

## 3 Days in Pieljekaise

Contributed by Administrator  
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Route: We follow the backpacker Josef Arnfjell on a 3 days trip to this small Nationalpark (Pieljekaise), 153km<sup>2</sup>, in the southern part of Norrbotten is unfortunately almost unknown in contrast to it's larger cousins, Sarek and Padjelanta, and is with it's extraordinary mountain birch nature and unspoiled fauna defenitely worth a visit.

### Day 1:

The day started with a light rain when 19 Mountain Leaders with teacher left Jekkvik, a small village in the Swedish mountains. The destination was Pieljekaise, one of Swedens 26 National parks. This small Nationalpark, 153km<sup>2</sup>, in the southern part of Norrbotten is unfortunately almost unknown in contrast to it's larger cousins, Sarek and Padjelanta, and is with it's extraordinary mountain birch nature and unspoiled fauna defenitely worth a visit.

After we had taken off from "The King Trail" on 500m altitude, we followed the more worn trail up towards Pieljekaise. The "climbing" up to the first cabin made us all warm in our clothes and after a paus we continued up to the park and passed the park border just below 900m altitude. We decided to continue to a small mountain lake 1 km into the park and spend our night there.

The lake, who didn't have a name on the map, was a stone's throw from the trail, in the shadow of the

1137m peak of Pieljekaise. We finished the cooking and kept a silent "profile". The next day we were going to scout for moose so we had to be as invisible as possible.

## Day 2:

At 7 a clock in the morning we left the camp and our rucksacks packed for daytour. Our guide and teacher Håkan "Klomma" Jonsson led us to the mountain side where we where going to start our scouting. A falcon scared a flock of fieldfare so they desperately flew away and made the rock ptarmigans press hard against the ground, so hard that we almost run over one bird before it flew away on stiff wings down to the protecting birch woods.

As we entered the spot we'd been looking for we sat down and started to look out over the valley. Håkan, our teacher, started to call for moose while we other sat quiet, gazing. After a short while he pointed out the first mooses which led to that some of us came in real close contact with the animales that day. Later on we split up in smaller groups and went on scouting by our own until the end of the day when we happy and content went back to the camp. After finishing our dinner we gathered to summarize the day and prepare for the next. The evening offered a flaming sunset, giving the observer a dazzling spectacle.

## Day 3:

The last day in the park, we hiked 2 and 2 in our own routes. The 10 different groups started the day in different times and finished the day on the other side of the park just below Gárránisváratj, despite this arrangement it was inevitable that we met one or another group on our way through Bieljávrrre valley. Since everyone moved quiet and carefully we didn't experience that as disturbing and the most groups had close contact, either with big game or with small game.

The mountain birches (*Betula pubescens czerepanovii*) were crowding and as the only bush there were common juniper (*Juniperus communis*), the combination gave the landscape a special character. Open areas of grass had been formed in the lower part of the land due to the cold air that gathered there and created an unfavourable microclimate for higher plants.

There were plenty of small games and since they had been freed from hunting for almost hundred years it took a quite long time before they fled the field. Even in the small creek one or another trout or arctic char could be seen as it jumped on only an arm's length distance.

The quite cold nights had started to build up ice on the edge of the small rippling streams in the valley and the frozen water was telling about a soon coming winter. An unafraid water ouzel wished us good luck with an afternoon bath when we crossed the creek which also are the southwest border of Pieljekaise's National park

When we reached the peak of Gárránisvárátj we could look back over the valley and say so long to the beautiful nature sceneries. Early next morning, before we left to Gauto for our home trip, a big moose decided to also bid us farwell on the ridge of Gárránisvárátj.

Text and Photo Josef Arnfjell / Mountain Leader