

Muddus National Park Sarek and Padjelanta National Parks

On the spot appraisal visit

14th – 19th August 2023

Pierre Galland (Switzerland)

Çiğdem Adem (Türkiye)

Background

- The European Diploma was awarded to 3 NPs in 1967.
- Periodically renewed since then, the last time in 2012.
- The last expert mission, conducted by Mr Pierre Galland took place in August 2011.
- The Swedish Authorities have sent annual reports regularly for the last 10 years.
- A new management structure covering the 3 parks was established after the adoption of the Laponia Management Plan in 2011.





The Laponian Area World Heritage

- The three National Parks, together with Stora Sjöfallet National Park and the Nature Reserves Sjaunja and Stubba have been inscribed on the World Heritage List by the World Heritage Committee in 1996 under both natural and cultural criteria.



Key Findings – Laponia Administration

- Laponiatjuottjudus is the association that administrates the Laponia World Heritage site. It took over responsibility for the World Heritage site from the Norrbotten County Administrative Board on 1st January 2013.
- The Sámi delegates represent the majority, but decision making is based on consensus.
- The special government regulation about the management organization Laponiatjuttjudus was renewed in 2014, 2016, 2018, and in 2022, the latter because of the Covid-19 pandemic. The regulation is extended until July 2026. These short-term renewals affect the staff members because it is uncertain how long they will continue to be recruited.

Key Findings – Reindeer Herding

- Between 100 000 and 120 000 reindeers and 1 000 reindeer herders exist across Lapponia.
- Logging, changes in land use such as hydropower construction, mining, wind turbine construction and climate change are major threats for reindeers in addition to predators.
- Intensive form of reindeer herding from a distance, not being there in person but herding by using drones or helicopters, makes the system more vulnerable.

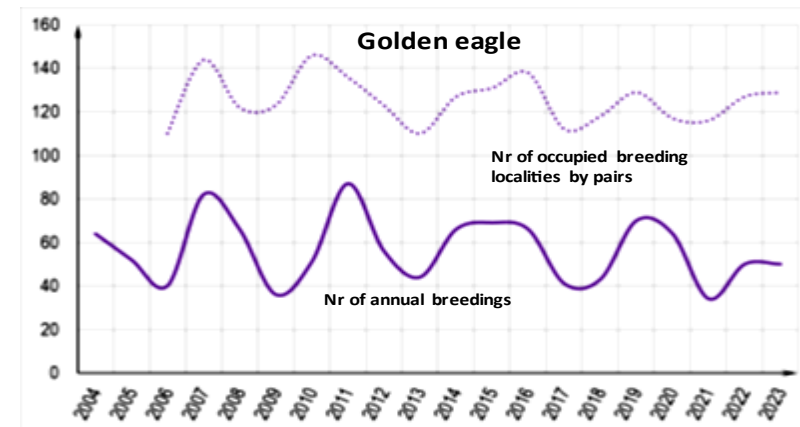
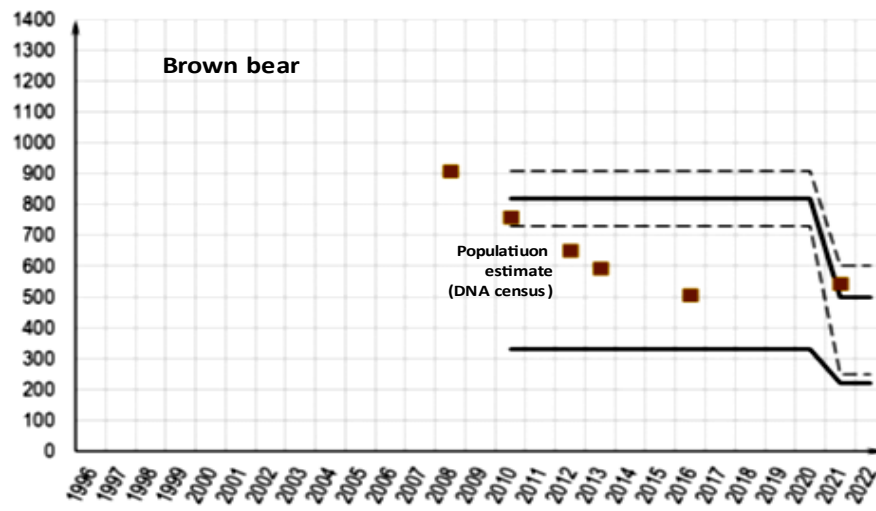
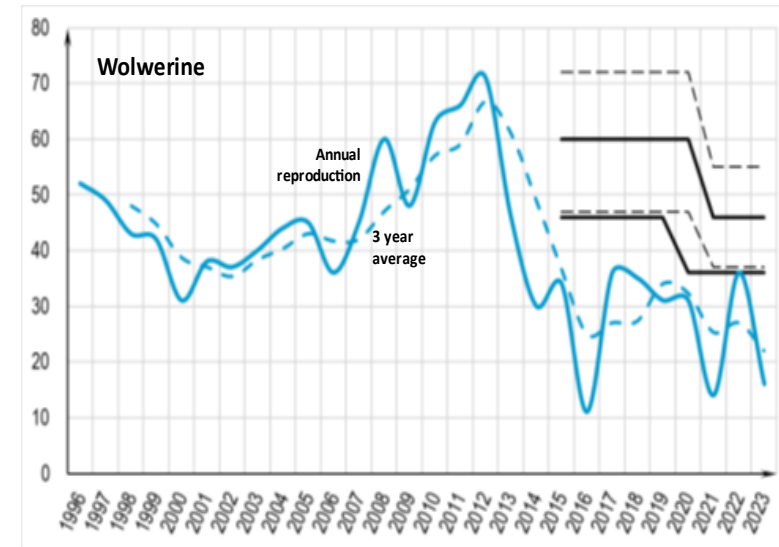
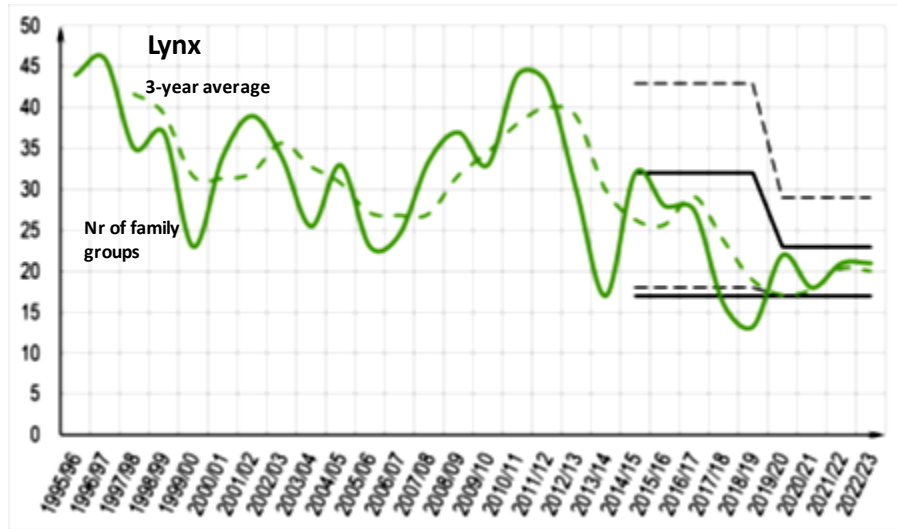
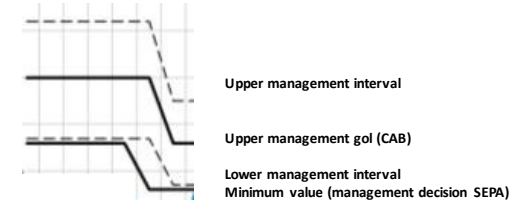
Key Findings - Predators Inventory & Control

- The monitoring of predators is a challenge due to harsh winter conditions, low accessibility of the land, vast area, low human density.
- However, 4-5 large carnivore managers working in the Norrbotten county are well equipped.
- European lynx, brown bears, wolverines, golden eagles and wolves exist as large carnivores.
- No established wolves exist in the Norrbotten county but wolves are crossing it, coming from Finland and Norway.
- Collecting more DNA samples are necessary to monitor brown bear population.

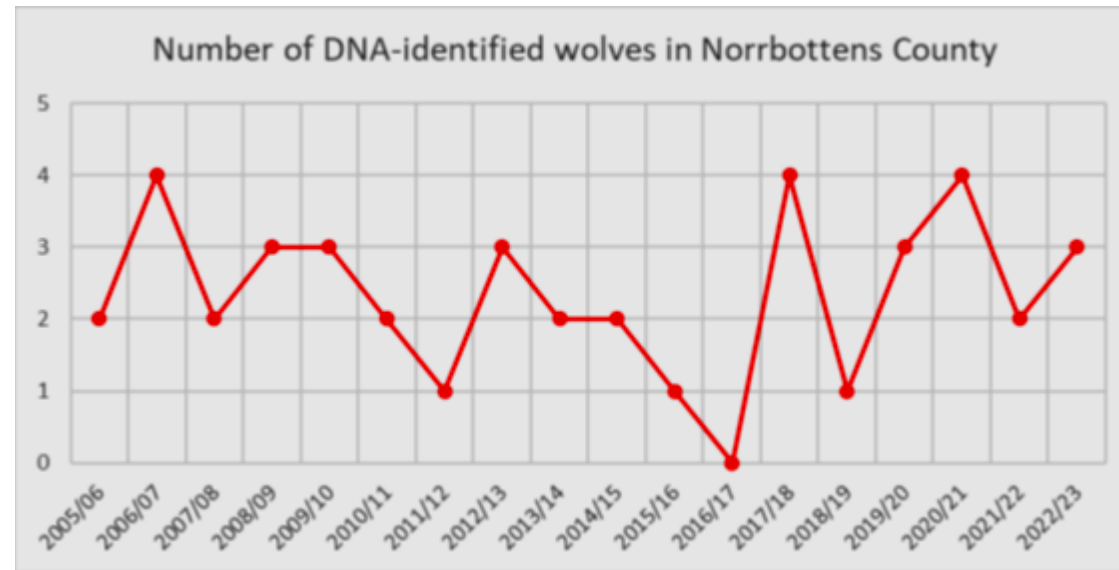
Key Findings - Predators Inventory & Control

- Balance wilderness conservation and Sami reindeer herding interests.
- Through hunting permits the predator population is controlled.
- Reindeer losses compensation mechanism
- Illegal hunting
- Regionalised large carnivore management structure

Key Findings – Census results of large carnivores across Norrbotten County



Key Findings - Census results of large carnivores across Norrbotten County



Key Findings – Bird inventory

Species	Situation
Gyrfalcon	3 pairs
Peregrin Falcon	250 pairs
White-tailed Eagle	100-110 pairs
Tengmalm's owl	30-40% decrease in population
Snow owl	Last observed in 2015
Lesser white-fronted goose	150-160 pairs in Sweden

Key Findings - Guarding and daily maintenance of infrastructures

- The tracks of ATVs, snow mobiles, motor bikes of reindeer herders and other vehicles are monitored.
- High resolution drone pictures are used to identify the damages, to understand how tracks are evolving and to have a baseline information.
- Snow mobiles, and the limited number of boats, have a negligible effect on the landscape.

Key Findings - Guarding and daily maintenance of infrastructures

- 6 and 4-wheel drive ATVs become more prevalent in the recent years among the Sami people for reindeer herding, hunting and fishing.
- The off-road vehicles damage the soil especially during the summer season.
- The vehicle tracks erase the reindeer tracks.
- In two Sami villages, reindeer herders use drones complementing helicopters. Apart from that, drones are not allowed in Lapland and Sami villages disapprove their use as well.

Key Findings - Tourism, tourism infrastructures and transportation

- According to the counters placed in Sarek National Park there are 10 000-15 000 visitors each year. 9 000-10 000 visitors visit the Naturum Laponia Visitor Center.
- There is currently a request from the reindeer herders to close some large areas of the National Parks to tourists to avoid disturbing the reindeers that graze freely, without guarding. To limit the access to areas, the reindeer herders decided to remove a bridge.

Key Findings - Information and communication

- The European Diploma is not displayed at the Muddos National Park entrance, Naturum Laponia Visitor Center and at the Ajtte Sami culture museum.
- Only information panels at the entrance of Muddus National Park include the logo of European Diploma at the end.
- Naturum Laponia Visitor Centre & the nearby trails are well-designed.
- They could serve as sources of inspiration and good practices for other Diploma holding sites and NPs.





E Humans have used the old-growth forests and wetlands for their survival for millennia. Since forestry began to spread in the 20th century, the remaining ancient forests have become increasingly rare and valuable.

Discussions about making Muddus/Muttos a national park began in the 1920s. This was partly to preserve the large forests and mires, but above all to protect the then rare Whooper Swan. When it was given legal protection in 1926 there were only a few pairs in the north. The large mires and lakes in Muddus/Muttos were among the few places where the swans found sanctuary and could breed.

After many years' struggle to protect the area, Muddus/Muttos National Park was formed in 1942. The park was extended in 1948. Today the Whooper Swan is no longer endangered.

Welcome to the land of old-growth forests, vast mires and whooper swans.

National Park Regulations

In Muddus/Muttos National Park you are the guest of nature.

Reindeer husbandry rights apply in the whole of Lapponia. It is forbidden to intentionally disturb foraging reindeer and other reindeer husbandry.	It is forbidden to fish, except at the outflow of Muttos River and the parts of Stuur Julevädno/ Greater Lule River that lie within the national park. A fishing permit is required.
As a visitor here you may always pick berries and mushrooms.	It is forbidden to break twigs, and to fell or damage living or dead/fallen trees, brush and bushes.
You may make a fire with the firewood provided or fallen branches.	It is forbidden to gather plants, lichen and wood living fungi, forbidden to catch, injure or kill animals, and forbidden to collect eggs or disturb wildlife.
You may pitch a tent for a day or two in one place.	It is forbidden to cycle, ride or bring a horse.
You may bring a leashed dog into the national park between 1 January and 30 April, and at all times of year on the Navy Trail.	It is forbidden to drive a motorised vehicle off-road. It is forbidden to drive a motorboat.
It is forbidden to drive a dogsled without the permission of the County Administrative Board.	<p>Read more in our regulations about what you may and may not do, www.laponia.nu. You can also find information about what to do to apply for dispensation or permits.</p>

LAPONIA
WORLD HERITAGE IN SWEDISH LAPLAND

United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Laponia Area
inscribed on the World
Heritage List in 1996

Review of the 2011 Recommendations

- *provide sufficient financial and human resources, including field staff*
- Done; however, a new Management Plan has still to be prepared.

Review of the 2011 Recommendations

- *continue the predators' inventories and use the results in order to help conserve the exceptional predator populations while allowing the Sami population to continue their traditional reindeer herding activities*
- Done. Inventories continue with good results. The decline of the wolverine and Eurasian lynx populations has to be monitored and restricting the number of hunting licenses for lynx should be taken into consideration as necessary. In addition, a restructuring of the Wildlife Management Delegation (WLMD) should be considered.

Review of the 2011 Recommendations

- *establish a centralized research database linked to a GIS for the whole Laponia area and make the results of the research widely available for scientists and visitors;*
- Ongoing. Still some difficulties to access the data collected by different organisations since the Laponia board is not an authority.
- Need to develop innovative mechanisms to improve the access of data and information by the Laponia board.

Review of the 2011 Recommendations

- *closely monitor the use of snowmobile, motor boats and other off-road vehicles, particularly in view of controlling illegal hunting and fishing;*
- Regularly done.
- The impact of snowmobile, motor boats and off-road vehicles is monitored closely by the NP management and the damages are repaired periodically.
- The main problem is four-wheelers, six-wheelers, motorcycles, and other off-road vehicles used particularly by reindeer herders.

Review of the 2011 Recommendations

- This problem has increased in the recent years and the risk of damage might rise with climate change (increased precipitation).
- However, snowmobiles and motorboats don't damage the vegetation, wetlands and soil/ground.
- Encourage research on the use of helicopters and drones and their impact on reindeers and wildlife and decide on restrictions, if necessary.
- Reconsider the frequency of the use of 6 and 4-wheel drive ATVs.

Review of the 2011 Recommendations

- *build and equip as soon as possible the visitor information centre in Stora Sjöfallet for the Laponia World Heritage site and provide specific information on the different National Parks; establish a network of smaller information points at strategic entrances into the parks and communicate about the different categories of international designations;*
- The Laponia Visitor Center “Naturum” (2014), is very well built and equipped. It offers very good information and services to the visitors.
- Naturum is open for a brief period in the summer and autumn; between 14 June- 1st October every year. Due to the harsh winter conditions the number of visitors in the winter are rather low. Information on various National Parks is provided in detail and it is well displayed. Communication about the different categories of international designations is sufficient except for European Diploma. Information on European Diploma at entrances and at the visitor center is needed and the diploma needs to be displayed.

Review of the 2011 Recommendations

- *set up a system for estimating the number of visitors, their profile and distribution over the years and initiate a research programme on the long-term impact of the different human activities (e.g. reindeer herding, fishing and tourism) on the landscape, and design a programme to monitor the effects of the climatic change;*
- Largely done.
- Data on the number of tourists is available since 2015. Counters are placed at certain points such as bridges to monitor visitor numbers annually.
- Impact of tourism on the landscape is rather low although the number of visitors increased during and after the Covid-19 pandemic. Public transportation offer is still very limited.
- Survey should continue and possible emergence of new tourism activities such as paragliding, base jumping, ice climbing and heli skiing should be taken into account.

Review of the 2011 Recommendations

- *consider linking the Sarek and Padjelanta NPs with the Muddus NP and other conservation areas so that the Laponia World Heritage site becomes a single European Diploma site*
- Ongoing; the process should be accelerated.
- It would simplify the management, the reporting and the communication.

Review of the 2011 Recommendations

- *reflect on the use of the different national and international designations for the area; organize a workshop with the relevant international organizations (e.g. Council of Europe, World Heritage Convention, Ramsar Convention, and National Park Service) with a view to harmonizing the reporting and monitoring requirements and the respective perimeters.*
- Interest for working more closely on the international designation exists. Such a workshop could be organised within the frame of the new management plan preparation.

Proposed conclusions

- The 3 NPs are very well managed by highly competent people and the new management system appears to be efficient and well accepted locally.
- They are not currently facing major issues.
- However, it is important to remain vigilant; climate change, changes in the socio-economic conditions and pressure from outside the protected territory (mining, hydropower, urbanisation) might have significant impacts on the so far well-preserved ecosystems.

Proposed conclusions

- The new the management structure for Laponia is very promising.
- The efficiency and acceptance of the new management system deserves to be carefully monitored.
- It could be a source of inspiration for the establishment of participatory management in other large protected areas.
- We therefore recommend to renew the European Diploma for the 3 National Parks for a 10 years period.

Recommendations

1. Consider merging the 2 European Diploma into a larger site including to the whole territory of the World Heritage property Laponian area.
2. Set up a coordination mechanism considering all the national and international designation (European Diploma, World Heritage, Ramsar, Natura 2000, National Parks and Reserves). Organise a joint international workshop including UNESCO and the Council of Europe as appropriate.
3. Finalise and adopt the new Laponia management plan and take a rapid decision regarding the future of the management organization Laponiatjuttjudus. Consider extending without time limit the special government regulation about Laponiatjuttjudus.

Recommendations

4. Continue and possibly intensify the research on the impact of climate change on food availability for reindeers, reindeer herding and predators' populations, and regulate the grazing intensity as appropriate.
5. Continue the predators' inventories and use the results in order to help conserve the exceptional predator populations. Monitor illegal hunting and increase the number of field staff for this purpose accordingly. Take appropriate measures to stop the decline of the Eurasian lynx and wolverine populations.

Recommendations

6. Reconsider the mechanism of the compensations paid for reindeer losses caused by large carnivores; increase them according to the inflation rate and the increase in the meat prices as stated in the reindeer herding law.
7. Encourage research on the use of helicopters and drones and their impact on reindeers and wildlife, and, if appropriate, set restrictions. Reconsider the frequency of the use of 6 and 4-wheel drive ATVs.
8. Continue the visitors' survey and consider possible emergence of new tourism activities such as paragliding, base jumping, ice climbing and heli-skiing. Explore ways for improving the public transportation service to the 3 National Parks to decrease the carbon footprint of visitors.

Recommendations

9. Continue to build up a centralised database for the whole area, or at least ensure an easy access to the different databases.
10. Pay a special attention and, if appropriate, set restrictions to the construction of technological/energy projects outside of the protected areas that may have a negative impact on the reindeer herding system and the fauna including birds (planned mining, existing hydro power plant, housing, wind turbines, etc.).
11. Promote the European Diploma in the information material and in particular in the Naturum exhibition and Ajtte Sami culture Museum in Jokkmokk. Improve communication for visitors to deter tourists from camping at reindeer herding sites and from disturbing grazing reindeer herds.

Thank you for your attention!

- Pierre Galland
- Çiğdem Adem

