



SONFJÄLLET  
NATIONAL PARK  
*THE HOME OF THE  
BEAR*





Photo: Anders Good, IBL

## *IN THE HEART OF HÄRJEDALEN*

Sonfjället can be found isolated in a sea of forest many miles away. The steep north face and the deep ravines in the mountainside give a wild and dramatic impression. At closer quarters, Sonfjället's appearance is characterised by barren rocky crests with several peaks, and the surrounding forest has grown tall and old.

When Sonfjället became a national park in 1909, it was among the first nine national parks in Europe. The intention was to preserve an untouched forest and mountain area in the southern mountains. Then there were only a few bears left in Sweden, including one in the area around Sonfjället. Nowadays, bears have a strong presence in the national park and there is a solid and viable bear population. Bears are shy, but with a bit of luck you can see droppings, tracks or tear marks on trees left behind them.





## NATIONAL PARK IN BRIEF

- AREA: 104 km<sup>2</sup> (after enlargement in 1989)
- OPENING YEAR: 1909 (then 27 km<sup>2</sup>)
- NEAREST TOWN: Hede
- PROVINCE: Jämtland
- COUNTY: Härjedalen
- NATURE TYPES: bare mountain, primeval-like coniferous forest

## TRACES OF THE ICE AGE

**On a hike in Sonfjället we can see how** the ice sheet shaped the landscape. Ten thousand years ago, the ice sheets of the last ice age began to melt. When the large amounts of melt water flowed down as huge rivers of ice between the thawed out mountain peaks, the water cut down into the rock at weak points and created steep ravines. These ravines are called saddle structures and are located between Gråsidan and Valmfjället, where the hiking trail is routed right alongside them. In the creeks that formed naturally between the mountainsides and the ice sheet during the melting, melt water flowed down and created furrows called glacial grooves. As the ice melted, new glacial grooves formed further down the slope. Melt water also found its way down into tunnels under the ice and then cut deep vertical ravines, meltwater channels, down the underlying mountain. Both glacial grooves and meltwater channels can be seen on the western slopes of Gråsidan and Högfjället.

# TO SONFJÄLLET'S NATIONAL PARK



## NYVALLEN'S SETER

During the summer, you can easily travel to the national park by car from Hedevisken. Nyvallen's seter and Sonfjället Nature Information are located at the end of the road. This is also where several marked summer trails start. The

information office is open from midsummer until the end of September.



## NYSÄTERN

To the west of the national park lies Nysäteren. Follow the road from Hedevisken towards Råndalen where there are road signs. Parking, a rest area and an information board are located immediately before Nysäteren seter. Both summer

and winter trails start out from here, including towards Sododalen and the only emergency shelter in the park.



## DALSVALLEN

South of Sonfjället lies Dalsvallen. You are led here by the road between Linsell and Råndalen. This is where you can start your walk into the national park all year round on both summer and winter trails that start out from here,

where there are cabins for rent and the opportunity for guided tours.

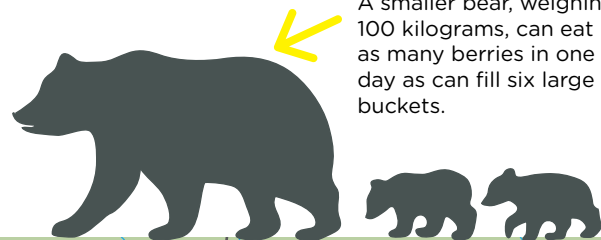


## VALMEN

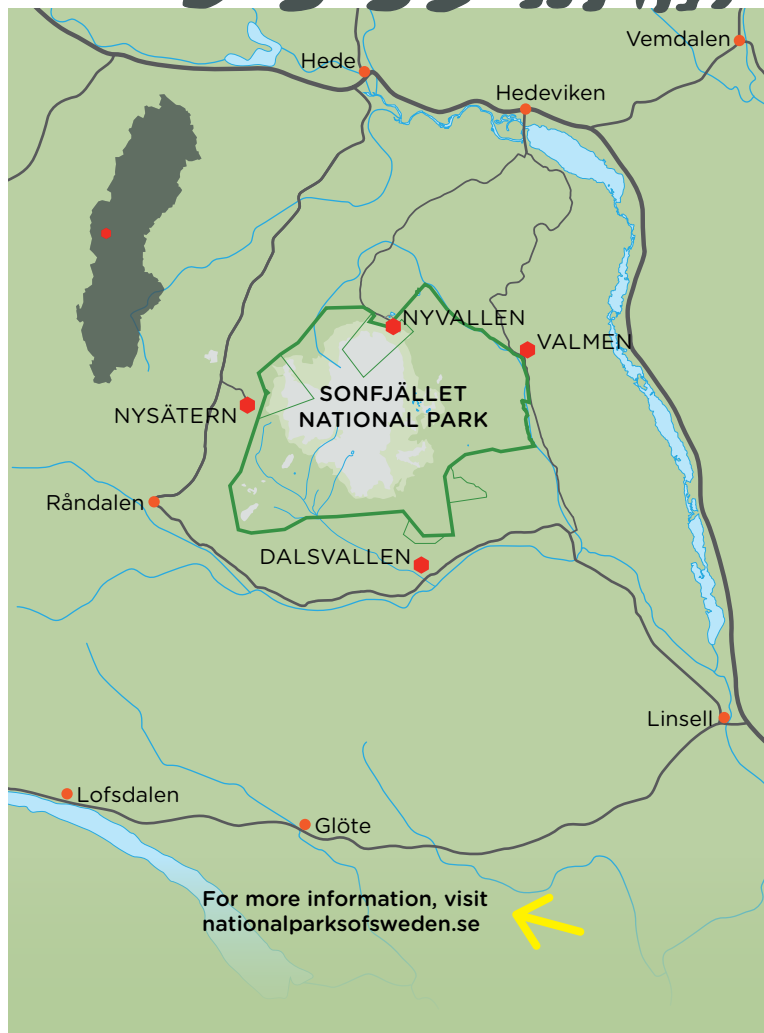
You can reach Valmen from Hedevisken via Sörviken. From here you can hike up the mountain on a summer trail in or just stay and enjoy the view at the rest shelter. There is an accessible rest area with open shed, barbecue area and dry toilet.

## BROWN BEAR *Ursus arctos*

A fully grown bear can weigh 60-300 kilograms, have a withers height of an impressive 1.5 metres and live to up to 30 years old. Bears hibernate from October to April. Bear cubs follow their mother for one or two years before they go off on their own.



A smaller bear, weighing 100 kilograms, can eat as many berries in one day as can fill six large buckets.



For more information, visit  
[nationalparksofsweden.se](http://nationalparksofsweden.se)





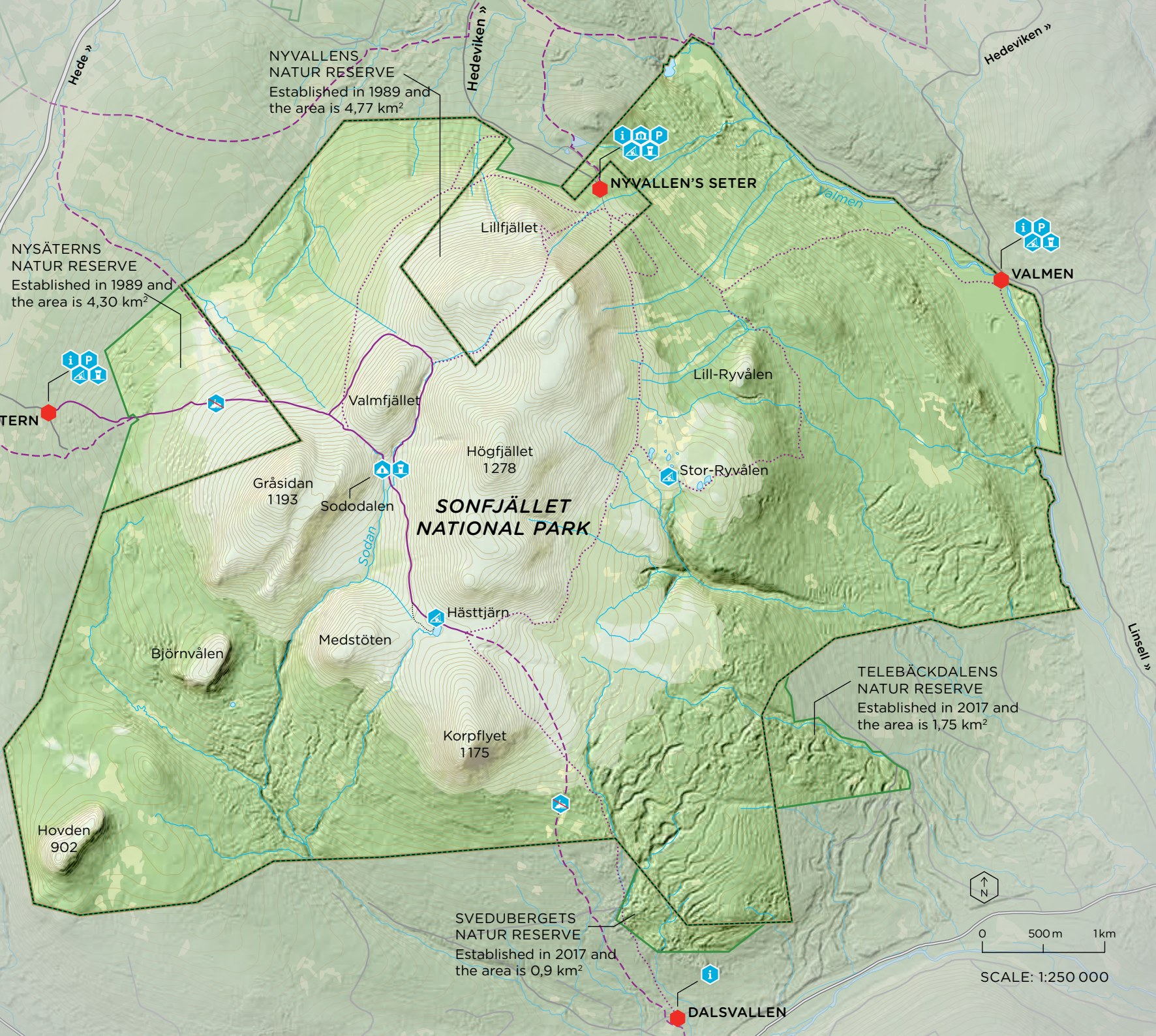
#### HIGH ABOVE THE SEA

At Korpflyet is one of the country's highest known tree line levels – just over 1,100 metres above sea level. This is due to the local climate with high summer temperatures. Sododalen is located in the middle of the mountain crests, and in the sheltered valley, both plant and animal life is richer than on the bare mountain.



#### TUFF ENVIRONMENT ON THE BARE MOUNTAIN

The Vemdalen quartzite results in nutrient-poor and coarse soils that allow almost all water to pass through. Few plants can withstand the dry, nutrient-poor soil and the tough climate on the bare mountain. Different lichens – reindeer-lichens and map lichen – survive together with cold-resistant and drought-resistant small-grown species such as trailing azalea and diapensia.



#### LEGEND

- MOUNTAINS AND MOORLAND
- MOUNTAIN BIRCH WOODS
- CONIFEROUS FOREST
- MARSH
- ENTRANCE
- INFORMATION SITE
- SONFJÄLLET NATURE INFORMATION
- CAR PARK
- EMERGENCY HUT
- WIND SHELTER
- DRY TOILET
- SNOWMOBILE BAN APPLIES THROUGHOUT THE NATIONAL PARK AND NATURE RESERVE
- LARGER ROAD
- MINOR ROAD
- SUMMER TRAIL
- WINTER TRAIL
- SUMMER AND WINTER TRAIL



#### FROST WEDGING

Rapid temperature changes cause cracks to form in the Vemdalen quartzite, which is the dominant type of rock in Sonfjället. The cracks are filled with water and when it freezes, the quartzite is wedged apart. This is called frost wedging. The process has covered Sonfjället with stone blocks in different sizes.



#### OLD AND CROOKED

Old Rasmus, one of the world's oldest living clonal trees (at least 9,500 years old) is growing at Sonfjället. None of the original tree is alive any longer but it is the same genetic individual. The lowest branches have rooted when they were pressed down to the ground and new trunks have grown up.



The area is part of the Natura 2000 network of protected ecological areas.



# LIVING SETER

**Nyvallen's seter has been operating** without interruption since the beginning of the 18th century. At midsummer time, when the snow has gone and the plants are flourishing at Nyvallen, the Kristoffersson family move here with their cattle. Here, as a visitor, you can experience life on a seter for a few hours or days as it has been lived for hundreds of years. Today, however, there are more modern aids that make life on the seter that little bit easier.

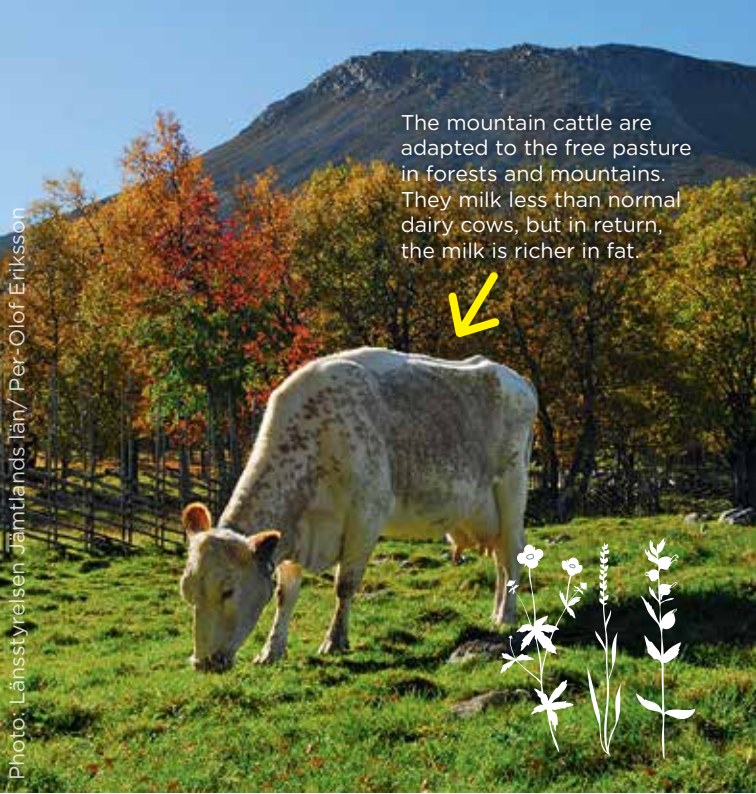
Nyvallen is not a museum but a seter with a living business, which you can experience on a guided tour for a fee. The mountain cattle graze freely in the surroundings and leave their mark on nature. The meadows are managed in a traditional way, making the vegetation more bio-diverse than on a modern hay pasture.

# THE OLD FOREST

**Nearly two-thirds of the national park's surface area** consists of forest. Located closest to the bare mountain are the lush and hilly mountain birch woods with the occasional clonal spruce. Large coniferous forests spread out to the east and southwest of the bare mountain. In the dryer areas, the pine trees grow from carpets of reindeer-lichens, lingonberry sprigs and crowberry sprigs. On more moist soil and on steep terrain, such as Ryåravinen, the pine trees have spread out and grown tall and dense. The oldest pine trees are around 250 years old.

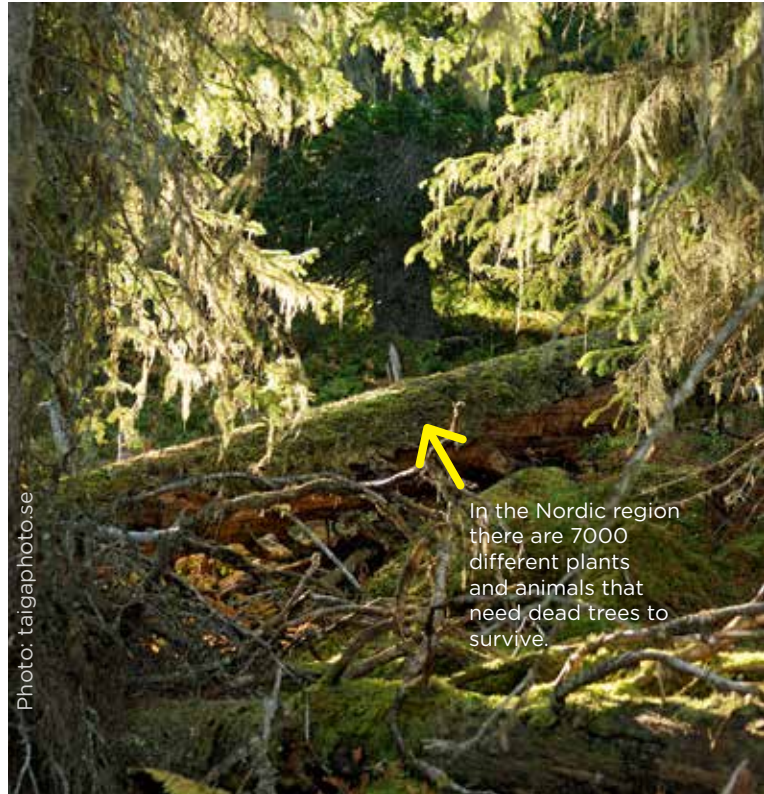
Most of the forests in the national park have had to take care of themselves for a long time and so there is dead decaying wood in the form of deadwood still standing and fallen trunks that have been broken down to varying degrees. Many wood living fungi and insects live off the dead decaying wood and the birds in turn are keen on the insects.

Photo: Länstyrelsen Jämtlands län/ Per-Olof Eriksson



The mountain cattle are adapted to the free pasture in forests and mountains. They milk less than normal dairy cows, but in return, the milk is richer in fat.

Photo: taigaphotose



In the Nordic region there are 7000 different plants and animals that need dead trees to survive.

# POINTS TO REMEMBER

The varied nature in Sonfjället National Park and adjacent nature reserves is open for you – take care of it! Special rules apply in the national park. Full rules and regulations on the right to travel and stay in the national park are given on the signs at each entrance.

- Do not disturb the wild or the domesticated animals.
- Only berries and edible mushrooms may be picked.
- You may take loose, dry branches lying on the ground to make a fire.
- You must not pick rocks or other geological materials.
- Dogs can be brought in if kept on a leash.
- No riding.
- Fishing only permitted with a valid fishing licence in Styggjärn and in Valmen. Otherwise, fishing and hunting are not permitted.
- Caravans or camper vans must not be set up for overnight stays.
- Motorised vehicles must not be driven outside of designated roads and car parks. The snowmobile ban applies throughout the area.
- Landing of aircraft is forbidden.
- Setting up posters or similar is forbidden.
- You must not arrange orienteering checkpoints or mark out tracks.
- To conduct scientific studies or arrange sports competitions, permission is required from the County Administrative Board.
- A permit from the County Administrative Board is required to carry out organised activities
  - a. more than three times a year,
  - b. with more than 35 participants outside designated trails, facilities and locations,
  - c. that involve overnight stays for more than one consecutive night in the same location.

# FIVE THINGS YOU MUST NOT MISS

## 1. SODODALEN

The bare mountain is rocky, but Sododalen is located in the centre of the Sonfjället massif. The river Södan is lined with grass and herbs. Here you can find the white-throated dipper and common sandpiper. The emergency shelter in Sododalen is most easily reached from Nysäteren to the west.



## 2. NYVALLEN'S HILL FARM

A curious calf insists on getting attention and the mountain cattle can be heard mooing in the distance. Here you can learn about nature in the information centre, follow a guided tour (for a fee) or taste traditional hill farm food.



## 3. THE FAMILY TRAIL

A shorter walk starts from Nyvallen which can be just right if you don't want to go so far. Here, young and old can read about nature and look out for carved animals in the forest.



## 4. THE GEOLOGY

Sonfjället has been formed from the ice sheet and its melt water. Rivers of melt water eroded the deep gullies in the mountainsides. There are several such gullies, so-called glacial grooves, on the rocky slopes of Högfjället.



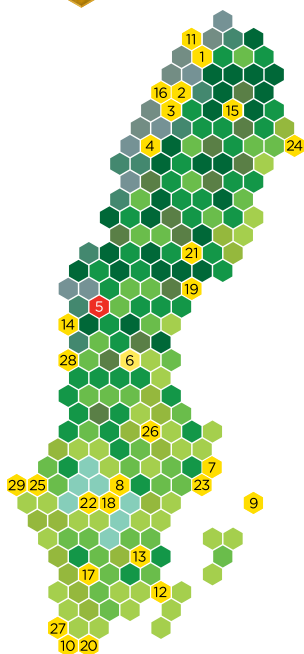
## 5. THE VIEW

Sonfjället rises high above the surrounding landscape. A superb viewing point is at the peak of Lillfjället, where a magnificent view extends across forests, mountains and marshlands.





# NATIONAL PARKS OF SWEDEN



1. ABISKO – An easily accessible mountain valley with unusually rich flora.
2. STORA SJÖFALLET / STUOR MUORKKE – Impressive peaks, glaciers and ancient pine woodlands.
3. SAREK – Magnificent, demanding wilderness in a unique mountainous landscape.
4. PIELJEKAISE – Expansive, pristine woodlands of mountain birch.
5. SONFJÄLLET – A low mountain with natural woodland and plenty of bears.
6. HAMRA – A rare complex of natural woodland, wetland and watercourses.
7. ÄNGSÖ – Genuine agricultural landscape with grazing animals and haymaking.
8. GARPHYTTAN – This old agricultural landscape is a sanctuary for many songbirds.
9. GOTSKA SANDÖN – Unique, beautiful island with miles of sandy beaches.
10. DALBY SÖDERSKOG – Leafy woodland on the plains of Skåne.

11. VADVETJÄKKA – Sweden's northernmost national park is a mountain with deep caves.
12. BLÅ JUNGFRUN – An island of legends, with smooth rocks, deciduous trees and beautiful views.
13. NORRA KVILL – One of the few old growth type woodlands in southern Sweden.
14. TÖFSINGDALEN – Valley with ancient pine woodlands, rich in boulders and rushing waters.
15. MUDDUS / MUTTOS – The land of vast wetlands and old growth woodlands.
16. PADJELANTA / BADJELÄNDA – Rolling mountain heaths and big lakes, far from the nearest road.
17. STORE MOSSE – The largest wetland area in Sweden south of Lapland.
18. TIVEDEN – A wooded landscape with a sense of wilderness.
19. SKULESKOGEN – Coast with magnificent views and the world's highest isostatic lift.
20. STENSHUVUD – Coastal hills, broadleaved woodlands, inviting heathlands and beaches.
21. BJÖRNLANDET – Mountains, cliffs and woodlands with traces of old woodland fires.
22. DJURÖ – Archipelago in western Europe's biggest inland sea.
23. TYRESTA – Pristine woodland just south of Stockholm.
24. HAPARANDA SKÄRGÅRD – Archipelago with sandy beaches and shallow waters.
25. TRESTICKLAN – Roadless wilderness with expansive views from pine-covered ridges.
26. FÄRNEBOFJÄRDEN – A mosaic of broadleaved woodlands and water in Nedre Dalälven.
27. SÖDERÅSEN – Deciduous woodland, scree slopes, running water and a rich flora and fauna.
28. FULUFJÄLLET – By Sweden's highest waterfall, old growth woodland meets mountainside that is white with lichen.
29. KOSTERHAVET – Species-rich area of sea and archipelago with Sweden's only coral reef.

## CONTACT

[www.lansstyrelsen.se/jamtland](http://www.lansstyrelsen.se/jamtland)  
Phone: 010-225 30 00

[naturvardsverket.se](http://naturvardsverket.se)  
Responsible for Sweden's national parks.

