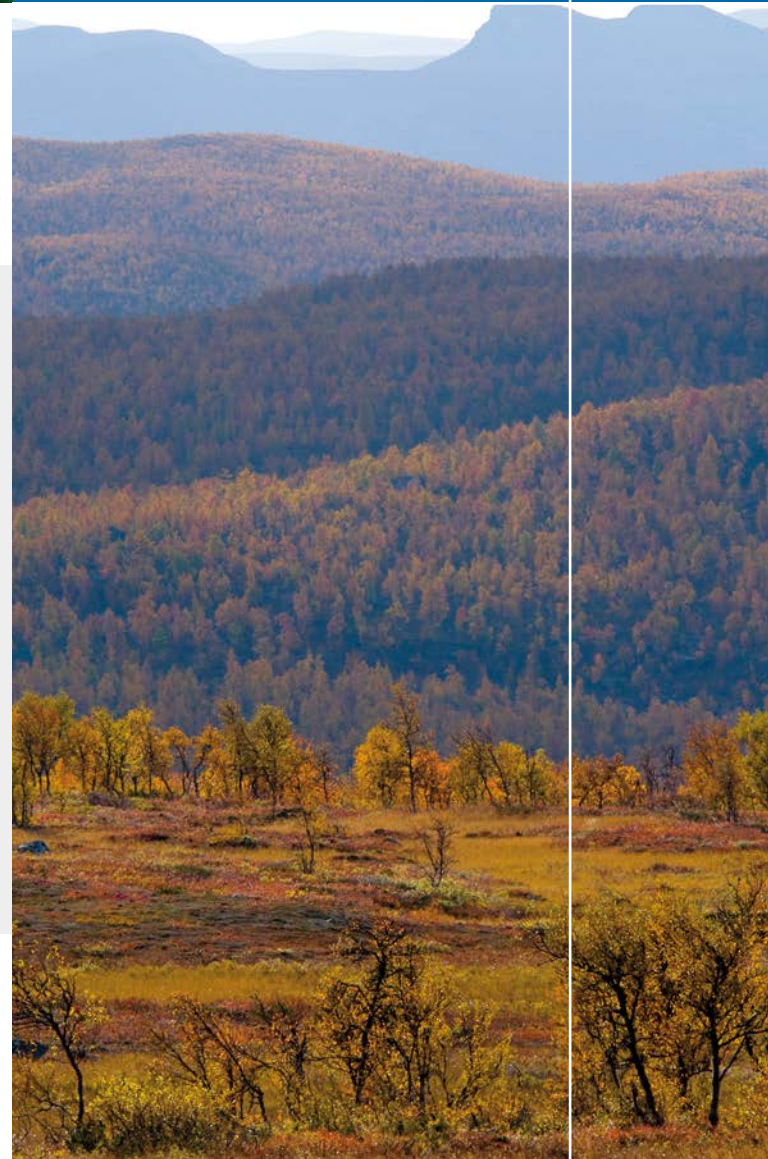
§ Regulations in Pieljekaise National Park

There are regulations to preserve nature. In the national park it is forbidden among other things to

- damage land and rocks or remove minerals or other geological materials
- damage the vegetation by breaking twigs, fell dead or living trees, twigs and bushes (although it is permissible to pick dry twigs to make a fire or shelter)
- dig up or pick flowers (berries and mushrooms may be gathered however)
- hunt or fish, or collect or catch insects, or other creatures, or in any way disturb wildlife
- use a motorised vehicle or boat, or land an aircraft
- bring a dog (although a dog on a leash may year-round be brought on the King's Trail and during the period 1 January – 30 April in the entire national park)
- affix a board, poster or similar or set up orienteering checkpoints or marked trails
- damage cultural remains or other historical monuments

The complete regulations are available from the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency. More information: www.nationalparksofsweden.se.

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Groups of semi-domesticated reindeer forage in Pieljekaise, especially in spring and autumn.



Blue Heath blooms on the mountain moor. The Ptarmigan, here in winter dress, seeks the highest mountain summits.



The autumn colours of the Mountain Bearberry brighten the mountain moors.



The remains of a Sámi hearth lie right on the King's Trail, beside an old reindeer milking enclosure.

Autumn hiking

Dwarf Birch, Willow and Mountain Bearberry seem aflame in autumn colours.

Yellow, orange and red in an incredible mix.

A reindeer herd slowly crosses the mountain moor.

The large bull assembling his harem,

the younger ones clumsily trying to butt in.

Last year's calves are still following the cows.

Centuries ago, migrating wild reindeer

walked the same ground.

The sight is peaceful and timeless.

Golden Plover and Lapland Bunting

have left for warmer climes.

Above us circle White-tailed Eagle and Golden Eagle.

When we descend to the birches in the valley

a family of Willow Grouse flutters up, giggling shrilly.

Perhaps at the hiker's heavy burden?

The mountain birches paint the ground yellow

with their wet, fallen leaves whose scent is of autumn.

When I see the dry yellow stalks

of Globeflower, Alpine Blue Sow-Thistle and Wolf's Bane

I decide to return.

To be back here in early summer amid flowery glory,

Bluethroat's song and gushing spring streams.

And perhaps some mosquito music.

THE NATIONAL PARK OF BIRCH FORESTS

The national park was established in 1909 to protect a subalpine area containing vast, beautiful mountain birch forests. The national park's name, Pieljekaise (Bieljigájse in Sámi spelling), comes from the 1,137 metre mountain of that name in the eastern part of the park.

400 MILLION YEARS YOUNG!

Travelling from Arjeplog to Jäckvik or Adolfsström first takes you over primary rock almost 2,000 million years old. At the halfway point you come to the younger bedrock of the mountain range. It was formed over 400 million years ago when two continents collided and the seas between them disappeared. Sediment from the sea bed was compressed into a mighty mountain range, which was forced up over the primary bedrock. For millions of years it was then worn down to the mountain range we see today. The smooth fells and valleys of Pieljekaise are completely on mountain bedrock.

THE GREAT ICE CAP

In the ice age, Scandinavia was covered by an inland ice cap. By about 9 000 years ago it had melted from the mountain region. Traces of the ice can be seen in the national park. Examples include the smooth lines of the U-shaped valley, which the ice has chiselled out, and land areas strewn with boulders that were once frozen into the glacial ice.

LOW FELLS WITH VARIATIONS

Two thirds of the national park is mountain birch forest, up to an altitude of 800 metres asl. The area's bedrock is hard, poor and slowly weathering. It produces dry birch forest and mountain moors with Bilberry, Red Whortleberry, Crowberry, Mountain Bearberry and Dwarf Birch. The lower mountain bedrock contains somewhat weathered shale that further down in the valley has created more fertile soil. There are verdant meadow birch forests with luxuriant stands of tall plants. Globeflower and Wood Crane's-Bill bloom in early summer. Later in summer, Alpine Blue Sow-Thistle, Wolf's Bane, Garden Angelica and Melancholy Thistle take over.

THE MOUNTAIN BIRCH FOREST

Only in Scandinavia is the border with treeless mountain terrain formed by mountain birch. In other mountain regions, conifers often play that role. The treeline altitude varies. It is often 50 metres lower on shady north-facing slopes than on south slopes. It is higher in the south (900m asl) than in the north (400-500 m asl). And it is lower to the west, nearing the Atlantic. A characteristic of the mountain birch is that at intervals of several decades it is attacked by the Autumnal Moth (*Epirrita autumnata*), which eats the forest bare. At places in the national park, one can still see dead birch trunks from previous attacks. But the roots survive and new shoots appear, benefiting willow grouse and moose, which eat tender birch twigs. It is a natural way for the mountain birch to form new stands.

WILDLIFE

In the national park, walkers can see big moose with imposing antlers. Semi-domesticated reindeer forage here, especially in spring and autumn. There are bears, lynxes and wolverines in the national park, but they avoid people. You are more likely to see predators such as the White-Tailed Eagle, Golden Eagle and Gyrfalcon and more common mountain birds: Willow Grouse, Ptarmigan, Golden Plover and Lapland Bunting. The spring songs of waders echo in the wetlands. Common Snipe, Wood Sandpiper, Redshank and Common Greenshank nest here for a few summer weeks.

HUMANS' LANDSCAPE

The national park may appear an unspoiled wilderness, but for millennia it has been home to Sámi tending reindeer. The land is rich in ancient remains such as lávvu tepee sites, hearths and systems of wild reindeer trapping pits. Wild reindeer hunting was abandoned centuries ago and the Sámi became reindeer herders. The Sámi settlement Tjállas lies in the west of the park, today's reindeer corral next to the ancient trapping pits. Hikers on the King's Trail (north of Pieljekaise cabin) can discover right on the trail the stones of an ancient Sámi hearth. Pieljekaise National Park lies in Semisjaur-Niarg reindeer herding district. Modern-day reindeer herding is carried on, continuing millennia of Sámi land use. It is important that visitors use their judgment not to disturb foraging reindeer or reindeer herding.