The Laponian Area
The Laponian Area

- Comprise:
  940,000 hectares,
  200 km length east-west, 80 km north-south

- Lies within two biogeographical regions (WCMC):
  2.6.5 Subarctic Birchwoods
  2.3.3 West Eurasian Taiga

- Consist of two landscape types:
  Western high mountains,
  Eastern monadnock plains

- Is protected by:
  4 National Parks
  2 Nature reserves
The Laponian Area

Nature types, area:

• Bare mountain, mountain meadow and heathland; 450 000 ha
• Coniferous forest; 120 000 hectar
• Birch forest; 90 000 hectar
• Mire; 120 000 hectar
• Lakes and streams; 80 000 hectar
• Glaciers; 50 000 hectar
Sveriges svar på Alaska
The Laponian Area
Natural criteria VIII

- The area contains all the processes associated with glacial activity such as *U-shaped valleys, moraines, talus slopes, drumlins*, presence of large erratics and rapidly flowing *glacial streams*.

- It has excellent examples of ice and frost action in a tundra setting including formation of *polygons* and an area of spectacularly collapsing and growing *pulsas*.

- *Glacial rivers* originating in the snowfields continue to cut through bedrock. Large unvegetated areas illustrate the phenomenon of *weathering*. 
The Laponian Area
Natural criteria IX

• The importance of the *vast mire complex* of Sjaunja has been recognized by its Ramsar site designation and is the largest in Europe outside Russia.

• The area has *primeval coniferous forest* with dating indicating ages as old as 700 years. Natural succession continues here unimpaired.
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Natural criteria VII

• Great variety of natural phenomena of exceptional beauty. The snow-covered mountains in Sarek and Sulitelma are not only magnificent to see but are a text book of glacial-related geomorphology.

• The large alpine lakes in Padjelanta, with the mountain backdrop on the Swedish/Norwegian border are of exceptional beauty.

• The extensive Rapa Valley provides a total contrast with the alpine areas. Particularly noteworthy is its very active delta area, surrounding cliffs and rocky outliers with sheer faces plunging to the delta.
The Laponian Area
Cultural criteria (iii) and (v).

• The area, which has been inhabited by the Saami since prehistoric time, is one of the best preserved examples of a nomadic area in northern Scandinavia. It contains settlements and pastures for large herds of reindeer, a custom that was once very common, going back to an early stage in human economic and social development.
COMPARISON WITH OTHER AREAS

The Virgin Komi Forests (Russian Federation), the Nahanni and Wood Buffalo National Parks in Canada

• The Laponian Area contains significant differences physically and in vegetation from other World Heritage sites which share the West Eurasian Taiga Biogeographical Province. (bedrock, tree species, forest features etc)

• There is no existing World Heritage site in the Subarctic Birchwoods Province.
The Laponian Area

Natural criteria (vii), (viii) and (ix)

• The site contains examples of ongoing geological, biological and ecological processes, a great variety of natural phenomena of exceptional beauty and significant biological diversity including a population of brown bear and alpine flora.

Cultural criteria (iii) and (v).

• The site has been occupied continuously by the Saami people since prehistoric times, is one of the last and unquestionably largest and best preserved examples of an area of transhumance, involving summer grazing by large reindeer herds, a practice that was widespread at one time and which dates back to an early stage in human economic and social development.