



Syntaxonomic diversity of the birch krummholz with *Betula pubescens* var. *pumila* in the north of the European Russia: I. The class Vaccinio–Piceetea Br.-Bl. in Br.-Bl. et al. 1939

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ABSTRACT

A new alliance, Empetro hermaphroditi–Betulion pumilae Lavrinenko et Braslavskaya **all. nov.**, is described for dwarf shrub, dwarf shrub–green moss, and dwarf shrub–lichen krummholz of *Betula pubescens* var. *pumila*. These communities occur under climatic conditions extreme for woody vegetation in the North, along a longitudinal gradient from Fennoscandia to the Bolshezemelskaya forest-tundra. Based on the authors' field studies in northern European Russia and earlier published data from this area as well as from Scandinavian countries, two suballiances are distinguished: Eu-Empetro hermaphroditi–Betulion pumilae **suball. nov.** – for lowland and mountain forest-tundra krummholz in oligotrophic, snow-poor, dry habitats; and the more oceanic Corno suecici–Betulion pumilae Lavrinenko et Braslavskaya **suball. nov.** – for mesotrophic krummholz with greater snow accumulation and moisture, occurring also in the coastal northern taiga beyond the forest-tundra. The alliance includes 6 associations (with subassociations and variants) and 6 syntaxa provisionally ranked as 'community' due to few relevés from single localities.

Keywords: Birch scrub, krummholz, Vaccinio–Piceetea, Empetro hermaphroditi–Betulion pumilae, Braun-Blanquet classification, *Betula pubescens* var. *pumila*

РЕЗЮМЕ

Лавриненко О.В., Браславская Т.Ю., Чиненко С.В., Чуракова Е.Ю., Карсонова Д.Д., Копейна Е.И., Котлярчук Е.А., Разумовская А.В., Сидорова О.В., Смирнова М.А. Синтаксономическое разнообразие березовых криволесий из *Betula pubescens* var. *pumila* на севере Европейской России. I. Класс Vaccinio–Piceetea Br.-Bl. in Br.-Bl. et al. 1939. Новый союз Empetro hermaphroditi–Betulion pumilae Lavrinenko et Braslavskaya **all. nov.** описан для кустарничковых, кустарничково-зеленомошных и кустарничково-лишайниковых криволесий из *Betula pubescens* var. *pumila*, распространенных в экстремальных для древесной растительности климатических условиях Севера на долготном градиенте от Фенноскандии до Большеземельской лесотундры. По материалам собственных исследований на севере европейской части России и на ранее опубликованных данных с этой территории и из скандинавских стран установлено 2 подсоюза: Eu-Empetro hermaphroditi–Betulion pumilae **suball. nov.** – для криволесий равнинной и горной лесотундры в олиготрофных, малоснежных и сухих местообитаниях и более океанический Corno suecici–Betulion pumilae Lavrinenko et Braslavskaya **suball. nov.** – для криволесий мезотрофных местообитаний с большим снегонакоплением и увлажнением, кроме лесотундры распространен также в приморской полосе северной тайги. Синтаксономическое разнообразие союза представлено 6 ассоциациями (с субассоциациями и вариантами) и 6 синтаксонами, оставленными в ранге 'сообщество' из-за небольшого числа описаний из 1 пункта.

Ключевые слова: березовые криволесия, Vaccinio–Piceetea, Empetro hermaphroditi–Betulion pumilae, Браун-Бланке, *Betula pubescens* var. *pumila*

Birch krummholz in the north of European Russia represents a key phytogeographical and phytoclimatic boundary of forest vegetation, as well as a phenomenon reflecting the formation history of the region's vegetation cover. They occur at the northern limit of woody vegetation and in the subalpine mountain belt (the arctic and altitudinal tree line). *Betula pubescens* var. *pumila* (G. Zanoni ex Murray) Govaerts – the accepted (current) name for an infraspecific variety of downy birch

(*Betula pubescens* Ehrh.). The main synonyms (common in older literature) are: *Betula tortuosa* Ledeb., *Betula czerepanovii* N.I. Orlova, *Betula pubescens* subsp. *tortuosa* (Ledeb.) Nyman, *Betula pubescens* subsp. *czerepanovii* (N.I. Orlova) Hämet-Ahti. All these names are now considered as full synonyms of *Betula pubescens* var. *pumila* in modern databases (POWO 2026, NCBI 2026). The taxon is placed within the monophyletic group of the species *Betula pubescens* under the APG IV phylogenetic system. In North European literature, this taxon is also known as 'mountain birch'. It exhibits high ecological plasticity. The growth form is not fixed but varies along a continuous gradient depending on environmental conditions: prostrate shrubs (low, often creeping or decumbent) under extreme conditions (high mountains, open tundra, strong winds); scrub (krummholz, multi-stemmed, twisted shrub or stunted tree) in the forest-tundra and subalpine (mountain forest-tundra) belt; and full-sized (up to 12 m tall) erect trees in sheltered valleys with fertile soils (Jónsson 2004, Wielgolaski 2005). Polycormic trees dominate dry, nutrient-poor heath forests, while monocormic trees dominate meadow forests and high-altitude sites (Verwijst 1988). Under harsh conditions, the 'twisted' growth form (reflected in the synonym *Betula tortuosa*) is observed – trunks become twisted and branches are interwoven – an adaptation to wind and snow load. The more severe the habitat, the more pronounced the tortuosa-like form.

The natural range of the arctoboreal–montane species *Betula pubescens* var. *pumila* is almost circumpolar; it extends as a continuous belt across the entire north of Eurasia and parts of North America: from Newfoundland (Canada) to Greenland, and from Northern Europe (Iceland, the mountains of Scandinavia – Norway, Sweden, Finland) and Eastern Europe (the northern part of European Russia) to Western and Central Siberia (Taimyr and the Putorana Plateau) (POWO 2026, WFO 2026). *Betula pubescens* var. *pumila* dominates the subalpine krummholz belt in the Ural Mountains (540–680 m a.s.l.) and the mountains of Southern Siberia (Altai, Sayans, 950–1350 m a.s.l.) (Gorchakovskiy 1966, Degteva & Dubrovskiy 2014, Zibzeev et al. 2015). This belt is characterized by high humidity, deep snow cover, and the twisted, crooked growth forms of the trees. In the northern part of European Russia, communities of *Betula pubescens* var. *pumila* occur not only in the forest-tundra (at the limit of tree vegetation) and in the Khibiny Mountains (Murmansk Region, Nenets Autonomous Okrug), but also in the northern taiga subzone – in coastal areas and on the islands of the White Sea (Arkhangelsk Region), where constant winds and winter cold provide conditions approaching those of the forest-tundra and tundra (Churakova et al. 2016, Smirnova 2025).

The unusual phenomenon of birch krummholz ('mountain birch') has drawn the attention of researchers, especially where it is most widespread – in the Scandinavian countries, as well as in Russia. The syntaxonomic diversity of birch communities has been repeatedly described within different classification systems. The main works in the framework of the ecological-phytocoenotic (dominant) classification were carried out by geobotanists of the last century (Regel 1923, 1927, Sambuk 1932, Zinzerling 1932, Dedov 1940, Kor-

chagin 1940, Katenin 1972, Ramenskaya 1974). The syntaxonomic diversity of the birch communities has also been studied based on the ecological-dynamic approach, widely used in forest theory and practice in Finland (Cajander 1926). Hämet-Ahti (1963) performed the most comprehensive classification of mountain birch forests in Western Norway, considering zonation. The main community types of birch krummholz have been described in the classification of habitats in Karelia and Murmansk Region (Kryshen et al. 2009, Kryshen & Kuznetsov 2009, Koroleva 2011), as well as in the Urals (Degteva & Dubrovskiy 2014).

Within the floristic classification, which has been more widely used in the classification of Northern European forests, the main associations with *Betula pubescens* var. *pumila* are described in the works of Nordhagen (1943), Dierssen (1996), Wehberg et al. (2005), and Wehberg (2007). Within the framework of this approach, birch krummholz communities have been described in the West Siberian northern forest-tundra (Lashchinskiy & Lashchinskaya 2015) and in the high mountains of the Altai-Sayan region in Russia (Zibzeev et al. 2015).

Almost all authors, using different classification approaches, have distinguished two main types of syntaxonomic units: those for birch krummholz with dwarf shrub, dwarf shrub–lichen, or dwarf shrub–green moss ground cover, and those for herb-rich (including tall-herb) birch krummholz. Within the Braun-Blanquet approach, the former are placed in the class Vaccinio–Piceetea Br.-Bl. in Br.-Bl. et al. 1939, while the latter belong to the class Betulo carpaticae–Alnetea viridis Rejmanek ex Bœuf, Theurillat, Willner, Mucina et Simler in Bœuf et al. 2014.

This article presents a Braun-Blanquet floristic classification of *Betula pubescens* var. *pumila* communities of the class Vaccinio–Piceetea, based on the authors' own materials from the European part of Russia and including earlier published data from this area as well as Scandinavian countries.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Study area

The territory from which materials were summarized for developing syntaxonomic decisions is vast and diverse in terms of physical-geographical conditions. Sites 1–18 (Fig. 1), where relevés were conducted, are located in the north of European Russia, along a latitudinal gradient from the northern taiga to the northern forest-tundra and southern (subarctic) tundra in Dalniye Zelentsy, and along a longitudinal gradient from eastern Fennoscandia to the western part of the Bolshezemelskaya forest-tundra. Administratively, the study area covers Nenets Autonomous Area, Murmansk Region, and Arkhangelsk Region. Most sites, with the exception of four, are situated north of the Arctic Circle.

The north of European Russia is predominantly lowland. Mountain massifs occur only in the west: the Keivy Upland (300–400 m a.s.l.) (Fig. 1, site 3), composed of gneisses and crystalline schists with mafic minerals, and the Khibiny Mountains (300–1200 m a.s.l.) (Fig. 1, site 4), composed of mafic igneous rocks (nepheline syenites and melteigite-urtites) (Kaletska et al. 1966). Most research

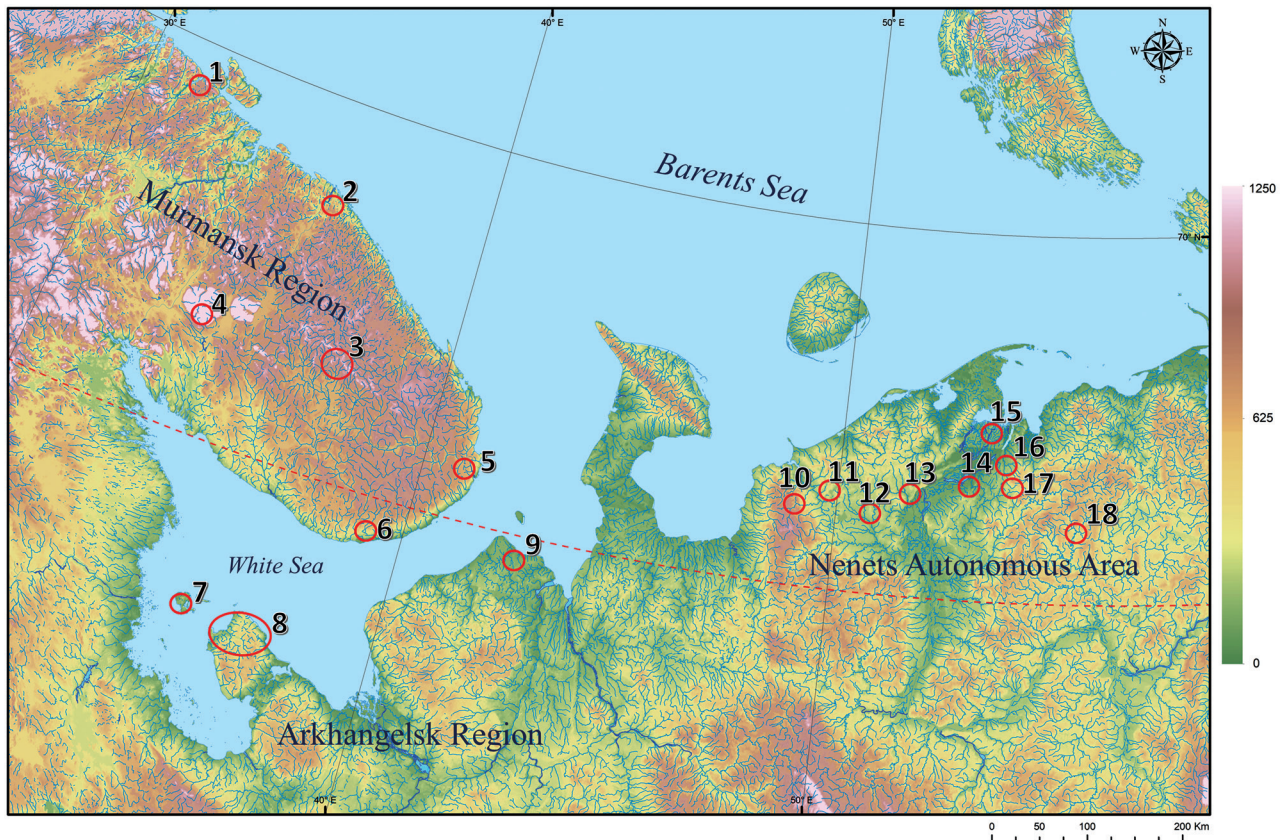


Figure 1 Study area. Field sites by authors, Dedov (1940) and Regel (1927): 1–6 – Murmansk Region: 1–2 – Murmansk Coast: 1 – Liinakhamari environs (Chinenko); 2 – Dalniye Zelentsy environs (Chinenko); 3 – Keivy Upland (Chervurta & Slyudyana mountains, Kalmyk & Uzkaya rivers (Chinenko), Pessaryok & Sakharaya rivers, Parusnaya Mount (Razumovskaya)); 4 – Khibiny (Vudyavrchorr and Aikuivenchorr) Mountains (Kopeina); 5–6 – Tersky Coast: 5 – Lower reaches of the Ponoy River and islands (Tabachy Kuvshin, Bolshoy Popov) in the Gorlo of the White Sea (Kopeina); 6 – Chapoma settlement, Strelna River (Regel); 7–9 – Arkhangelsk Region, southern coast of the White Sea: 7 – Solovetsky Islands (Churakova, Sidorova); 8 – Onega Peninsula: coastal areas from Cape Orlovsky to the Yarenga village (Smirnova); 9 – Koida village environs (Churakova); 10–18 – Nenets Autonomous Area: 10–12 – Northern Timan Ridge and Malozemelskaya forest-tundra: 10 – Belaya River and Indiga River near Popovych village (Dedov, Lavrinenko); 11 – "Tri Sopki" hills and Khvostovaya River (Dedov); 12 – Listvenichnaya River (Dedov); 13–15 – Pechora Delta: 13 – Kamenka village and opposite Oksino village (Dedov); 14 – Naryan-Mar environs, including Kuya River, Kharitonovskoye Lake and Listennichnaya River (Lavrinenko, Karsonova, Kotlyarchuk); 15 – a terrace remnant in the northern part of the delta (Lavrinenko); 16–18 – Bolshezemelskaya forest-tundra: 16 – Ortina River (Lavrinenko); 17 – Severnaya River (Lavrinenko, Karsonova); 18 – Laya River (Lavrinenko, Simonova)

was conducted on coastal plains of marine and fluvio-glacial sandy and clayey deposits (Kaletskaia et al. 1966). In Scandinavia, published studies span latitudes from 61.6°N (Nordhagen 1943) to 70.7°N (Hämet-Ahti 1963), in mountain massifs (300–1700 m a.s.l.) composed of acidic granites and gneisses (Hämet-Ahti 1963), sometimes with calcium-bearing minerals (Aune 1973), or of less acidic gabbro, norites, amphibolites, or schists (Nordhagen 1943, Hämet-Ahti 1963, Wehberg 2007).

A brief climatic and environmental characterization of our study areas (based on: Ahti et al. 1968, Durov 1971, Isachenko 1976, Aleksandrova 1977, Tuhkanen 1984, Koroleva 2006, Climate Data 2026, Weather and climate 2026) is summarized in Table 1. From western to eastern sites, and also from coastal areas inland, mean annual air temperature decreases and climate continentality increases, which is expressed in lower precipitation and a greater seasonal temperature range. In Murmansk Region, birch krummholz is widespread in the forest-tundra on more or less drained terrains, including marine and river

terraces with soils of various textures; in mountains and on elevations (varakas) it occupies slopes of different steepness and is confined to shallow soils on bedrock with free and impeded drainage; sporadically, in small patches, it penetrates into the southern tundra subzone along the Murmansk coast in Kola Peninsula. Although the CAVM (2003) does not place this area within the Arctic, Koroleva (2006) and, earlier, Aleksandrova (1977) argued that it belongs to the southern tundra zone. At least, the landscape around Dalniye Zelentsy is treeless tundra. In the lowland areas of Nenets Autonomous Area, krummholz occur at the northernmost forest-tundra boundary, where it is confined to well-drained habitats with light-textured soils (sands) and deep (over 2 m) permafrost or its absence due to taliks beneath rivers. Further south, in the northern taiga subzone of Arkhangelsk Region, the occurrence of *Betula pubescens* var. *pumila* krummholz is determined by unfavorable soil conditions, as well as by the influence of northern winds and cold sea currents in a coastal strip up to 500 m wide along the White Sea coast.

Table 1. Natural and climatic conditions of the study area.

Locality no. in Fig. 1	Study sites	Botanical and geographical zonation	Terrain / Altitude (m a.s.l.)	The mean annual		Oceanicity	Soil forming material / drainage
				T, °C	P, mm		
Murmansk Region							
1	Liinakhamari environs (Murmansk Coast)	Northern forest- tundra	Pediment plain with alternating rock ridges and depressions (0–5 km away from the seashore / 20	1.3	600–700	O2–O1	Rocky, with loose deposits / free and impeded
2	Dalniye Zelentsy environs (Murmansk Coast)	Southern (subarctic) tundra	Hilly plain and sea terraces (1 km away from the seashore) / 70–100	1.7	700	O2–O1	Rocky, with sandy deposits / free and impeded
3	Keivy Upland	Northern forest- tundra	Gentle upland / 160–350	–0.3	600	OC	Shallow sandy or gravelly soils on bedrock / free and impeded
4	Khibiny Mountains	Mountain forest- tundra	Mountains / 350–400	0.3	1000	OC	Bedrock with gravelly deposits / impeded
5	Ponoy River and White Sea Throat islands	Northern forest- tundra	Floodplain and sea terraces (0–8 km away from the seashore) / 20–150	–1.1	600	O1	Rocky with sandy- gravelly deposits / impeded
6	Chapoma settlement, Strelna River	Southern forest-tundra	Floodplain and watershed plain / 20–40	0.1	550	O1	Rocky with sandy- gravelly deposits / impeded
Arkhangelsk Region							
7, 8	Solovetsky Islands, coast of the Onega Peninsula	Northern taiga	Sea terraces 20–500 m away from the seashore / 2–30	1.1	650	O1–OC	Sandy-bouldery, and loamy / impeded and poor
9	Koida environs	Southern forest-tundra	Swampy plain, floodplain / 5–40	–0.9	550	O1	Sandy, sandy on permafrost / free and impeded
Nenets Autonomous Area							
10	Northern Timan Ridge	Northern forest- tundra	Old destroyed mountains / 200–300	–1.2	550	O1	Sandy and shallow soils on bedrock / impeded
11, 12, 16–18	Bolshezemelskay and Malozemelskaya forest-tundra	Northern forest- tundra	Watershed plain / 80–120	–3.9	400	OC	Sandy on deep (>2m) permafrost / free
13–14	Pechora River Delta and adjacent localities	Subarctic floodplain & northern forest- tundra	Floodplain and watershed plain / up to 10–80	–2.3	450	O1	Sandy / free

Note. T – Temperature; P – precipitation; O2 – moderately oceanic (transitional); O1 – weakly oceanic (near-continental); OC – intermediate oceanic-continental.

Sampling and data analysis

The syntaxonomic analysis is based on 187 relevés, which were sampled at different sites in 2005–2025: 19 by O.V. Lavrinenko and 22 by her in collaboration with other researchers (11 – with D.D. Karsonova, 8 – with A.I. Grishnyakova, 3 – with E.A. Kotlyarchuk), 47 by S.V. Chinenko, 31 by E.Yu. Churakova and 19 – together with V.N. Mamontov, 23 by M.A. Smirnova, 15 by E.I. Kopeina and 1 – together with N.E. Koroleva, 5 by O.V. Sidorova & I.B. Amosova, 4 by A.V. Razumovskaya, and 1 by K.I. Simonova.

For the analysis and description of syntaxa, we used 14 relevés by Regel (1923, 1927) performed in 1912–1913, and 12 relevés by Dedov (1940) performed in 1930–1939. For tabular comparison, we included syntaxa by Hämet-Ahti, which were distinguished using the Kalela classification method – quite close to the Braun-Blanquet approach and yielding comparable results (Hämet-Ahti 1963: 28) – as well as those by Nordhagen (1943), Wehberg (2007), Aune (1973), and Lashchinskiy & Lashchinskaya (2015).

We identified all species (vascular plants, bryophytes, and lichens) on 50–400 m² plots (or within the natural boundaries when the community area was smaller) and estimated both

total and major biormorph / layer cover (%) and species cover abundance scores using the Braun-Blanquet scale (Becking 1957, Barkman et al. 1964): r – solitary individuals; + – < 1 %; 1 – 1–5 %; 2a – 6–12 %; 2b – 13–25 %; 3 – 26–50 %; 4 – 51–75 %; 5 – 76–100 %. In the relevés by Churakova, Sidorova, Razumovskaya, and Smirnova, species were given as cover (%), which was converted to Braun-Blanquet cover scores. Estimates of species abundance from 1 to 6 in Dedov (1940) and from 1 to 5 in Nordhagen (1943) are retained as in the authors' works. Values on the Drude scale in Regel's (1923, 1927) relevés were converted to Braun-Blanquet abundance scores: + → +, sol → 1, sp → 2a, sp.-cop. → 2b, cop. → 3, soc. or cop.-soc. → 5. In the summary column of the tables in Hämet-Ahti (1963), the median species cover (%) is given; in Aune (1973), the median value on the 10-point Domin scale is given.

Coordinates in the authors' relevés were taken with a Garmin GPS device; in those by Dedov and Regel, they were taken from maps (see notes to Tables 2–7). For some relevés in Murmansk Region where coordinates are missing, brief locality descriptions are provided in the notes to Tables 2, 4, 5, and 7.

Table 2. Association Empetro hermaphroditum–Betuletum pumilae in the Murmansk Region and Nenets Autonomous Area compared with syntaxa in the mountains of the Norway.

Relevés by		Original data (a)																		Dedov 1940 (b)						Nordh. 1943	Constancy and abundance																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																										
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Table 2. Continued.

Table relevé no.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	a	b*	c*	d*	e*	
<i>Flavocetraria cucullata</i>	.	r	.	.	.	r	.	.	.	.	r	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	1	.	.	.	.	II ^r	I ¹	I ¹	I ⁺	.
<i>Peltigera malacea</i>	+	+	.	r	r	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	II ⁺	.	II ¹	.	I ⁺
<i>Stereocaulon paschale</i>	.	.	.	+	1	1	+	.	+	.	r	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	1	1	1	II ⁺	II ¹	I ¹	.	.

Note. Species found in 1–3 relevés with an abundance of r or + and of 1 by Dedov (others are indicated in brackets): *Picea obovata* (incl. *P. × fennica*) 22; *Betula nana* s. str. 5, 21, 22; *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* 6; *Antboxanthum alpinum* 22; *Calamagrostis neglecta* s. l. (incl. *C. groenlandica*) 20; *C. purpurea* 19; *Campanula rotundifolia* 1, 2, 7; *Carex bigelowii* s. l. (incl. *C. arctisibirica*) 20; *Chamaenerion angustifolium* 23, 24; *Diphysastrum alpinum* 17 (1); *D. complanatum* 21; *Equisetum sylvaticum* 23 (3); *Geranium sylvaticum* 20, 24; *Hieracium* agg. *alpinum* 2, 3, 11; *H. agg. laevigatum* 13; *H. agg. vulgatum* 17; *Lycopodium clavatum* 7 (1); *Orthilia secunda* 20; *Poa pratensis* s. l. (incl. *P. alpigena*) 12; *Pyrola rotundifolia* s. l. (incl. *P. grandiflora*) 21, 24; *Rubus arcticus* 20 (2), 21; *Rubus chamaemorus* 19; *Tanacetum bipinnatum* 10, 13 (2b); *Aulacomnium palustre* 21, 22 (2); *Bryum* sp. 6; *Dicranum bonjeanii* 22 (2), 23 (2); *D. flexicaule* 4, 9, 16; *D. groenlandicum* 3; *D. polysetum* 15, 22; *Hylocomiadelphus triquetrus* 6; *Poblia nutans* 9; *Polytrichum hyperboreum* 4, 6, 22 (2); *P. piliferum* 6, 22, 23 (2); *P. strictum* 20 (2), 23 (2), 24 (2); *Alectoria ocbroleuca* 19; *Cladonia amaurocraea* 5, 24; *C. bellidiflora* 5, 10; *C. deformis* 20; *C. phyllophora* 6; *C. pleurota* 5, 11, 24; *C. subfurcata* 7; *C. sulphurina* 11, 13; *Flavocetraria nivalis* 6, 19; *Nephroma arcticum* 20, 23, 24 (2); *Peltigera polydactylon* 23; *P. scabrosa* 4, 7 (1), 21; *Sphaerophorus globosus* 13, 19.

In columns 'c', 'd' and 'e', the rest species of constancy I or II are not shown.

GPS coordinates (WGS 84) (N, E): 1 – 67.65436, 53.12631; 2 – 67.65428, 53.12681; 3 – 67.65481, 53.13622; 4 – 67.59113, 53.23669; 5 – 67.60033, 53.24068; 6 – 67.65319, 53.1375; 7 – 67.59653, 53.24747; 8 – 67.65377, 53.13535; 9 – 67.92222, 54.13333; 10 – 67.64385, 54.03213; 11 – 67.64378, 54.03346; 12 – 67.6585, 53.14322; 13 – 67.64519, 54.03314; 14 – 67.65083, 53.14555; 15 – 67.65104, 53.14551; 16 – 67.59457, 53.2471; 20–21 – 67.48694, 51.87139; 22 – 67.46778, 49.38139; 23 – 67.50972, 50.60000; 24 – 67.48694, 51.87139.

Locations of the rest relevés (nrs. in the table), in the Murmansk Region: 17 – Keivy Upland, Mount Chervurta; 18 – Dalniye Zelentsy village, Voronya Bay, at the mouth of Khokhryachiy Stream; 19 – Dalniye Zelentsy village, on the road south from Yarnyshnaya Bay.

Authors. rel. no. 1–3, 10, 12, 13 – Lavrinenko & Grishnyakova; 4, 5, 711, 16 – Lavrinenko & Karsonova; 6, 9 – Lavrinenko; 8, 14, 15 – Lavrinenko & Kotlyarchuk; 17–19 – Chinenko; 20–24 – Dedov (1940); 25 – Nordhagen (1943).

Nomenclature types (lectotypus hoc loco) are indicated by a gray fill.

*b–e – Constancy and abundance for the associations: b – *Betula tortuosa*–*Hylocomium proliferum* (Dedov 1940); c – *Betuletum empetro-hylocomiosum* (Nordhagen 1943); d – *Vaccinio vitis-idaeae*–*Betuletum* Wehberg 2007; e – Submaritime *Empetrum* type (Hämet-Ahti 1963).

** *Betula pubescens* s. l. (incl. *B. czerepanovii*, *B. subarctica*) in Hämet-Ahti (1963).

The vegetation was classified according to the Braun-Blanquet sorted-table method (Westhoff & van der Maarel 1978) with clustering (Ward's method) to order the relevés. The constancy of the species in the tables is given on a percentage scale (%): I – > 0–20, II – 21–40, III – 41–60, IV – 61–80, V – 81–100. Species with constancy V–III are considered to be highly constant. The median abundance values (if not given, they are "+" or "r") for each species were used to characterize the syntaxa. To calculate these, the Braun-Blanquet scale values were converted to an 8-point numerical scale.

To visualize floristic similarity and for the ordination of the relevés, we applied the UMAP method (Uniform Manifold Approximation and Projection) (McInnes et al., 2018), implemented in the umap-learn library for Python. Distances between relevés were calculated using the Bray-Curtis coefficient. The ordination parameters were set to n_neighbors = 15, min_dist = 0.30.

When characterizing associations and subsyntaxa, we used the notion of a "differential species combination" (Beetink 1965, Molenaar 1976) – a group of taxa that are characteristic of a syntaxon when they occur together, although each may not be a character species individually. Syntaxa established from a small number (1–6) of relevés from a single geographical locality are retained at the rank of 'community'. For faithful (exclusive, selective, preferential) species of higher syntaxa, we used the concept of "character species" (Braun-Blanquet 1932, Westhoff & van der Maarel 1978). The nomenclature of species follows Chepinoga et al. (2024) for vascular plants (with Plants of the World Online (POWO 2025) consulted for *Betula pubescens* var. *pumila*), Hodgetts et al. (2020) for bryophytes, and Santesson et al. (2004) for lichens. Geographical, ecological and biomorphological characteristics for vascular plants follows Sekretareva (2024). The new syntaxonomic units were named

according to the fourth edition of the International Code of Phytosociological Nomenclature (ICPN) (Theurillat et al. 2021). Authors of syntaxa are given in the text at first mention and in the conspectus.

RESULTS

Classification and characteristics of vegetation units

After processing the relevé (Tables 2–7), synoptic table (Table 8) and statistical analysis, birch krummholz with dwarf shrub–green moss cover of the European North of Russia was assigned to six associations (with subassociations and variants) and six syntaxa as 'community' belonging to new alliance and two suballiances of the class *Vaccinio-Piceetea* Br.-Bl. in Br.-Bl. et al. 1939.

Dwarf shrub, dwarf shrub–green moss, and dwarf shrub–lichen birch scrub and krummholz of *Betula pubescens* var. *pumila*, distributed in Scandinavia and in the north of European Russia along a latitudinal gradient from Eastern Fennoscandia to the Bolshezemelskaya tundra (forest-tundra and coastal areas of the northern taiga, subalpine belt in mountains), are assigned to a new alliance – *Empetro hermaphroditi*–*Betulion pumilae*.

Since the nomenclature of the genus *Empetrum* is not settled, in the name of the alliance (and its included subsyntaxa) we use the name of the hypoarctomontane, tetraploid (4n) species with bisexual flowers – *Empetrum hermaphroditum* Lange ex Hagerup, accepted in PAF (2026) and Euro+Med (2026) (in WFO: *Empetrum nigrum* subsp. *hermaphroditum* (Hagerup) Böcher; in POWO: synonymized under *Empetrum nigrum* L. subsp. *nigrum*), in order to distinguish it from the boreal *Empetrum nigrum* s. str.

Although the 4th edition of the ICPN (Theurillat et al. 2021) does not recommend using infraspecific taxa below subspecies rank as name-forming elements (recommenda-

Table 3. Association *Cladonio stellaris*–*Betuletum pumilae* in the Murmansk Region and Nenets Autonomous Area compared with syntaxa in the mountains of the Norway and Finland.

Relevés by	Original data (a)				Dedov (1940) (b)			Nordh. 1943	Constancy and abundance				
Locality (no. in Fig. 1)	3	3	3	3	11	12	12						
Date	21.07.2019	21.07.2019	16.07.2024	16.07.2024	12.08.1931	12.09.1931	12.09.1931		Constancy and abundance				
Cover, %: trees	30	40	35	35	20	>20	30	-					
shrub	20	10	15	2	-	-	-	-					
dw. shrubs and herbs	40	25	30	30	-	-	35	-					
bryophytes	35	5	20	30	-	-	15	-					
lichens	45	60	75	65	-	-	70	-					
Relevé nr. by author	K3	K25	596	598	303	413	412	11					
Table relevé no.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	a	b*	c*	d*	e*
No. of relevés									4	3	13	177	50
Differential species combination of the ass. <i>Cladonio stellaris</i>–<i>Betuletum pumilae</i>													
<i>Cladonia stellaris</i>	3	3	4	4	2	.	.	4	4 ⁴	1 ²	V ⁴	V ²	IV ⁺
<i>Stereocaulon paschale</i> **	2a	.	.	.	6	6	2	1	1 ^{2a}	3 ⁶	V ²	V ²	V ⁴⁰
<i>Betula nana</i>	2a	1	2a	1	.	.	2	2	4 ^{2a}	1 ²	V ²	IV ¹	III ¹
<i>Cladonia coccifera</i>	.	.	+	.	.	.	2	3	1 ⁺	2 ³	V ¹	III ⁺	IV ⁺
<i>Cladonia uncialis</i>	.	1	1	.	.	.	.	.	2 ¹	.	IV ¹	IV ¹	V ¹
<i>Flavocetraria nivalis</i>	.	.	.	.	1	1	3	1	.	3 ¹	V ²	III ¹	II ⁺
<i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i>	+	.	1	.	.	.	.	3	2 ¹	.	IV ²	.	I ¹
<i>Flavocetraria cucullata</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	V ¹	I ⁺	I ⁺
<i>Polytrichum piliferum</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	II ¹	III ⁵
Character species of the suballiance Eu-Empetro hermaphrodit–<i>Betulenion pumilae</i>													
<i>Festuca ovina</i>	+	.	+	+	2	2	3	2	2 ⁺	3 ²	V ¹	II ⁺	II ¹
<i>Cladonia arbuscula</i> (incl. subsp. <i>mitis</i>)	1	.	.	.	2	2	5	1	1 ¹	3 ²	V ²	IV ¹	V ¹
<i>Cladonia rangiferina</i>	1	2a	1	.	3	2	4	1	3 ¹	3 ³	V ²	V ¹	IV ¹
<i>Polytrichum juniperinum</i>	1	.	.	.	1	2	3	1	1 ¹	3 ²	V ²	V ¹	V ⁵
<i>Ptilidium ciliare</i>	+	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	4 ¹	3 ¹	IV ¹	III ⁺	II ²
<i>Cetraria islandica</i>	.	1	.	.	2	1	2	1	1 ¹	3 ²	V ¹	II ⁺	I ⁺
<i>Cladonia gracilis</i>	.	.	1	.	2	1	3	1	1 ¹	3 ²	V ¹	IV ¹	I ⁺
<i>Oreojuncus trifidus</i>	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	1 ⁺	.	II ¹	III ⁺	II ⁺
<i>Phyllodoce caerulea</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	IV ²	III ¹
Character species of the alliance Empetro hermaphrodit–<i>Betulenion pumilae</i>													
<i>Betula pubescens</i> var. <i>pumila</i> **	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	5	4 ³	3 ⁴	V ⁵	V ³	V ²⁷
<i>Empetrum</i> <i>hermaphroditum</i>	2b	2b	2a	2b	4	3	3	1	4 ^{2b}	3 ³	V ³	V ³	V ³⁰
<i>Avenella flexuosa</i>	2a	1	1	+	2	1	.	2	4 ¹	2 ²	IV ¹	IV ¹	IV ⁺
Character species of the Vaccinio–Piceetea													
<i>Vaccinium vitis-idaea</i>	2a	+	2a	2b	4	5	4	3	4 ^{2a}	3 ⁴	V ²	V ²	V ⁵
<i>Pleurozium schreberi</i>	3	1	.	3	2	1	3	1	2 ³	3 ²	IV ¹	IV ¹	IV ⁵
<i>Vaccinium myrtillus</i>	1	+	+	2a	.	.	2	.	4 ¹	1 ²	I ¹	IV ²	IV ⁵
<i>Juniperus communis</i> (incl. <i>J. sibirica</i>)	2b	1	.	1	.	.	.	.	2 ¹	.	.	III ¹	III ⁺
<i>Lysimachia europaea</i>	+	+	.	.	2	.	2	.	2 ⁺	2 ²	I ¹	III ¹	II ⁺
<i>Hylacomium splendens</i>	.	.	.	.	3	3	3	1	.	3 ³	II ¹	I ⁺	I ⁺
<i>Spinnulum annotinum</i> (incl. <i>S. subarcticum</i>)	.	.	.	.	1	1	2	.	.	3 ¹	.	II ⁺	II ⁺
<i>Vaccinium uliginosum</i>	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	1	1 ⁺	.	V ²	II ¹	II ⁺
<i>Dicranum scoparium</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	II ¹	V ¹	III ⁵
Highly constant species of syntaxa													
<i>Solidago virgaurea</i> (incl. <i>S. lapponica</i>)	+	+	.	.	1	1	.	1	2 ⁺	2 ¹	II ¹	II ¹	III ⁺
<i>Cladonia cornuta</i>	.	.	1	+	.	.	.	.	2 ¹	.	II ¹	III ⁺	I ⁺
<i>Cladonia deformis</i>	.	+	.	.	2	2	.	.	1 ⁺	2 ²	III ¹	III ⁺	IV ⁺
<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	+	r	2a	1	.	.	.	.	4 ¹	.	.	.	I ⁺
<i>Dicranum fuscescens</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	V ¹	IV ¹	IV ⁵
<i>Poblia nutans</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	V ¹	.	I ⁺
<i>Cladonia pycnidata</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	IV ¹	I ¹	I ⁺
<i>Alectoria ochroleuca</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	III ¹	I ⁺	I ⁺
<i>Barbilophozia hyopodoides</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	I ¹	III ¹	I ⁺
<i>Cladonia crispata</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	I ¹	I ⁺	V ⁺
<i>Cladonia ecmocyna</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	V ⁺
<i>Barbilophozia hatcheri</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	III ³
<i>Nephroma arcticum</i>	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1 ⁺	.	.	II ¹	III ¹
<i>Calamagrostis lapponica</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	III ⁺

Note. Species found in 1–3 relevés with an abundance of r or + and of 1 by Dedov (others are indicated in brackets): *Picea obovata* (incl. *P. × fennica*) 1 (1); *Arctous alpina* 5 (2); *Calluna vulgaris* 3 (1); *Carex bigelowii* s.l. 2; *Cornus suecica* 5; *Diphysastrum alpinum* 1, 3; *D. complanatum* 4; *Equisetum arvense* 5 (2), 6 (2), 7 (2); *Luzula pilosa* 1, 5, 7; *Pedicularis lapponica*; *Rubus arcticus* 5, 6 (2), 7 (2); *Dicranum bonjeanii* 5; *D. flexicaule* 7 (2); *Polytrichum commune* 4; *P. hyperboreum* 5, 7 (2); *P.*

tion 10F), in the names of the alliance and subsyntaxa with *Betula pubescens* var. *pumila* we deliberately propose to use the variety epithet *pumila*, because it is important to emphasize the physiognomic (structural) distinctiveness of this vegetation type – subarctic, boreo-maritime and subalpine krummholz (low stature, crooked trunks, and multi-stemmed growth form of birch) – caused by ecological and climatic factors, in order to distinguish them from forest communities of erect, tall trees of *Betula pubescens* s. str.

Empetro hermaphrodit–*Betulenion pumilae* Lavrinenko et Braslavskaya all. nov.

Name-giving taxa: *Empetrum hermaphroditum* Lange ex Hagerup and *Betula pubescens* var. *pumila* (G. Zanoni ex Murray) Govaerts.

Holotypus: ass. *Empetro hermaphrodit–Betulenion pumilae* Nordhagen 1943 nom. mut. nov. Lavrinenko et Braslavskaya (see below).

Synonym. *Empetro hermaphrodit–Betulenion pumilae* Mucina, Willner et Grabherr in Mucina et al. nom. ined. et inval. (Art. 1, 2b); see also Mucina et al. (2016).

Character species includes vascular plants *Betula pubescens* var. *pumila*, *Avenella flexuosa*, *Empetrum hermaphroditum*.

Habitats and geography. Subarctic, boreo-maritime and subalpine birch scrub and krummholz occupy well-drained habitats protected by snow cover in winter, with slightly acidic soils. In the mountain massifs of Scandinavia (Norway, Sweden, Finland) and the Kola Peninsula, they are distributed in the subalpine belt on stony substrates. In the lowland forest-tundra of the Barents Sea coast (from the Kanin Peninsula to the Bolshezemelskaya tundra and the Murmansk coast) and in the continental areas of Eastern Murman, they occupy drained surfaces of marine terraces and watershed elevations with sandy and stony soils. In the northern taiga subzone on the White Sea coast, they form under the influence of winds on sandy and stony substrates.

The alliance is divided into two suballiances based on species differences and ecological habitat conditions.

Eu-Empetro hermaphrodit–*Betulenion pumilae* suball. nov.

Subarctic and subalpine birch scrub and krummholz with dominance of hypoarctic dwarf shrubs *Empetrum hermaphroditum*, *Vaccinium myrtillus*, *V. uliginosum* and *V. vitis-idaea* in the driest and most oligotrophic habitats.

Holotypus: ass. *Empetro hermaphrodit–Betulenion pumilae* Nordhagen 1943 nom. mut. nov. Lavrinenko et Braslavskaya (see below).

Character species include vascular plants *Arctous alpina*, *Festuca ovina* s.l., *Oreojuncus trifidus*, *Phyllodoce caerulea*, bryophytes *Ptilidium ciliare*, *Polytrichum juniperinum* and lichens *Cetraria islandica* s.l., *Cladonia arbuscula* s.l. (incl. subsp. *mitis*), *C. gracilis* s.l., *C. rangiferina*.

Geography. The subalpine belt in the mountains of Fennoscandia and the lowland forest-tundra

Table 3. Continued.

strictum 3, 6, 7 (2); *Sanionia uncinata* 3 (1), 4 (1); *Cladonia amaurocraea* 7 (2); *Peltigera aphthosa* 6, 7 (2); *P. polydactylon* 7; *Sphaerophorus globosus* 7 (2). In the Nordhagen relevés (column 'c') with the constancy II are also given: *Pedicularis lapponica*, *Cladonia macrophylla*, *Peltigera malacea*; in the Wehberg relevés (column 'd'): *Linnaea borealis*, *Polytrichum commune*, *P. piliferum*, *Cladonia pleurota*, *Nephroma arcticum*; in the Hämet-Ahti relevés (column 'e'): *Diphasiastrum complanatum*, *Linnaea borealis*, *Polytrichum strictum*, *Orthocaulis attenuates*, *Cetraria ericetorum*, *Cladonia bellidiflora*, *C. carneola*, *C. chlorophaea*, *C. macrophylla*, *C. phyllophora*, *Peltigera aphthosa*, *P. scabrosa*; the rest species of constancy I or II are not shown.

Nomenclature types (lectotypus hoc loco) are indicated by a gray fill.

GPS coordinates (WGS 84) (N, E): 1 – 67.77793, 35.97595; 2 – 67.64903, 37.18224; 3 – 67.71241, 36.79676; 4 – 67.71271, 36.80197; 5 – 67.50972, 50.60000; 6–7 – 67.48694, 51.87139.

Authors. rel. no. 1–4 – Razumovskaya, 5–7 – Dedov (1940), 8 – Nordhagen (1943).

*b–c – Constancy and abundance for the associations: b – *Betula tortuosa*–*Stereocaulon paschale* and *Betula tortuosa*–*Cladonia sylvatica* (Dedov 1940); c – *Betuletum empetro-cladinosum* (Nordhagen 1943); c – *Empetro-Betuletum pubescentis* (Wehberg 2007); e – Continental subalpine *Empetrum*–*Lichen*es type (Hämet-Ahti 1963).

** *Stereocaulon* sp. in Wehberg (2007); *Betula pubescens* s. l. (incl. *B. czerepanovii*, *B. subarctica*) in Hämet-Ahti (1963).

in the north of European Russia. The range of the alliance probably also extends to the mountains of the Polar and Northern Urals (birch krummholz belt).

Syntaxonomic structure of the suballiance

Nordhagen (1943) provided table relevés of birch krummholz widely distributed in the subalpine belt of the Norwegian mountains. In the driest, most oligotrophic, and poorly snow-covered habitats in winter, he described communities of *Betula tortuosa* (the traditional name among Scandinavian botanists) with dwarf shrubs (*Empetrum hermaphroditum*, *Vaccinium vitis-idaea*) and a lichen layer as the ass. *Betuletum empetro-cladinosum*. In habitats that are more mesophytic and better snow-covered in winter compared to the lichen birch forests, Nordhagen described birch krummholz with a green moss layer as the ass. *Betuletum empetro-hylocomiosum*. He believed that the similarity between these forest types is low, so they should be divided into two independent associations, which he placed in different alliances: those with a lichen layer – in the alliance *Loiseleurio-Arctostaphyilion* *Kalliola* ex Nordhagen 1943, and those with a green moss layer – in the alliance *Phyllocladon-Vaccinicion* *myrtillo* Nordhagen 1943. He writes that the communities of the ass. *Betuletum empetro-hylocomiosum* occupy an intermediate position between *Betuletum empetro-cladinosum* and the main type of birch krummholz – the ass. *Betuletum myrtillo-hylocomiosum*, but emphasizes that the connection with the latter is very weak.

Dierßen (1996:102–106, 783) accepted the ass. *Empetro-Betuletum* with subassociations and used the name ass. *Empetro-Betuletum pubescentis* Nordhagen 1943 subass. *cladonietosum* for the driest and poorest birch forests, where a continuous lichen layer is formed (*Cladonia mitis*, *C. ecmocyna*, *C. stellaris*, *Stereocaulon paschale*, *Flavocetraria nivalis*), accompanied by dwarf shrubs *Arctostaphylos alpina*, *Vaccinium vitis-idaea* and *Empetrum hermaphroditum* (dominant). In contrast, he assigned to the subass. *Empetro-Betuletum pubescentis* *hylocomietosum* those subalpine birch forests in habitats with longer snow cover and, consequently, a more favourable water balance, featuring mesophilic species: *Vaccinium myrtillus*, herbs and mosses (with *Hylocomium splendens* dominant), where lichens are rare, and *Vaccinium uliginosum* may form facies. It is precisely these communities, where in addition to *Empetrum hermaphroditum*, *Vaccinium myrtillus* and other mesophytes

are constant, that Dierßen considers as the *Empetro-Betuletum pubescentis* *hylocomietosum*, placing the ass. *Myrtillo-Betuletum tortuosae* Nordhagen 1943 (original name – *Betuletum myrtillo-hylocomiosum*) in synonymy under the ass. *Empetro-Betuletum pubescentis* Nordhagen 1943. However, Nordhagen wrote that *Vaccinium myrtillus* is constantly absent from the communities of the ass. *Betuletum empetro-hylocomiosum*, and that this is such a conspicuous feature that a separate association should be distinguished. That is, Dierßen (1996) interpreted the concept of the ass. *Empetro-Betuletum* more broadly than Nordhagen originally did, and, moreover, he treated birch as the aggregate *Betula pubescens* agg. (*Betula tortuosa* and its hybrid races with *B. pubescens* subsp. *pubescens*).

Later, Wehberg (2007) retained the name ass. *Empetro-Betuletum pubescentis* Nordhagen 1943 em. Kielland-Lund 1973 (Kielland-Lund 1973: *Betula pubescens* s. l.) for birch krummholz with a lichen layer, while the green moss communities (with *Hylocomium splendens* and *Pleurozium schreberi* dominant in the ground cover) he described as the ass. *Vaccinio vitis-idaea-Betuletum* Wehberg 2007 (in tables: *B. pubescens* subsp. *czerepanovii*), selecting a holotypus from his own relevés. Birch krummholz with *Vaccinium myrtillus* were described by Wehberg (2007) as a new association, *Vaccinio myrtillo-Betuletum* Wehberg 2007. This name is a later synonym of the ass. *Betuletum myrtillo-hylocomiosum* Nordhagen 1943, because the original diagnosis of the association in Nordhagen is sufficient within the meaning of Art. 2b.

After processing our own tables of relevés and comparing them with the materials of Scandinavian researchers, we propose to return to the nomenclature of syntaxa and to the understanding of the circumscription of associations as defined by Nordhagen (1943), and to describe (with selection of lectotypes) three associations: *Cladonio stellaris-Betuletum pumilae* (original name *Betuletum empetro-cladinosum*), *Empetro hermaphroditum-Betuletum pumilae* (*Betuletum empetro-hylocomiosum*) and *Vaccinio myrtillo-Betuletum pumilae* (*Betuletum myrtillo-hylocomiosum*). Since the names of Nordhagen's associations are illegitimate (Art. 34c), we bring them into accordance with the ICPN. Considering that there are discrepancies in the epithets used in syntaxon names by different authors (Nordhagen 1943: *Betula tortuosa* in the tables; Hämet-Ahti 1963: *B. pubescens* (incl. *B. tortuosa*, *B. subarctica*); Wehberg 2007: *B. pubescens* subsp. *czerepanovii*), we conform the syntaxon names to the current taxonomy of *Betula* according to Art. 45 of the ICPN. The taxon name for the mutation is *Betula pubescens* var. *pumila* (Zanoni ex Murray) Govaerts, used according to POWO (2026), Euro+Med (2006), WFO (2026).

Empetro hermaphroditum-Betuletum pumilae Nordhagen 1943 nom. mut. nov. Lavrinenko et Braslavskaya (Table 2, rel. 1–25; Table 8, columns 9–13; Fig. 2A–D)

Lectotypus hoc loco: Nordhagen 1943: 170–171, Table 22, relevé 11, Eastern Norway (Østlandet), Jotunheimen mountain range, Sikilsdalen, Lake Sikilsdalsvatn, 1100 m a. s. l., relevé area 4 m². See also Table 2, rel. 25 in this article.

Rejected name: Ass. *Betuletum empetro-hylocomiosum* Nordhagen 1943 nom. illeg. et inept. (Art. 34c, 45) (*Betula tortuosa* in Table 22).

Synonyms and corresponding names. *Vaccinio vitis-idaeae*–*Betuletum* Wehberg 2007 (syntax. syn.) (Wehberg 2007: Table 11, 12); *Betula tortuosa*–*Hylocomium proliferum* nom. ined. (Art. 1) (Dedov 1940: List 32); Oceanic subalpine *Empetrum* type and Submaritime *Empetrum* type (Hämet-Ahti 1963: Table 8, 10).

Composition. Differential species combination = character species of the suballiance Eu-*Empetro hermaphroditum*–*Betulenion pumilae*: *Arctous alpina*, *Festuca ovina* s. l., *Oreojuncus trifidus*, *Ptilidium ciliare*, and lichens *Cetraria islandica* s. l., *Cladonia arbuscula* (incl. subsp. *mitis*), *C. gracilis* s. l., *C. rangiferina*. A characteristic feature is the absence / rare occurrence with very low abundance of *Cornus suecica* and *Vaccinium myrtillus*. The total number of taxa registered in the association is 75: 30 vascular plants (2 trees, 2 shrubs, 6 dwarf shrubs, 20 herbs), 17 bryophytes, and 28 lichens. In the communities described by Nordhagen in the mountains of Norway at latitude 61.6°N and an altitude of 1000–1100 m a.s.l., *Luzula pilosa* is constant. Based on variation in species composition, 2 variants were identified. In the area of co-growth of *Betula pubescens* var. *pumila* and *Larix sibirica* (forest-tundra in the Naryan-Mar environs), the var. *Larix sibirica* (Table 2, rel. 1–8) is described, which is differentiated from the typical variant by the constancy of *Larix sibirica* (5–6 m tall), as well as *Arctous alpina* and *Peltigera aphthosa*.

Structure. The total cover in the communities is 100 %, with the mean cover of trees 70 %, shrubs 5 %, dwarf shrubs 60 %, herbs 20 % and mosses 70 %. Cover of lichens is usually less than 1 %, but sometimes reaches 5–15 %. Birch forms a krummholz or shrub. In Dalniye Zelentsy (Murman coast), the tree stand is absent; birch has a shrub growth form up to 1.6 m tall; in communities on sands, the height and density of birch are significantly higher than on stony sites. In the lowland forest-tundra, birch (3–4 m tall) is characterized by multi-stemmed growth – from a few to a dozen curved trunks of varying thickness, clustered at the base, from which they grow in different directions at an angle of 45–80°, forming a common crown. Such trees are either grouped together, forming a common coenotic field where green mosses and dwarf shrubs dominate, or spaced several meters apart; then, on the periphery of the crowns and in open clearings, fruticose lichens are interspersed in the moss cover, albeit with low abundance. The shrub layer is usually absent; near birches and under their canopy grow low (0.5–1.0 m tall) bushes of *Juniperus sibirica*. A dense dwarf shrub layer, 10–15 cm tall, is formed by *Empetrum hermaphroditum* sometimes with codominance of *Vaccinium vitis-idaea*. Among herbs, *Avenella flexuosa* (2a) is constant and often abundant; in most communities there are *Festuca ovina* s. l., *Lysimachia europaea* and *Solidago lapponica*; less common are the psammophytes *Oreojuncus trifidus*, *Antennaria dioica*, and *Hieracium* agg. *umbellatum*. The mosses *Pleurozium schreberi* (dominant) and *Hylocomium splendens* form a continuous ground cover; *Dicranum majus*, *Ptilidium ciliare* and *Polytrichum commune* are constant admixtures. The communities are characterized by low alpha diversity – ranging from 13 to 35 species, with an average of 23.

Habitats. The lingonberry-crowberry-green moss birch krummholz communities are confined to watersheds composed of fluvio-glacial sandy deposits and occupy the upper parts and slopes of the margins of extensive deflation basins (forest-tundra east of the Pechora River), as well as gently sloping sandy marine terraces and sheltered sections of stony hill slopes on the watershed plain (Murman coast). The soils are podzolized podbur with an organogenic horizon 1–3 cm thick (Fig. 2C) or humus psammozem; buried podzolic horizons are also found in the soil profile (Fig. 2D). On the Kola Peninsula, the soils are sandy, sandy-stony or stony. According to Nordhagen (1943), the snow depth in winter in such communities in the mountains is 0.5–0.6 m.

Distribution. The relevés were made on the Murman coast and on the Keivy Upland (Fig. 1, sites 2, 3), in the Naryan-Mar environs and in the forest-tundra east of the Pechora River (Fig. 1, sites 14, 16, 17). Dedov described krummholz in the lower reaches of the Pechora River and in the Malozemel'skaya forest-tundra (Fig. 1, sites 10, 11, 13). The general distribution is the subalpine belt (mountain forest-tundra) in the mountains and the lowland northern forest-tundra from Fennoscandia to the Bolshezemel'skaya tundra. In the vicinity of Dalnie Zelentsy (Fig. 1, site 2), it extends into the southern tundra subzone in sheltered habitats.

The authors have only a few of their own relevés from the Kola Peninsula of birch krummholz communities with a continuous lichen cover, which Nordhagen described in Norway and assigned to the ass. *Betuletum empetro-cladinosum*. For the diagnosis of the association, relevés by Dedov (1940) from the northern forest-tundra adjacent to the Malozemel'skaya tundra are also used.

Cladonio stellaris–Betuletum pumilae Nordhagen 1943 nom. mut. nov. Lavrinenko et Braslavskaya (Table 3, rel. 1–8; Table 8, columns 1–8; Fig. 2E)

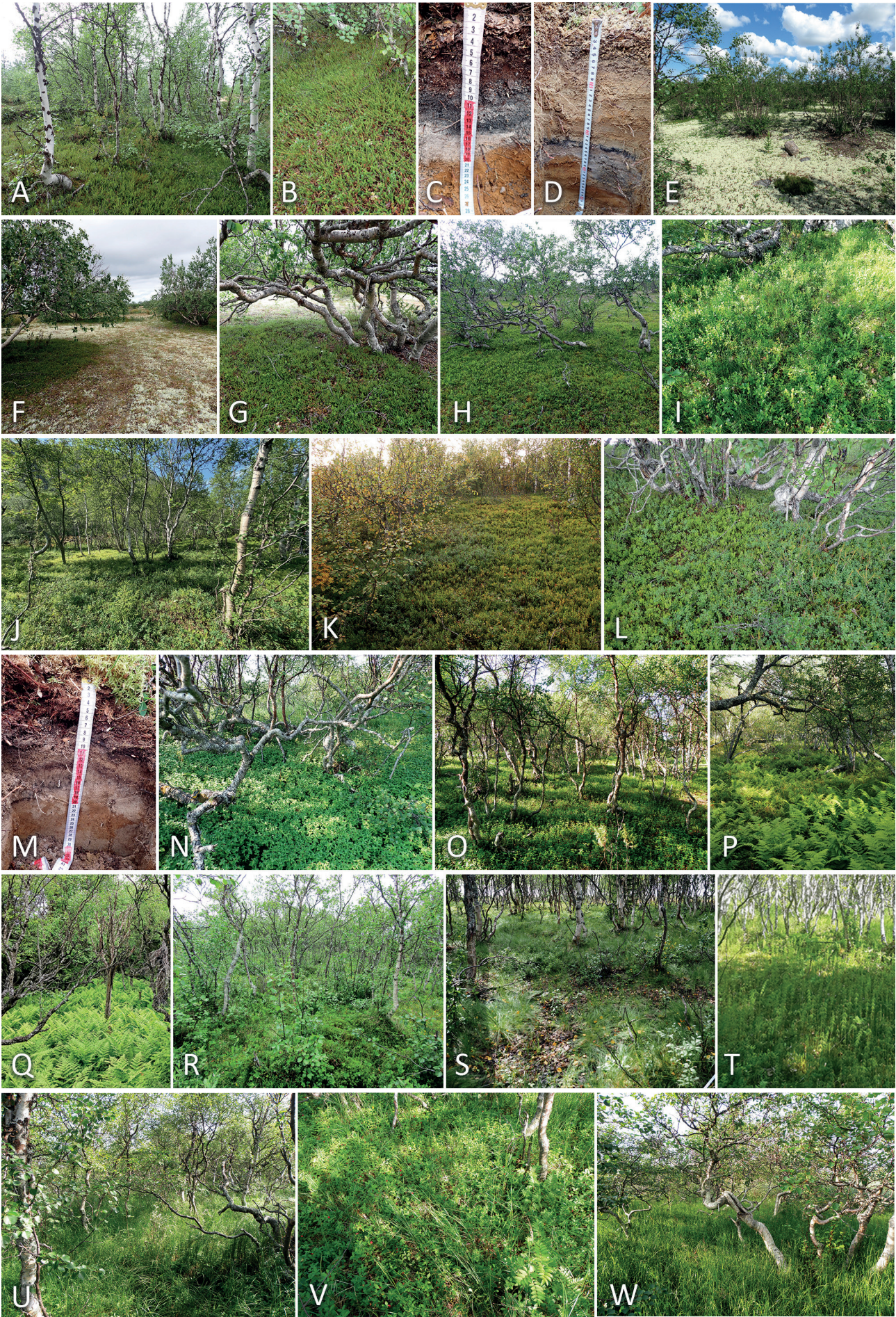
Lectotypus hoc loco: Nordhagen 1943: 115–116, Table 13, relevé 11, Eastern Norway (Østlandet), Jotunheimen mountain range, Sikilsdalen, Lake Sikilsdalsvatn, 1010 m a. s. l., relevé area 4 m². See also Table 3, rel. 8 in this article.

Rejected name: Ass. *Betuletum empetro-cladinosum* Nordhagen 1943 nom. illeg. et inept. (Art. 34c, 45) (*Betula tortuosa* in Table 13).

Synonyms and corresponding names. *Empetro–Betuletum pubescentis* Nordhagen 1943 subass. *cladonietosum* nom. inval. (Art. 3f) (Dierßen 1996); *Empetro–Betuletum pubescentis* Nordhagen 1943 em. Kielland-Lund 1973 with subassociations *Cladonia stellaris*-Subass. Wehberg 2007 nom. inval. (Art. 3o, 5) and *Stereocaulon spec.*-Subass. Wehberg 2007 nom. inval. (Art. 3o, 5) (Wehberg 2007: Table 7–8); ass. *Betula tortuosa–Stereocaulon paschale* nom. ined. (Art. 1), ass. *Betula tortuosa–Cladonia sylvatica* nom. ined. (Art. 1) (Dedov 1940: List 31); Continental subalpine *Empetrum*–Lichenes type and continental subalpine *Empetrum*–Lichenes–*Pleurozium* type (Hämet-Ahti 1963: Table 3, 5).

Composition. Differential species combination: *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*, *Betula nana*, *Polytrichum piliferum* and lichens, among which the main highly constant species are: *Cladonia stellaris* (dominant), *C. coccifera*, *C. uncialis*, *Flavocetraria nivalis*, *Stereocaulon paschale* (dominant). Apparently, based on the dominance of lichen species, several facies or other subsyntaxa can be described. Compared to other syntaxa of the alliance, *Juniperus communis* s. l. (incl. *J. sibirica*) and *Lysimachia europaea* are absent or occur occasionally with low abundance in the communities.

Structure. The tree stands are sparse, with a canopy cover of 0.2–0.4. Birch trees are 3–6 m tall, almost always multi-stemmed, with the diameter of the main trunks not exceeding 10 cm. "Skirts" – sprouting of shoots in the lower part of the trunk – is well developed. Saplings of *Betula pubescens* var. *pumila* are numerous, reaching the same height (up to 1.3 m) as the shrub layer, in which *B. nana* is often present. Mosses are scarce; the dwarf shrubs *Empetrum hermaphroditum* and *Vaccinium vitis-idaea* s. l. tend to grow in shaded areas near the trunks. It is precisely due to the sparseness of the tree layer and, as a consequence, relatively weak leaf fall and humus accumulation that a continuous cover of light-demanding fruticose lichens of the genera *Cladonia* and *Stereocaulon* with scattered tussocks of *Festuca ovina* s. l. has formed in the open areas.



Habitats. The driest and most oligotrophic habitats with slightly acidic soils. In Murmansk Region, under low-mountain conditions, it occurs on all flat automorphic landscape elements, including rock outcrops and river terraces. The soils are strongly podzolized, with a humus layer 3–5 cm thick. The winter snow depth (determined by the position of the lichen *Melanelia olivacea* on the trunks) is only 0.3 m. In the Malozemelskaya forest-tundra, the communities occupy the tops and upper parts of slopes of low sandy hills. The soils are podzolized sandy loam. In the habitats in Norway, the substrate always consists of extremely dry morainic gravel or sand.

Distribution. The communities have been described in the mountains of Scandinavia, on the Kola Peninsula (Fig. 1, site 3), and in the northern forest-tundra bordering the Malozemelskaya tundra (Fig. 1, sites 11, 12).

Note. East of the Pechora River, on sandy deposits (in the basins of the Kuya, Severnaya, and Ortina rivers (Fig. 1, sites 14, 16, 17)), "park birch forests" occur, so named because of their physiognomic resemblance to well-maintained parks (Fig. 2F). The birches are old-growth there, 3–4 m tall, with several thick (up to 20–25 cm in diameter) and crooked trunks growing in different directions from a common base, with crowns "trimmed" by snow abrasion. The diameter of the common crown of a multi-stemmed tree is usually 5 m or more. These trees grow at some distance from each other, either singly or in clumps, beneath which a common dwarf shrub-green moss phytocoenotic patch has formed. Meanwhile, all the space between the trees is occupied by lichen tundra communities. The boundary between the ground cover of mosses under the trees and that of lichens in the open glades is very sharp (Fig. 2G). Considering the spatial structure, we regard "park birch forests" not as a single association community, but as a complex of: (a) groups of birches with dwarf shrub-green moss patches – the ass. *Empetro hermaphroditi-Betuletum pumilae* (or, in more mesophytic and chionophytic conditions, the ass. *Vaccinio myrtilli-Betuletum pumilae*, described below); (b) in open areas – dwarf shrub-lichen communities of the ass. *Loiseleurio-Diapsietum* (Fries 1913) Nordhagen 1943 and/or the ass. *Empetro-Betuletum nanae* Nordhagen 1943, previously described by Lavrinenko & Lavrinenko (2020). In such complexes, birch does not regenerate on the dense lichen cover; saplings and young trees are absent, and only occasional root suckers occur around the trunks. In contrast, in adjacent moist habitats or in places with disturbed ground cover, birch regenerates actively, which is attributable to current regional climate warming.

Vaccinio myrtilli-Betuletum pumilae

Nordhagen 1943 nom. mut. nov. Lavrinenko et Braslavskaya (Table 4, rel. 1–50; Table 8, columns 14–23; Fig. 2H–2M)

Lectotypus hoc loco: Nordhagen 1943: 148–149, Table 19, relevé 16, Eastern Norway (Østlandet), Jotunheimen mountain range, Lake Sikildalsvatn, 1050 m a.s.l., relevé area 4 m². See also Table 4, rel. 50 in this article.

Rejected name: Ass. *Betuletum myrtilli-hylociosum* Nordhagen 1943 nom. illeg. et inept. (Art. 34c, 45) (*Betula tortuosa* in Table 19).

Synonyms and corresponding names. *Vaccinio myrtilli-Betuletum* Wehberg 2007 nom. illeg. [Art. 31, 32d] (Wehberg 2007: Table 15, 16); *Betula tortuosa-Vaccinium myrtillus* nom. ined. (Art. 1) (Dedov 1940: List 32); Continental subalpine *Empetrum-Myrtillus* type and oceanic *Cornus-Empetrum-Myrtillus* type (Hämet-Ahti 1963: Table 6, 9).

Composition. Differential species combination: *Vaccinium myrtillus*, *V. uliginosum* and *Dicranum majus*. Species of the alliance and suballiance Eu-*Empetro hermaphroditi-Betulenion pumilae* are constant and frequent. A characteristic feature is the absence or insignificant participation of *Cornus suecica* and *Maianthemum bifolium* in the herb-dwarf shrub layer. Based on variation in species composition, 3 variants have been identified. The var. *typica* (Table 4, rel. 37–45) is diagnosed by the constancy of *Anthoxanthum alpinum* / *A. odoratum*, *Hieracium* agg. *vulgatum*, *Pyrola minor*, *Sciuro-hypnum reflexum*, *Lophozia ventricosa*. In the communities in the mountains of Norway and Northern Finland, *Luzula pilosa*, *Geranium sylvaticum*, *Gymnocarpium dryopteris* (patchy distribution) are constant with low abundance; in the Khibiny Mountains – *Sorbus aucuparia* s.l., *Spinulum annotinum*, *Melampyrum pratense* and *Picea obovata* (incl. *P. × fenica*) (character species of the class Vaccinio-Piceetea), as well as *Phyllodoce caerulea* (alliance *Phyllodoce-Vaccinion myrtilli* Nordhagen 1943). The var. *inops* (rel. 1–10) and the var. *Betula nana* (rel. 11–36) are distinguished by the absence of the aforementioned species. Furthermore, the first variant differs by the absence of *Vaccinium uliginosum*, while the second, in addition to the constancy of *V. uliginosum*, is characterized by the occasional occurrence of *Rhododendron tomentosum*; moreover, in both variants, *Geranium sylvaticum* and *Gymnocarpium dryopteris* are not encountered. The communities described by Dedov (see Table 4, rel. 46–49) can be assigned to the var. *Betula nana*. The total number of taxa registered in the association is 146: 75 vascular plants (4 trees, 9 shrubs, 13 dwarf shrubs, 49 herbs), 35 bryophytes and 36 lichens.

Structure. The total cover in the communities is predominantly 100 %. The tree layer varies from sparse (15 %) to well-developed and completely closed (90 %), with a mean of 50 %. In less thermally favorable conditions, birch is 2–3 m tall; the trees are characterized by multi-stemmed growth, with several stems clustered at the base and growing in dense groups (park growth form). In Dalniye Zelentsy (Murman coast), in communities of the var. *inops*, the growth form of birch is a shrub from 0.5 m (on stony substrates) to

Figure 2 Birch krummholz and habitats. A–D – ass. *Empetro hermaphroditi-Betuletum pumilae* in Naryan-Mar environs (Table 2): A – view of the stand, B – dwarf shrub (*Empetrum hermaphroditum*)–green moss ground cover, C – podzolized podburs and D – buried podzols; E – ass. *Cladonio stellaris-Betuletum pumilae* (Table 3) in Keivy Upland; F–G – complex of the ass. *Empetro hermaphroditi-Betuletum pumilae* in the phytocoenotic patch of birches and subass. *Loiseleurio-Diapsietum salicetosum nummulariae* in treeless plots in Naryan-Mar environs; H–N – ass. *Vaccinio myrtilli-Betuletum pumilae* (Table 4): H–I – var. *inops*: H – view of the stand and I – dwarf shrub (*Vaccinium myrtillus*)–green moss ground cover in Ortina River, J – var. *typica* in Khibiny; K–M – var. *Betula nana*: K – in Northern Timan Ridge, L – dwarf shrub (*Vaccinium myrtillus*, *V. uliginosum*)–green moss ground cover in Laya River, M – podzolic soil; N–O – ass. *Corno suecici-Betuletum pumilae* (Tables 5, 6): N – subass. *typicum* var. *Poa pratensis* in Pechora Delta, O – subass. *luzuletosum pilosae* in Keivy; P–Q – ass. *Dryopterido expansae-Betuletum pumilae* (Table 6) location on coast of the White Sea: P – in Solovetsky Islands, Q – in Onega Peninsula; R – ass. *Carici nigrae-Betuletum pumilae* in Solovetsky Islands; S–W – communities location on coast of the White Sea: S – *Nardus stricta-Betula pubescens* var. *pumila* in Solovetsky Islands; T – *Equisetum sylvaticum-Betula pubescens* var. *pumila* in Onega Peninsula; U and V – *Carex aquatilis-Betula pubescens* var. *pumila* in Solovetsky Islands; W – *Calamagrostis purpurea-Betula pubescens* var. *pumila* in Solovetsky Islands. Photos were taken by: A–D, F, G, H–I, K–M – Lavrinenko; E – Razumovskaya; J – Kopeina; O, P, R, S, U–W – Churakova; Q, T – Smirnova

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Table 4. Continued.

[illegible]

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Note. Species found in 1–3 relevés with an abundance of r or + and of 1 by Dedov (others are indicated in brackets): *Betula pubescens* s. str. 42 (2a); *Pinus sylvestris* 15, 17, 36; *Populus tremula* 16 (1); *Salix-aphrea* 39 (1), 40 (1), 41 (2a); *S. glauca* 25 30; *S. lanata* 40 (1); *S. lapponum* 40 (1), 42; *S. phylicifolia* 30, 40 (1); *Andromeda polifolia* (incl. *A. paniculata*) 28; *Dryas punctata* 40 (1); *Angelica sylvestris* 41; *Armeria salza* 25; *Calamagrostis neglecta* 46, 49; *Carex brunneus* 9, 17; *C. canescens* 44; *C. globularis* 31, 47; *Chamaenerion angustifolium* 23, 46; *Corallorhiza trifida* 40; *Crepis tectorum* 25; *Diphysastrum* 31, 32 (1), 50; *D. complanatum* 32, 47 (2); *Euphrasia frigida* 39; *Hieracium* agg. *laevigatum* 6, 7 (1), 8; *Luzula multiflora* (incl. subsp. *frigida*) 13, 36; *Nardus stricta* 39 (1); *Neottia cordata* 41; *Onodolitea norvegica* 41; *Orchilola secunda* 47 (2); *Poa pratensis* (incl. *P. grandiflora*) 40, 41, 42; *Rubus arcticus* 9, 46 (2), 47; *R. chamaemoris* 1; *Saussurea alpina* 41; *Selaginella selaginoides* 41; *Andræa rupestris* 40 (1); *Aulacomnium palustre* 46 (2); *Brachypogonum erythrorhizon* 25, 26; *Dicranum drummondii* 39 (1), 42, 43 (1); *Dicranum polysetum* 46, 47 (3), 49; *Holcacomidophus triquetris* 32; *Hymenotoma crispulum* 40, 41; *Kiaeria blyttii* 40; *K. starkei* 41; *Lepidogrum pyrrhome* 39, 40 (1); *Orthocaulis floerkei* 39; *Polytrichum piliferum* 21 (1), 36, 40; *Psychostomum pseudoholcaceum* 40; *Racomitrium canescens* 36 (2a), 40; *R. microcarpon* 40, 42, 44; *Saxiro-lupinum cartum* 37, 42, 45 (1); *Cetraria nigricans* 29; *Cladonia chlorophaea* 4, 38; *C. coccifera* 12 (1), 28; *C. crispata* 26, 29, 32; *C. deformis* 17 (1), 21, 47; *C. fimbriata* 21, 34; *C. furcata* 41; *C. macrophylla* 21; *C. phyllophora* 32; *C. psycidata* 38, 50; *C. subbruscula* 21, 22, 34; *C. stricta* 21; *C. stygia* 25, 29, 32; *C. subhypnata* 29, 32; *Flavocetraria cinctulata* 29, 47; *Peltigera leucophaea* 4; *P. malacea* 21, 30; *Phaeorhynchus globosus* 32.

GPS coordinates (WGS 84) (N, E): 3 – 67.64445, 54.02325; 4 – 67.64165, 54.03867; 5 – 67.92811, 54.04736; 6 – 67.91914, 54.04736; 7 – 67.9195, 54.04775; 8 – 67.93931, 54.07583; 11 – 68.19278, 54.07520; 12 – 67.93931, 54.07583; 13 – 67.91814, 54.05183; 19 – 67.64365, 54.03577; 21 – 67.29753, 48.98806; 22 – 67.27219, 48.93644; 23 – 67.26356, 48.94036; 24 – 67.9185, 54.05622; 25 – 67.64362, 54.03664; 26 – 67.64844, 53.77631; 27 – 68.19544, 53.78786; 28 – 67.69106, 54.07860; 29 – 67.59031, 53.21947; 30 – 67.59142, 53.22667; 31 – 67.27425, 55.96102; 32 – 67.27459, 55.9607; 33 – 67.74494, 53.54011; 34 – 67.74756, 53.5312028; 35 – 67.59163, 53.23044; 36 – 67.62635, 33.705893; 37 – 67.651991, 33.648834; 38 – 67.652045, 33.648834; 39 – 67.651292, 33.652273; 40 – 67.651292, 33.652273; 41 – 67.651357, 33.653176; 42 – 67.652008, 33.649883; 43 – 67.651357, 33.653176; 44 – 67.650757, 33.653447; 45 – 67.50972, 50.60000; 46 – 48 – 67.50972, 50.60000; 49 – 67.48694, 51.87139.

vicinity of Dalmiye Zelentsy village: 2 – seashore at Dalniy Beach; 10, 12 and 16 – Voronyā Bay, at the mouth of Khokhrýachiy Stream. Keivy Upland: 9, 18 – Mount Slyudyanaya; 15 and 20 – western part, the Uzkava River; 17 – the Kalmýok River.

Nomenclature types (lectotypus hoc loco) are indicated by a gray fill.

*** *Betula pubescens* s. l. (incl. *B. czerepanovii*, *B. subarctica*) in Hämet-Ahti (1963).

1.4 m tall (on sandy terraces). In more thermally favorable conditions, the trees have crooked single trunks up to 5–7 m tall. In the Khibiny Mountains, the growth form of birch is determined by snow accumulation – on steep slopes, due to snow movement, the trunks become crooked, while on gentler slopes they are closer to straight-stemmed. The shrub layer (0.5–1 m tall) is sparse (mean cover 5 %), composed mainly of *Juniperus communis* (incl. *J. sibirica*); in communities of the var. *Betula nana*, also of dwarf birch; in the var. *typica*, they are often accompanied by *Sorbus aucuparia* (incl. subsp. *glabrata*) and occasionally *Salix* spp. The cover of the herb–dwarf shrub layer is 50 to 90 %, 10–20 cm tall, with low-growing dwarf shrubs *Vaccinium* spp. dominating. Among herbs, *Avenella flexuosa* is constant and often abundant (2a); in most communities, *Festuca ovina* s.l. and *Solidago lapponica* are present. Moss cover varies from 10 to 90 %; cover of lichens is usually 1 % or less. In the ground cover, where it is formed, *Pleurozium schreberi* (2b) dominates; other bryophytes (*Hylocomium splendens*, *Dicranum majus*, *Barbilophozia hycopodioides*, *Polytrichum commune* and *Saxionia uncinata*) occur less frequently and with lower abundance. Alpha diversity of the communities ranges from 13 to 51 species, with an average of 25.

Habitats. Birch krummholz communities with *Vaccinium myrtillus* occur in places where water availability is higher than in the associations described earlier. At the same time, these communities require a dense and relatively long-lasting snow cover. Nordhagen (1943) indicates that this is evident, among other things, from the fringe of *Melandelia olivacea* on birch trunks, which in the mountains often grows from a height of 1.0–1.5 m. In the lowland forest-tundra, the communities are confined to sandy terraces; the soils have a typical podzolic profile, often with a humus-rich layer up to 5 cm thick (Fig. 2M). In the Keivy Upland and Linakhamari, they are confined to rocky substrates with thin (up to 20 cm) loose deposits (sandy, gravelly-sandy) and an organic horizon 1–3 (5) cm thick. In the Khibiny Mountains, under birch krummholz communities, the soils are predominantly podburs (often buried); a podzolic horizon is formed in old-growth communities.

Distribution. Communities of the typical variant, described by Nordhagen in the mountains of Norway, are also distributed in the Khibiny Mountains (Fig. 1, site 4). Communities of the two other variants are described in the forest-tundra (on plains and uplands) of the European part of Russia (Murmansk Region and Nenets Autonomous Area) and extend into the southern tundra on the Murman coast (Fig. 1, sites 1–3, 10, 11, 13–18).

Corno suecici–Betulenion pumilae Lavrinenko et Braslavskaya **suball. nov.**

The suballiance comprises subarctic, boreo-maritime and subalpine birch scrub and krummholz of mesotrophic, well-watered to waterlogged habitats, in which herb–dwarf shrub layer *Cornus suecica* (an amphioceanic hypoarctic species confined to the sea coast and low mountain areas) dominates or codominates.

Holotypus: ass. Corno suecici–Betuletum pumilae Regel 1927 nom. mut. nov. Lavrinenko et Braslavskaya (see below).

Character species includes *Cornus suecica*, the boreal mesophytic small herbs *Gymnocarpium dryopteris*, *Maianthemum bifolium* and *Melampyrum pratense* s.l., and *Sorbus aucuparia* (incl. subsp. *glabrata*). We also tentatively assign *Rubus chamaemorus* to such species, although this decision may be revised as more data on waterlogged birch krummholz communities will be collected.

Geography. The range of the suballiance is determined by the area of co-growth of *Betula pubescens* var. *pumila* and *Cornus suecica* – the subalpine belt in the mountains

of Fennoscandia, often in the forest-tundra of the Kola Peninsula and the northern taiga along the White Sea coast (including the Solovetsky Islands). Further east, it occurs sporadically; communities have been described only in the lower reaches of the Pechora River (on relict terraces in the Pechora River delta and near the Naryan-Mar).

Syntaxonomic structure of the suballiance. In the works of Dierßen (1996) and Wehberg (2007), the name ass. Corno–Betuletum pubescentis Aune 1973 is given for birch krummholz communities with *Cornus suecica* dominating the ground cover. In the association described in western Central Norway, Aune (1973: 24–29) combined the poorest birch forests of *Betula pubescens* and the closely associated pine-birch forests described on shaded valley slopes. The tree layer is rather dense; the herb–dwarf shrub layer is dominated either by *Vaccinium myrtillus* or by various ferns, on the basis of which the subassociations are established: myrtilletosum, dryopteridetosum, athyrietosum, and thelypteridetosum (limbospermae). *Pinus sylvestris* often dominates in the tree layer of the subass. myrtilletosum communities (see Table 8, columns 42–45). At the same time, in discussing the syntaxonomic position of the ass. Corno–Betuletum, Aune writes (1973: 74) that it is, in western Norway, a vicariant syntaxon for the more eastern ass. Eu-Piceetum (Cajander 1921) Kielland-Lund 1962 (syn. Linnaeo borealis–Piceetum abietis (Cajander 1921) Kielland-Lund 1962) and that the name Corno–Pinetum, used by Kielland-Lund (1971) to designate the western birch-pine forests vicariant for spruce forests (only mentioned by him, but not analyzed in detail), "is probably more descriptive than my Corno–Betuletum". It should be noted that Aune (1973) does not provide a description of the growth form and height of birch trees (therefore, it is unclear whether *Betula tortuosa* is actually meant). These circumstances suggest that, in all likelihood, the ass. Corno–Betuletum Aune 1973 was not intended by its author as a syntaxon of birch krummholz communities – a fact that Dierßen and Wehberg did not take into account. This motivated us to seek a different syntaxonomic solution for describing communities of *Betula pubescens* var. *pumila* with *Cornus suecica*.

Earlier, Regel (1927) described the ass. Betuletum corneosum for krummholz of *Betula tortuosa* rich in *Cornus suecica*, and the ass. Betuletum cornoso–myrtillosum for those with high abundance of *Cornus suecica* and *Vaccinium myrtillus*, uniting them into the group Betuleta cornoso–myrtillosa. The communities of these associations differ only in the abundance of *Vaccinium myrtillus* and, within the Braun-Blanquet approach, should be recognized as a single association. The association is valid, since the conditions of Art. 2b ICPN are fulfilled (original diagnosis and a table with relevés are provided). Regel notes that birch krummholz with *Cornus suecica* is widely distributed along the entire Tersky Coast (White Sea), where conifers are absent or retreat from the seacoast. Furthermore, the association is common throughout the polar limit north of the coniferous forest boundary in Fennoscandia. Almost everywhere, the birch is multi-stemmed, with strongly curved, thick, often almost prostrate trunks. The communities occur on dry alluvial soils, dry morainic soils, on sand or stones, as well as on dune sand. For birch krummholz with codominance of *Cornus suecica* in the herb–dwarf shrub layer, we accept the association authored by Regel, with the selection of a lectotype and the correction of the name ass. Betuletum corneosum in accordance with ICPN (Art. 10). Since the name of the taxon *Betula tortuosa* was used in that work, a mutation of the association name (Art. 45 ICPN) has been performed. The taxon name for the mutation is *Betula pubescens* var. *pumila* (Zanoni ex Murray) Govaerts used according to POWO (2026), Euro+Med (2006), WFO (2026).

Table 5. Association Corno suecici–Betuletum pumilae in the north of European Russia compared with syntaxa in the mountains of the Norway.

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Table 5. Continued.

[illegible]

Note. Species found in 1–3 relevés with an abundance of r or + (others are indicated in brackets): *Rosa acicularis* 42 (2a), 50 (2a), 48 (2a); *Salix caprea* 12 (1); *S. phylicifolia* 7 (1); *Andromeda polifolia* s. l. 19 (1), 24 (1); *Achillea millefolium* 40; *Bartsia alpina* 9 (1); *Diastora virgata* 27; *Calamagrostis arundinacea* 44 (2a), 49, 51; *C. purpurea* 1, 49 (1); *Carex brunnescens* 7, 9 (1); *C. globularis* 45 (1); *C. lasiocarpa* 13; *Cerastium holostictum* 9 (1); *Dasytheca maculata* (incl. *D. fuscii*) 35, 41; *Dechampsia cespitosa* 35 (1), 40; *Dryopteris expansa* s. l. 7 (2a), 54 (1); *Equisetum arvense* 3; *E. pratense* 1 (2b), 49 (2a); *Euphrasia frigida* 40; *Festuca rubra* (incl. *F. richardsonii*) 27, 49; *Hieracium aeg. murorum* 20, 25; *H. aeg. umbellatum* 27, 38; *Juncus filiformis* 3; *Leymus arvensis* 47; *Malium effusum* 39; *Neottia cordata* 7; *Plantaginella bifurcata* 38, 40; *Poa pratensis* (incl. *P. alpigena*) 40; *Pseudolathyrus alpestris* 7 (1); *Pyrola minor* 10; *P. rotundifolia* (incl. *P. rotundifolia* s. l.) 35 (1); *Rubus arcticus* 2, 47; *R. saxatilis* 47 (1), 25; *Taraxacum officinale* 1, 27, 37; *Viola biflora* 26; *Brachypodium pinnatifidum* 39, 40; *Cladonia dendroidea* 41; *Cladonia rangiferina* 32, 37; *Rhytideladeobolus* 48; *Plagioglyphia asplenoides* 48; *Plagioglyphium ruscicum* 40; *Polytrichum commune* 20, 21, 22 (1); *Cladonia amaraurea* 20, 21, 22 (1); *Cladonia imbricaria* 12, 13, 22; *C. sulphurea* 2; *Flavotritoma subopinnatis* 38; *Sclerophyllum cartum* 37; *Sphenobolus minutus* 20, 21, 22 (1); *Nephroma arcticum* 7; *Pelligera aphobosa* 22, 32, 34.

In columns 'd'-g', the rest species of constancy I or II are not shown.

GPS coordinates (WGS 84) (N, E): 1 - 67.0396, 41.35107; 2 - 67.32392, 49.05428; 28 - 64.95646, 35.75853; 29 - 66.38346, 42.65203; 30 - 66.37515, 42.61289; 31 - 66.37600, 42.63190; 32 - 64.95645, 35.75187; 33 - 66.38845, 42.66654; 34 - 64.95619, 35.75631; 35 - 65.01577, 35.71239; 37 - 66.37943, 42.63765; 38 - 64.97659, 35.73214; 39 - 64.95723, 35.75681; 40 - 65.00934, 35.71955; 42 - 64.91908, 37.8008; 43 - 64.87362, 44.87362; 44 - 65.10893, 37.32353; 45 - 65.06115, 37.50970; 46 - 64.92053, 37.79775; 47 - 65.10925, 37.3236; 48 - 64.91760, 37.80618; 49 - 65.08012, 37.46605; 50 - 64.91722, 37.80585; 51 - 65.08000, 37.46581; 52 - 65.11995, 37.28671; 53 - 65.11967, 37.28652; 54 - 64.92716, 36.45789; 55 - 66.10136, 38.86629.

Locations of the rest relevés (nrs. in the table), in the Murmansk Region: Vicinity of Dalniye Zelentsy village: 3 – near the eastern shore of Voronya Bay; 5, 7, 9 – on the road south from Yarnyshnaya Bay; 6, 10, 26 – Voronya Bay, at the mouth of Khokhryachi Stream; 25 – a hill near the road from the village to the border outpost. Vicinity of Imakhamari village: 4, 8, 11, 13–17, 19 – east of the

Table 5. Continued.

highway, near the abandoned garages; 12, 24 – on the road west of the village; 18, 20 – East of the highway, beyond the abandoned garages, a hollow between the hills, a slope down to Pechenga Bay. Kevy Upland: 21, 23 – western part, Uzkaya River; 22 – Mount Chervurta.

Authors. rel. no. 1 – Kopeina; 2 – Lavrinenko; 3–26 – Chinenko; 27, 29, 30, 31, 33, 37 – Churakova & Mamontov; 28, 32, 38, 39, 40 – Churakova; 34–36, 41 – Sidorova & Amosova; 42–54 – Smirnova; 55 – Regel (1927).

Nomenclature types for association (lectotypus hoc loco) and subassociation (holotype) are indicated by a gray fill.

*c–g – Constancy and abundance for the associations: c – *Betuletum corneosum* and *Betuletum cornoso–myrtillosum* (Regel 1927, Table 1; for relevés in which species are given with abundance: 366, 367, 369, 377, 380, 466, 483, 484, 681, 990, 992, 1007, 1110, 1112); d – Mossy with *Cornus suecica* (Nordhagen 1943); e – *Corno–Betuletum* (Wehberg 2007); f – Oceanic *Cornus–Empetrum–Myrtillus* type (Hämet-Ahti 1963); g – Submarine *Cornus–Myrtillus* type (Hämet-Ahti 1963).

** *Betula pubescens* s. l. (incl. *B. czerepanovii*, *B. subarctica*) in Hämet-Ahti (1963).

Corno succici–Betuletum pumilae Regel 1927 nom. mut. nov. Lavrinenko et Braslavskaya (Table 5, rel. 1–55; Table 6, rel. 1–17; Table 8, columns 24–33; Fig. 2N–2O)

Lectotypus hoc loco: Regel 1927: 105–108, Table 1, relevé 369, Kola Peninsula, Tersky Coast, Chapoma village, Strelna River, undulating terrain, 23.08.1913, 66.10136°N, 38.86629°E, within the natural boundaries of the community, author – K. Regel. Information on the tree layer in relevé 369 is contained in Regel 1923: 215. See also Table 5, rel. 55 in this article.

Rejected name: *Betuletum corneosum* Regel 1927 nom. inept. (Art. 45) (*Betula tortuosa* in the paper).

Synonyms and corresponding names. *Betuletum cornoso–myrtillosum* Regel 1927 nom. illeg. et inept. (Art. 34c, 45) (*Betula tortuosa* in the paper); Mosrik, med *Cornus suecica* (Nordhagen 1943: Table 21); *Corno–Betuletum* (with *Betula pubescens* subsp. *czerepanovii*, described by Wehberg 2007: Table 19, 20); Submarine *Cornus–Myrtillus* type and *Lastraea* variant of the Submarine *Cornus–Myrtillus* type (Hämet-Ahti 1963: Table 11, 12).

Composition. Differential species combination = character species of the suballiance *Corno succici–Betulenion pumilae*: constantly or often *Cornus suecica* (2b), *Melampyrum pratense* s. l., *Sorbus aucuparia* (incl. subsp. *glabrata*), less often *Gymnocarpium dryopteris*, *Maianthemum bifolium*, *Rubus chamaemorus*. In the dwarf shrub layer, along with *Cornus suecica*, *Vaccinium myrtillus* is common and approximately equally abundant (2b). The total number of taxa registered in the association is 159: 99 vascular plants (5 trees, 11 shrubs, 10 dwarf shrubs, 73 herbs), 39 bryophytes and 21 lichens.

Based on variation in species composition, determined ecologically and chorologically, 3 subassociations were identified: subass. typicum (northern vicariant), subass. luzuletosum pilosae (southern vicariant), and subass. rhododendroetosum tomentosum, which unites slightly waterlogged communities.

Structure. The total projective cover in the communities is 100 %. In communities of subass. typicum, birch has a scrub growth form, 1.2–2 m tall with 80–95 % cover, or krummholz, from 2–3 m tall with 50–80 % cover (Dalniye Zelentsy, Liinakhamari) to 7–8 (10) m tall with 15–30 % cover (Kevy Upland). Both young stands and old-growth stands occur. Shrubs and understory do not have any significant cover – on average 10 %, maximum up to 30 %. In this layer, *Juniperus communis* s. l. predominates; in some communities *Sorbus aucuparia* (incl. subsp. *glabrata*) occurs, and only occasionally *Betula nana* and *Salix glauca*. The herb–dwarf shrub layer (15–40 cm tall) is dense or almost continuous, with an average cover of about 70 %. In this layer, *Cornus suecica* and *Vaccinium myrtillus* codominate (both 2b); *Empetrum hermaphroditum*, *Vaccinium vitis-idaea* and *Avenella flexuosa* are less abundant (all 2a). Moss cover is usually absent or fragmentary (on average 15 %) and very rarely dense. The communities are characterized by low alpha diversity – ranging from 12 to 28 species, with an average of 19. The features of composition and structure of the communities of the two other subassociations are described below.

Habitats. Birch communities with *Cornus suecica* on the Murman coast in the Liinakhamari environs are the most widespread type of krummholz; in Dalnie Zelentsy, it occurs in small patches on sandy coastal terraces and hill slopes. In the mountains and uplands of the Kola Peninsula and on Northern Timan, the communities are formed on mid and lower sections of gentle slopes, on rocky substrates covered with a layer of loose (gravelly, sandy, loamy) deposits, with an organogenic (peaty) layer (3)5–20 cm thick. In the forest-tundra, they occupy low sandy hills on watershed plains; in the northern taiga, they occupy low-level coastal terraces. The soils are sandy or sandy loam, often highly bouldery on coastal terraces.

Distribution. Relevés of communities of the subass. typicum were made in lowland and mountain areas of Eastern Fennoscandia and on Northern Timan (Fig. 1, sites 1–3, 5, 6, 10); further east – only in the Pechora River delta (Fig. 1, sites 14–15); those of the two other subassociations – along the southern coast of the White Sea (Fig. 1, sites 7–9).

Corno succici–Betuletum pumilae subass. typicum subass. nov. (Table 5, rel. 1–26, 55; Table 6, rel. 1–10; Table 8, columns 24–25, 29; Fig. 2N)

Holotypus = holotypus of the association (autonym, Art. 5b, 13b).

Composition. The same as the association. Based on variation in species composition, 2 variants were identified: typica (Table 5, rel. 1–26) and *Poa pratensis* (Table 6, rel. 1–10). The second variant is distinguished by higher diversity of mesophytic herbs: *Adoxa moschatellina*, *Chamaenerion angustifolium*, *Poa pratensis* s. l., *Equisetum arvense* s. l., *Rubus arcticus*.

Structure. Communities of the var. typica are the same as those of the association. In communities of the var. *Poa pratensis*, the tree layer is dense (mean cover 70 %), with birches of crooked and multi-stemmed growth form, 2–2.5 m tall in the Ponoy River estuary and on islands in the Gorlo of the White Sea, and 3–4 (6) m tall in the Pechora River delta. In the herb–dwarf shrub layer, *Cornus suecica* dominates, with its abundance ranging from 2a–2b in the western region to continuous cover on a relict marine terrace in the Pechora River estuary (Fig. 2N). The communities are characterized by increased

Table 6. Subsyntax of the association *Corno suecici*–*Betuletum pumilae* and association *Dryopterido expansae*–*Betuletum pumilae* in the north of European Russia.

[illegible]

Table 6. Continued.

Relevé nr. in the table	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	a	b	c				
<i>Polytrichum commune</i>	.	.	.	.	.	r	.	+	.	.	2b	+	.	.	+	+	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	I ⁺	III ⁺	I ⁺			
<i>Cladonia rangiferina</i>	+	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	+	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	I ⁺	III ⁺	.			
<i>Poblia nutans</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	+	+	.	.	.	.	.	+	+	.	+	+	+	+	+	+	.	III ⁺	III ⁺	.			
<i>Luzula pilosa</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	1	.	.	.	1	1	1	+	.	+	.	.	.	III ⁺	III ⁺	.		
Other species																																						
<i>Veratrum lobelianum</i>	.	.	.	.	.	+	+	.	r	r	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	II ⁺	.	.			
<i>Tanacetum bipinnatum</i>	.	.	.	.	.	+	1	.	r	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	II ⁺	.	.			
<i>Anthoxanthum alpinum</i>	+	.	.	.	.	+	+	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	II ⁺	.	.			
<i>Calamagrostis purpurea</i>	.	.	.	.	.	+	+	.	+	2a	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	II ⁺	I ⁺	.			
<i>Sciuroidium reflexum</i>	.	.	.	.	.	+	+	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	+	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	II ⁺	.	II ⁺			
<i>Cladonia deformis</i>	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	+	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	I ⁺	III ⁺	.			
<i>Equisetum sylvaticum</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	.	1	.	.	2a	+	.	+	3	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	II ⁺	II ⁺	II ⁺			
<i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	+	.	2a	+	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	2a	.	I ⁺	II ⁺	II ⁺			
<i>Dicranum fuscescens</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	II ⁺	II ⁺		
<i>Plagiobryum rossicum</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	II ⁺	II ⁺		
<i>Sciuroidium starkei</i>	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	1	.	+	I ⁺	.	II ⁺			
<i>Cladonia fimbriata</i>	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	I ⁺	.	II ⁺		
<i>Sphagnum</i> sp.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	+	+	+	+	+	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	IV ⁺	.			

Note. Species found in 1–3 relevés with an abundance of r or + (others are indicated in brackets): *Alnus incana* s. l. 19 (1); *Betula pubescens* s. str. 4 (2a); *Pinus sylvestris* 21 (1), 29; *Populus tremula* 18; *Salix glauca* 2 (1), 5, 11; *S. hastata* 3 (1) 5; *S. lapponum* 11; *S. caprea* 21; *S. myrsinifolia* 19 (1); *S. phyllifolia* 11; *S. lanata* 2 (1); *Achillea millefolium* 6, 9, 10; *Bistorta elliptica* 6, 9; *B. vivipara* 5; *Calamagrostis arundinacea* 19 (1); *C. neglecta* s. l. 7, 10; *Campanula rotundifolia* 3, 4; *Carex aquatilis* 17; *C. canescens* 13; *Cerastium scandicum* 3; *Dryopteris caribbiana* 13, 20; *Equisetum fluviatile* 11; *E. palustre* 11; *E. pratense* 3 20 (1); *Eriophorum angustifolium* 11 (1) 13; *Euphrasia frigida* 28, 31; *Festuca rubra* (incl. *F. richardsonii*) 3, 10, 16; *Geranium albidum* s. l. 6, 7, 10; *G. sylvaticum* 26 (1), 27 (2a); *Gymnocarpium dryopteris* 26, 27 (1), 30 (1); *Hieracium* agg. *alpinum* 7; *H. agg. laevigatum* 7, 8; *H. agg. umbellatum* 23; *Lamium album* 6; *Lathyrus vernus* 21; *Menyanthes trifoliata* 11 (1); *Orthilia secunda* 19 (1); *Oxalis acetosella* 18 (1), 22 (1); *Pedicularis lapponica* 7; *Poa palustris* 19; *Ranunculus acris* s. l. 19; *R. repens* 19; *Rubus saxatilis* 19; *Stellaria hebecalyx* 7, 9; *Veronica chamaedrys* 24; *Viola biflora* 6; *Aulacomnium palustre* 31; *Barbilophozia lycopodioides* 8, 9 (1); *Brachythecium salebrosum* 26, 28, 29; *Ceratodon purpureus* 23 (2b); *Climacium dendroideum* 19; *Dicranum acutifolium* 9, 10; *D. montanum* 26; *Mylia anomala* 12; *Ptilidium pulcherrimum* 28, 31; *Ptilium cristacastrensis* 25; *Rhytidiadelphus subpinnatus* 29 (1), 31 (2a); *Warnstorfia exannulata* 13; *Cetraria islandica* 2, 3, 17; *Cladonia arbuscula* (incl. subsp. *mitis*) 5, 30, 31; *C. cornuta* 8 (1); *C. gracilis* 2; *C. ochrochlora* 8 (1); *C. pyxidata* 5; *Peltigera aphthosa* 7, 26, 29; *P. canina* 8.

Nomenclature types (holotypus) are indicated by a gray fill.

GPS coordinates (WGS 84) (N, E): 1 – 66.58607, 41.16463; 2 – 66.58607, 41.16463; 3 – 66.29778, 36.34677; 4 – 66.29751, 36.34851; 5 – 67.03925, 41.3472; 6 – 68.19194, 53.77519; 7 – 68.19442, 53.79403; 8 – 67.59529, 53.25468; 9 – 68.192306, 53.77528; 10 – 68.19381, 53.79447; 12 – 66.37823, 42.61356; 13 – 66.38661, 42.66272; 14 – 66.3798, 42.64511; 15 – 66.37618, 42.61547; 16 – 66.38573, 42.58473; 17 – 66.38382, 42.59282; 18 – 65.11943, 37.28699; 19 – 65.01530, 35.71230; 20 – 65.10898, 37.32272; 21 – 64.92624, 36.45269; 22 – 65.01697, 37.69724; 23 – 65.01497, 35.70691; 24 – 65.01546, 35.70448; 25 – 64.95802, 35.75407; 26 – 64.95777, 35.75407; 27 – 64.95828, 35.75332; 28 – 65.03706, 35.65864; 29 – 64.95747, 35.75207; 30 – 64.95804, 35.75204; 31 – 65.03822, 35.59924.

Location of the rest relevés (nr. in the table), in the Murmansk Region: 11 – Vicinity of Liinakhamari village, east of the highway, near the abandoned garages.

Authors. rel. no. 1–5 – Kopeina; 6–7, 9 – Lavrinenko; 8 – Lavrinenko & Karsonova; 11 – Chinenko; 12–17 – Churakova & Mamontov; 18–22 – Smirnova; 23–31 – Churakova.

herb diversity, although none of the herbs reaches any significant abundance except for *Arenella flexuosa* (2a). Besides several forest small-herb species, these are mainly mesophytic species of floodplain habitats (meadows and willow thickets), that is determined by the location of the communities.

Habitats and distribution. More common in western, more oceanic areas: mainly on the Kola Peninsula (Fig. 1, sites 1–3, 5); described in the Timan forest-tundra (Fig. 1, site 10); further east – only in the Pechora River delta (Fig. 1, sites 14–15). See also association.

Corno suecici–Betuletum pumilae subass. luzuletosum pilosae Lavrinenko, Braslavskaya, Churakova, Sidorova et Smirnova **subass. nov.** (Table 5, rel. 27–54; Table 8, column 27; Fig. 20)

Holotypus: Table 5, relevé 36 (author's number B6), Arkhangelsk Region, Bolshoy Solovetsky Island, Kislaya Bay, first marine terrace, 65.01470°N, 35.71239°E, 12.08.2013, authors O.V. Sidorova & I.B. Amosova.

Composition. Differential species combination: *Luzula pilosa*, *Maianthemum bifolium* (1) and *Picea obovata* (incl. *P. × fennica*) (1).

Structure. The total projective cover in the communities is 100 %. The tree layer cover varies from sparse (20–30 %) to closed (70–80 %). Birch is (3)5–8(12) m tall, predominantly multi-stemmed, with spreading crowns. In the tree layer, *Picea obovata* (incl. *P. × fennica*) occurs, and very rarely single, young trees of *Pinus sylvestris* are found. Shrubs and understory do not have any significant cover – on average 10 %, with *Juniperus communis* s.l. and *Sorbus aucuparia* s.l. predominating, occasionally *Rosa acicularis*.

Cornus suecica (2b), *Vaccinium myrtillus* and *V. vitis-idaea* (both 2a) codominate in the herb–dwarf shrub layer (15–40 cm tall, mean cover 55 %). Moss cover is usually absent or fragmentary. Its cover (on average 10 %) correlates with tree layer canopy closure, since the input of large amounts of leaf litter hinders the normal growth of moss tussocks. The main bryophytes (*Dicranum scoparium*, *D. polysetum*, *Hylacomium splendens* and *Pleurozium schreberi*) are confined to microelevations (overgrowing boulders and coarse woody debris) and the bases of old birch trunks. The communities are characterized by low alpha diversity – ranging from 13 to 30 species, with an average of 21.

Habitats and distribution. Island and mainland coasts of the White Sea (Fig. 1, sites 7–9), in the northern taiga subzone. See also association.

Corno suecici–Betuletum pumilae subass. rhododendretosum tomentosum Lavrinenko, Braslavskaya, Churakova et Chinenko **subass. nov.** (Table 6, rel. 11–17; Table 8, column 27)

Holotypus: Table 6, relevé 15 (author's number B 5), Arkhangelsk Region, northern coast of the Belomorsko-Ku-lyskoye Plateau, vicinity of the village of Koida, Bab'i Lakes, foot of the hill, 66.37618°N, 42.61547°E, 03.08.2013, authors E.Yu. Churakova & V.N. Mamontov.

Composition. The differential species combination includes species that are diagnostic for the class Oxycocco–Sphagnetea Br.-Bl. et Tüxen ex Westhoff et al. 1946 (communities of oligotrophic (ombrotrophic) raised bogs and wet heaths on acidic soils): *Rhododendron tomentosum* s.l. (1), *Rubus chamaemorus* (2a), *Carex globularis* (1), *Calluna vulgaris*, *Betula nana*, *Eriophorum vaginatum*, *Andromeda polifolia*

and mosses *Sphagnum capillifolium* and *Polytrichum strictum*. Along with those, the mesotrophic species *Cornus suecica* (3) and *Vaccinium myrtillus* (2b), as well as species of the alliance *Empetro hermaphroditi*–*Betulion pumilae* and the class *Vaccinio-Piceetea* (see Table 6), are constant and abundant. The total number of taxa registered in 7 relevés is 49: 35 vascular plants (1 tree, 6 shrubs, 8 dwarf shrubs, 20 herbs), 11 bryophytes and 3 lichens.

Structure. The tree layer (30–60 %) consists of multi-stemmed (3–8 stems), more rarely single-stemmed crooked birch, 3–8 m tall (average 6 m) and up to 9 cm in diameter, with spreading (2.5–4 m) crowns. The shrub layer is absent or very sparse (up to 2 %, 0.6–1.5 m tall), composed mainly of *Juniperus communis* (incl. *J. sibirica*). In the herb–dwarf shrub layer (80–90 %, 10–30 cm tall), *Cornus suecica* and *Vaccinium myrtillus* codominate, sometimes *Empetrum hermaphroditum* and *Rubus chamaemorus*; *Rhododendron tomentosum* s.l. are constant. The moss cover is very sparse and fragmentary, 3–5 % (up to 30 %); besides the common forest mosses, *Polytrichum strictum* and *Sphagnum capillifolium* grow on microelevations (30–50 cm high, 1.5–2 m across). Alpha diversity of the communities ranges from 20 to 25 species, with an average of 22.

Habitats and distribution. Foothills and gentle slopes of hills on the margins of raised bogs on the northern coast of the Belomorsko-Kuloysskoye Plateau (Fig. 1, site 9), and singly on the Murman coast in Liinakhamari (Fig. 1, site 1; in a hollow between rocky ridges). The soils are sandy, with a well-developed litter layer and a peaty horizon.

Dryopterido expansae–Betuletum pumilae

Lavrinenko, Braslavskaya, Churakova et Smirnova **ass. nov.** (Table 6, rel. 18–31; Table 8, column 34; Fig. 2P–2Q)

Holotypus: Table 6, relevé 28 (author's number ГБ_33), Arkhangelsk Region, Solovetsky Islands in the White Sea, Cape Tolstik, sea terrace, 65.03706°N, 35.65864°E, 17.07.2023, author E.Yu. Churakova.

Composition. Differential species combination: mesophytic, mesotrophic and meso-eutrophic *Dryopteris expansa* s.l. (2b), *Milium effusum* (1), *Platanthera bifolia*, *Hylocomiadelphus triquetrus* (3), also characteristic of mesotrophic horsetail-sphagnum spruce forests on heavy soils (Kucherov & Kutenkov 2020). Total number of taxa registered in association is 70: 44 vascular plants (4 trees, 4 shrubs, 5 dwarf shrubs, 31 herbs), 22 bryophytes and 4 lichens.

Structure. The tree stand is closed (usually 60 %). Birch is predominantly multi-stemmed (3–5 (8) stems), (6)8–10(12) m tall, 10–15 cm in diameter, with spreading (4–6 m) crowns. *Picea obovata* (incl. *P. × fennica*) is constantly present in the tree stand on the Onega Peninsula, *Sorbus aucuparia* s.l. – on the Solovetsky Archipelago. The understory (up to 15 %, 1–2.5 m) consists of *Juniperus communis* s.l. and *Sorbus aucuparia* s.l. (on the Solovetsky Islands, it is heavily damaged by elk). In the herb–dwarf shrub layer (30–90 %, 35–40 cm tall), *Dryopteris expansa* s.l. (on flat plots), *Vaccinium myrtillus* (on microelevations), and *Cornus suecica* (on different microrelief elements) codominate. In communities with spruce or adjacent to spruce forests, *Equisetum sylvaticum* and *Deschampsia cespitosa* are recorded. The lower layer of the communities is formed only by mosses and usually has a cover of 20–30 %, with typical forest mosses on microelevations (near trunks, overgrown boulders, coarse woody debris) and *Hylocomiadelphus triquetrus* on flat plots. A high diversity of epiphytic and epixylic cryptogams growing on coarse woody debris and tree bases is characteristic. Alpha diversity of the communities ranges from 13 to 32 species, with an average of 24.

Habitats and distribution. Mesotrophic habitats with moderate to slightly excessive flowing moisture. Southern

coast of the White Sea: Solovetsky Islands and Onega Peninsula (Fig. 1, sites 7, 8) on gentle slopes of marine terraces, river mouth valleys, coastal ridges and uplands composed of marine stony-sandy and bouldery deposits.

Note. The association is not homogeneous in composition; part of the described communities where *Dryopteris expansa* s.l. has low abundance and the differential species combination is incomplete (Table 6, rel. 20–24) should be considered transitional to the *Corno suecici*–*Betuletum pumilae*. Nevertheless, the syntaxon is described at the rank of a separate association rather than a subassociation within the ass. *Corno suecici*–*Betuletum pumilae* due to the significant structural and physiognomic features of the typical communities, where the large fern has high cover. We could not find an exact analogue for the ass. *Dryopterido expansae*–*Betuletum pumilae* among syntaxa previously published by Scandinavian researchers. The syntaxon "Submaritime tall-fern forests" described by Hämet-Ahti (1963: Table 15) includes constant eutrophic hygrophytic species (*Alnus incana*, *Salix myrsinifolia*, *Filipendula ulmaria*, *Mattencia struthiopteris*) and megatrophic mesophytic species (*Trollius europaeus*, *Dryopteris dilatata*), while lacking *Empetrum hermaphroditum* and *Vaccinium vitis-idaea*, and having low constancy of *V. myrtillus*. All this indicates that this syntaxon cannot be an analogue for the lowland forest-tundra mesotrophic krummholz communities with high abundance of *Dryopteris expansa*, and simply does not belong to the alliance *Empetro hermaphroditi*–*Betulion pumilae*.

Carici nigrae–Betuletum pumilae Lavrinenko, Braslavskaya et Churakova **ass. nov.** (Table 7, rel. 1–12; Table 8, column 35; Fig. 2R)

Holotypus: Table 7, relevé 5 (author's number Б_К_АОЛГ2), Arkhangelsk Region, Solovetsky Islands in the White Sea, Cape Berezovy, sea terrace, 64.99111°N, 35.85813°E, 02.07.2024, author E.Yu. Churakova.

Composition. Differential species combination – both hygrophytes *Carex nigra*, *Sphagnum flexuosum*, *S. riparium*, characteristic of mesotrophic fens, and, to varying degrees, moisture-demanding oligotrophic and mesotrophic species *Dactylorhiza maculata* s.l., *Vaccinium microcarpum*, *Salix lapponum* (1), *Aulacomnium palustre*, *Polytrichum commune* (2b), *Sphagnum angustifolium* (2a), characteristic of waterlogged pine and birch forests (Kuznetsov 2012). The total number of taxa registered in the association is 68: 50 vascular plants (2 trees, 6 shrubs, 10 dwarf shrubs, 32 herbs), 18 bryophytes.

Structure. The tree stand (cover 30–40 %) consists of birch 3–6 (8) m tall, rarely with an admixture of spruce or pine. The shrub layer (1–15 %, 1–2 m tall) is composed of *Salix glauca*, *S. lapponum*, *Juniperus communis*. The herb–dwarf shrub layer is dense (20–35 cm tall, 40–80 % cover), species-rich, with codominance of *Cornus suecica*, *Empetrum hermaphroditum*, *Rubus chamaemorus*, *Vaccinium myrtillus* (all 2a) and *V. uliginosum* (2b). *Carex nigra* and *Dactylorhiza maculata* s.l. are constant but have low abundance. The lower layer is formed only by mosses, dense or continuous, species-rich, with dominance of *Polytrichum commune* and *Sphagnum angustifolium*, *S. flexuosum*, and more rarely other species. Alpha diversity of the communities is relatively high – ranging from 21 to 33 species, with an average of 27, which is due to the heterogeneity (elevations and depressions) of the terrain.

Habitats and distribution. *Sphagnum* and haircap moss birch krummholz are described on the Solovetsky Islands (Fig. 1, site 7), where they occupy the rear parts of the first marine terrace under conditions of excessive moisture and periodic temporary flooding from adjacent raised bogs. The soils are waterlogged peaty. The species composition indicates an unstable and heterogeneous water regime.

Table 7. Association *Carici nigrae*–*Betuletum pumilae* and communities of the suballiance *Corno suecici*–*Betulenion pubescentis* in the Arkhangelsk and Murmansk Regions and compared with *Rubio chamaemori*–*Betuletum prov.* in the mountains of the Norway.

Association / community *	Carici nigrae–Betuletum pumilae											NsBp	EsBp				CaBp	GpBp	RcBp				DcBp	Constancy and abundance																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																										
Locality (no. in Fig. 1)	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7</

Table 7. Continued.

Relevé nr. in table	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	a	b	c	d	e	f	g**	
<i>Vaccinium myrtillus</i>	2a	2b	2a	2b	·	2a	·	2a	2a	·	2a	+	·	·	1	2a	1	+	+	·	2a	2a	2b	1	1	1	1	+	2b	·	2b	·	2b	+	1	IV ^{2a}	III ¹	V ^{2a}	4 ¹	III ^{2b}	2 ¹	5 ²	
<i>Vaccinium vitis-idaea</i>	1	·	1	2a	·	1	+	1	1	1	+	1	·	1	1	+	1	2a	2b	1	1	+	1	2a	+	+	+	·	2a	·	·	1	·	+	IV ¹	V ¹	V ¹	3 ⁺	II ^{2a}	1 ⁺	5 ¹		
<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i> (incl. subsp. <i>glabrata</i>)	+	1	+	+	+	·	1	+	+	+	·	+	1	1	r	1	1	1	+	·	+	1	+	·	1	1	+	+	·	·	·	+	2a	1	1	IV ⁺	V ¹	IV ⁺	4 ¹	II ¹	2 ¹	·	
<i>Juniperus communis</i> (incl. <i>J. sibirica</i>)	·	+	1	1	1	1	1	·	1	·	+	·	+	·	+	·	·	2a	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	+	·	+	1	1	·	IV ¹	II ⁺	I ^{2a}	1 ⁺	III ¹	1 ⁺	·	
<i>Melampyrum pratense</i>	1	2a	+	1	1	1	1	+	1	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	1	+	+	·	·	+	1	+	+	·	+	·	·	1	·	·	·	·	V ¹	V ⁺	IV ¹	1 ⁺	I ¹	·	·	
<i>Pleurozium schreberi</i>	1	1	+	+	+	2b	1	2a	+	·	+	·	+	+	+	1	+	·	·	·	·	·	1	·	·	+	+	·	+	+	·	·	·	·	·	V ¹	V ⁺	I ¹	2 ⁺	·	·	·	
<i>Lysimachia europaea</i>	·	·	·	·	·	+	+	+	·	+	·	·	1	1	1	1	+	1	·	·	1	1	1	1	+	+	+	1	+	·	1	·	1	+	+	+	III ⁺	V ¹	IV ¹	4 ⁺	III ¹	2 ⁺	·
<i>Hylacomium splendens</i>	2a	·	3	2a	+	2a	+	·	+	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	1	·	·	·	·	·	1	·	·	·	·	·	1	·	·	·	+	+	+	III ^{2a}	·	I ¹	·	II ¹	1 ⁺	·	
<i>Picea obovata</i> (incl. <i>P. × fennica</i>)	·	1	·	·	·	·	·	1	1	·	+	1	·	·	·	·	2a	2a	+	2a	2a	+	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	III ¹	I ^{2a}	V ^{2a}	·	·	·	·	
<i>Linnaea borealis</i>	·	1	+	+	·	·	+	·	+	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	1	·	·	·	·	+	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	+	III ⁺	·	II ¹	·	·	1 ⁺	·	
<i>Dicranum scoparium</i>	·	·	·	+	+	·	+	+	·	·	·	·	1	+	·	+	+	·	·	+	·	1	+	1	+	1	+	+	·	·	1	1	2b	+	+	II ⁺	IV ⁺	II ¹	4 ¹	III ¹	2 ⁺	3 ¹	
<i>Spinulum annotinum</i> (incl. <i>S. subarcticum</i>)	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	+	+	+	+	·	+	·	·	·	+	+	·	·	·	3 ⁺	I ⁺	2 ⁺	·	
<i>Dicranum polysetum</i>	·	+	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	+	·	·	·	·	·	·	1	·	·	·	·	·	+	+	+	+	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	I ⁺	I ⁺	I ¹	3 ⁺	·	·	·
Highly constant species of syntaxa																																											
<i>Salix glauca</i>	1	·	·	+	·	2b	2a	2a	+	2a	+	2a	1	1	1	+	+	·	·	·	·	·	·	1	1	1	+	+	1	1	2a	·	2a	·	·	IV ^{2a}	V ¹	·	4 ¹	IV ^{2a}	·	2 ¹	
<i>Luzula pilosa</i>	+	+	+	+	·	+	·	+	+	+	r	·	+	+	+	+	+	1	·	1	·	+	1	·	1	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	IV ⁺	IV ⁺	IV ¹	·	·	·	·	
<i>Solidago virgaurea</i> (incl. <i>S. lapponica</i>)	1	·	·	+	·	+	1	·	+	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	1	1	1	1	·	·	·	·	·	·	2a	+	1	·	1	+	+	III ⁺	·	IV ¹	·	IV ¹	2 ⁺	·	
<i>Poblia nutans</i>	·	·	·	+	+	r	+	+	·	·	+	·	+	+	+	+	+	+	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	III ⁺	V ⁺	I ⁺	·	·	·	·	
<i>Calluna vulgaris</i>	1	·	+	2a	+	·	·	·	·	1	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	+	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	III ¹	I ⁺	·	1 ⁺	·	·	·	
<i>Sanionia uncinata</i>	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	+	+	+	+	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	+	1	·	+	1	·	·	·	·	IV ⁺	·	·	III ¹	·	·	·	
<i>Equisetum pratense</i>	+	·	·	·	1	·	1	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	r	r	·	1	·	·	·	·	·	·	1	·	·	·	·	·	·	II ¹	·	III ⁺	·	I ¹	·	·	
<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	+	1	·	·	1	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	I ⁺	III ¹	·	·	·	·	
<i>Salix phylicifolia</i>	+	·	·	·	·	1	+	·	1	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	1	1	·	·	·	·	+	1	·	+	+	+	·	2b	·	+	·	·	II ¹	·	II ¹	2 ¹	II ^{2a}	1 ⁺	·	
<i>Eriophorum angustifolium</i>	·	·	·	·	+	·	·	+	·	2a	·	·	2a	+	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	1	·	+	·	·	II ⁺	II ¹	·	·	II ¹	·	5 ¹	
<i>Betula nana</i>	·	·	·	·	·	·	+	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	r	·	1	·	·	I ⁺	·	·	·	II ⁺	·	5 ²		
<i>Polytrichum juniperinum</i>	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	5 ¹		
<i>Dicranum elongatum</i>	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	5 ¹		
<i>Phyllocladus caerulea</i>	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	+	1	·	·	·	·	II ¹	·	4 ⁺		
<i>Cladonia arbuscula</i> (incl. subsp. <i>mitis</i>)	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	4 ⁺		
<i>Cladonia gracilis</i> subsp. <i>elongata</i>	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	4 ⁺		
<i>Polytrichastrum alpinum</i>	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	4 ²		
<i>Carex canescens</i>	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	1	·	·	·	+	·	·	·	1	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	I ¹	·	I ¹	·	3 ¹	
<i>Andromeda polifolia</i> (incl. <i>A. pumila</i>)	1	·	·	·	+	·	·	·	·	·	+	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	+	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	II ⁺	·	·	1 ⁺	·	·	3 ⁺
Other species																																											
<i>Sphagnum squarrosum</i>	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	2a	+	·	+	2b	·	·	+	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	1	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	II ¹	I ⁺	·	·	·	·	·	
<i>Carex globularis</i>	+	·	·	·	+	+	·	+	·	·	·	·	+	1	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	II ⁺	II ¹	·	·	·	·	·	

Note. Species found in 1–3 relevés with an abundance of r or + (others are indicated in brackets): *Rosa acicularis* 19 (1); *Salix caprea* 15; *S. hastata* 30 (1); *S. lanata* 32 (1); *S. myrsinifolia* 30 (1); *Chamaedaphne calyculata* 6; *Rhododendron tomentosum* (incl. *R. subarcticum*) 1; *Alchemilla murbeckiana* 29 (1); *Angelica archangelica* 33; *A. sylvestris* 10 (1), 20 (1), 23 (1); *Anthoxanthum alpinum* 30; *Athyrium filix-femina* 20 (1); *Bistorta vivipara* 30; *Carex basillata* 1, 3, 12; *C. brunnescens* 29, 31, 33; *C. cespitosa* 2, 8 (1), 9; *C. juncella* 29, 30 (1); *C. limosa* 10; *C. paupercula* 33; *C. rariflora* 32 (2a); *C. rostrata* 32 (2b); *Chamaenerion angustifolium* 18, 29 (1); *Corallorhiza trifida* 31; *Dianthus superbus* 10; *Epilobium bornemannii* 31; *E. palustre* 29 (1), 32; *Eriophorum vaginatum* 24; *Festuca ovina* 30; *F. rubra* (incl. *F. richardsonii*) 14, 17; *Filipendula ulmaria* 28, 30; *Galium uliginosum* 28, 30; *Geum rivale* 32 (1); *Hieracium* agg. *umbellatum* 10; *Lathyrus vernus* 23; *Melampyrum sylvaticum* 5, 7; *Milium effusum* 21, 23; *Moneses uniflora* 28; *Neottia cordata* 31, 33; *Orthilia secunda* 13, 22, 28; *Parnassia palustris* 10; *Pedicularis lapponica* 31; *Phegopteris connectilis* 29 (1), 33 (1); *Pyrola media* 24, 28; *P. rotundifolia* (incl. *P. grandiflora*) 12, 22, 30; *Rubus arcticus* 30 (1); *Rumex acetosa* (incl. *R. lapponicus*) 31 (1); *Saussurea alpina* 30; *Taraxacum croceum* 30; *Trifolium pratense* 10; *Trollius europaeus* 29 (1), 30; *Veronica longifolia* 30 (1); *Vicia sepium* 13; *Viola biflora* 32 (1); *V. epipsila* 10, 20 (1), 30; *Brachythecium mildeanum* 24; *B. salebrosum* 14, 17; *Dicranum bonjeanii* 17; *D. brevifolium* 28; *D. fuscescens* 13; *Hylcomiadelphus triquetrus* 3; *Polytrichum strictum* 3; *Pseudobryum cinclidioides* 28; *Ptilidium ciliare* 19; *P. pulcherrimum* 15; *Rhizomnium punctatum* 20; *Sciuro-hypnum reflexum* 13, 14; *Sphagnum lindbergii* 31; *S. teres* 12 (1); *Warnstorfia exannulata* 10 (2b), 14, 26; *Cladonia chlorophaea* 19; *C. fimbriata* 13, 17, 28; *C. ochroclora* 19; *C. rangiferina* 31, 33; *C. uncialis* 31; *Peltigera elisabethae* 19.

Nomenclature types (holotypus) are indicated by a gray fill.

Table 8. Synoptic table of the syntaxa of the alliance **Empetro hermaphrodit-Betulion pumilae** from the forest-tundra and subalpine mountain belt of the north of European Russia, Norway and Finland and in comparison with the similar syntaxa from other alliance.

Number of syntaxa: All. Eu-Empetro hermaphroditum-Betulenion pumilae: 1 – *Betula tortuosa*–*Stereocaulon paschale*, *Betula tortuosa*–*Cladonia sylvatica* (Dedov 1940); 3 – *Betuletum empetro-cladinosum* (Nordhagen 1943); 4–6 – *Empetro*–*Betuletum*: 4 – *Cladonia stellaris*–Subass., 5 – *Stereocaulon*–Subass., 6 – association Continental subalpine *Empetrum*–Lichens type and Continental subalpine *Empetrum*–Lichens–*Planozium* type (Hämet-Ahti 1919/1963); 9 – *Empetro* hermaphroditum–*Betuletum* pumilae; 10 – *Betuletum empetro-hylocomiosum* (Nordhagen 1943); 11 – *Vaccinio vitis-idaea*–*Betuletum* (Wehberg 2007); 12–13 – Oceanic subalpine *Empetrum* type and Submaritime *Empetrum* type (Hämet-Ahti 1963); 14–17 – *Vaccinio myrtilli*–*Betuletum* pumilae: 14 – subass. *myrtillicum* var. inops, 15 – var. *typica*, 16 – var. *typica*, 17 – association (original data); 18 – *Betula tortuosa*–*Vaccinium myrtillus* (Dedov 1940); 19–20 – *Betuletum myrtillo-hylocomiosum* (*Betula tortuosa*–*Vaccinium myrtillus* sossiation) (Nordhagen 1943); 21 – *Vaccinio myrtilli*–*Betuletum* (Wehberg 2007); 22–23 – Continental subalpine *Empetrum*–*Myrtillus* type and Oceanic *Cornus*–*Empetrum*–*Myrtillus* type (Hämet-Ahti 1963); Suball. *Corno suecici*–*Betulenion* pumilae: 24–28 – *Corno suecici*–*Betuletum* pumilae: 24 – subass. *typicum* var. *typica*, 25 – var. *Poa pratensis*, 26 – subass. *luzuletosum pilosae*, 27 – subass. *Orthodendretosum tomentosum*, 28 – association (original data); 29 – *Betuletum corneosum* (Regel 1927); 30 – Mossy with *Cornus suecica* (Nordhagen 1943); 31 – *Corno*–*Betuletum* (Wehberg 2007); 32–33 – Submaritime *Cornus*–*Myrtillus* type and *Lastraea* variant of the Submaritime *Cornus*–*Myrtillus* type (Hämet-Ahti 1963); 34 – *Dryopterido*–*Betulenion* pumilae; 35 – *Caricetum nigrae*–*Betuletum* pumilae; 36–41 – communities: 36 – *Nardus stricta*–*Betula pubescens* var. *pumila*, 37 – *Equisetum sylvaticum*–*Betula pubescens* var. *pumila*, 38 – *Carex aquatilis*–*Betula pubescens* var. *pumila*, 39 – *Rubus chamaemorus*–*Betula pubescens* var. *pumila*, 40 – *Dryopteris carthusiana*–*Betula pubescens* var. *pumila*, 41 – *Rubus chamaemori*–*Betuletum* prov. (Wehberg 2007). Other alliances: 42–45 – *Corno*–*Betuletum*: 42 – *myrtilletosum*, 43 – *dryopteridetosum* immature, 44 – *dryopteridetosum* mature, 45 – association (Aune 1973); 46 – *Geranio krylovii*–*Betuletum pubescentis* Lashchinskij et Lashchinskaya 2015.

[illegible]

Table 8. Continued.

[illegible]

[illegible]

Table 8. Continued.

[illegible]

Note. Other species with constancy only I and II are not included in the table. Differential species combination and character species of the suballiance are indicated by frames around the values. Bold type indicates high abundance. The gray shading shows differentiation by low abundance/constancy or absence of species.

* *Betula pubescens* in Aune (1973); *Stereocaulon* sp. in Wehberg (2007).

Authors: OJD – Original data; Ded – Dedov (1940); Reg – Regel (1927); Nord – Nordhagen (1943); Wehb – Wehberg (2007); H-Ah – Hämet-Ahti (1963); Aune – Aune (1973); Lash – Lashchinsky & Lashchinskaya (2015); the diagnostic species in the frame, as per the authors.

Sites: Ar – Arkhangelsk Region; Mu – Murmansk Region (Khibiny); Ne – Nenets Autonomous Area; No – Norway; WS – Western Siberia.

In half of the described communities of the ass. *Carici nigrae*–*Betuletum pumilae*, *Nardus stricta* occurs with low (1) abundance. The primary habitats of this species are bog margins and wet forest edge biotopes with poor acidic soils; it expands under grazing disturbance (Zhukova 1974). Its presence in the communities of the association may indicate past recreational impact (overgrowth of roads and trails). Severe trampling and destruction of the ground cover likely led to the replacement of the association's communities by a derived community in which *Nardus stricta* dominates.

Community *Nardus stricta*–*Betula pubescens* var. *pumila* (Table 7, rel. 13–17; Table 8, column 36; Fig. 2S)

Birch krummholz (40–50 % cover, 8 m tall) with a well-developed herb layer (*Nardus stricta* (3), *Calamagrostis purpurea* (1), *Carex nigra*), dwarf shrubs (*Vaccinium uliginosum* (2b)), and a fragmentary (3–15 %) ground cover (*Dicranum majus*, *Calliergon cordifolium*, *Aulacomnium palustre*), formed in a recreational zone on the Solovetsky Islands.

We have provisionally assigned birch krummholz communities of waterlogged and wet habitats to the suballiance Corno suecici–Betulenion pumilae, keeping them at the rank of 'community' due to the small number of relevés, mostly from a single location.

Community *Equisetum sylvaticum*–*Betula pubescens* var. *pumila* (Table 7, rel. 18–23; Table 8, column 37; Fig. 2T)

Krummholz of multi-stemmed (3–6 stems) *Betula pubescens* var. *pumila* (6–10 (12) m tall, 40–80 % cover), in whose herb-dwarf shrub layer, along with *Vaccinium myrtillus* (2a) and *Cornus suecica* (1), *Equisetum sylvaticum* (2b) predominates, with a fragmentary moss cover of *Polytrichum commune* and *Sphagnum girgensohnii* in floodplain, streamside habitats and waterlogged depressions of marine terraces on the White Sea coast.

Community *Carex aquatilis*–*Betula pubescens* var. *pumila* (Table 7, rel. 24–27; Table 8, column 38; Fig. 2U–2V)

Birch krummholz (40–50 % cover, 3–8 m tall) with a dense or continuous herb-dwarf shrub layer in which, along with *Cornus suecica* (3), *Rubus chamaemorus* (2a) and *Vaccinium myrtillus* (1), graminoids – *Carex aquatilis* (2b) and *Calamagrostis purpurea* (1) – predominate, with the moss cover absent or fragmentary, in mesotrophic wet habitats on a sandy marine terrace of the White Sea coast.

Community *Calamagrostis purpurea*–*Betula pubescens* var. *pumila* (Table 7, rel. 28; Fig. 2W)

One community of *Betula pubescens* var. *pumila* (40 % cover, 3 m tall) with a continuous herb layer (0.9 m tall) of *Calamagrostis purpurea* (3), *Equisetum fluviatile* (2b) and *Comarum palustre* (2a) on the bank of a river flowing into the White Sea.

Community *Rubus chamaemorus*–*Betula pubescens* var. *pumila* (Table 7, rel. 29–33; Table 8, column 39)

Waterlogged herb-rich birch scrub (1.6 m tall) and krummholz (3–10 m tall), 30–50 % cover, in whose herb layer, along with *Cornus suecica* (2b), *Rubus chamaemorus* (2b), *Calamagrostis purpurea* (2a), *Comarum palustre* (1), there occur herb *Geranium sylvaticum*, *Cirsium heterophyllum*, with a continuous moss cover dominated by sphagnum (*Sphagnum girgensohnii*, *S. warnstorffii*, *S. centrale*) in relatively rich, well-watered habitats on peaty soils (peat 15–35 cm thick) over a stony base on the Murman coast, more rarely in the Keivy Upland. These communities are possibly a transitional type to herb-rich birch krummholz of the alliance Geranio sylvatici–Betulion pumilae prov. Wehberg (2007) in the mountains of Norway described a preliminary ass. *Rubus chamaemorei*–*Betuletum* nom. inval. (Art. 3b) (see Table 7, column 'g'; Table 8, column 41). It unites birch krummholz (3 m tall) with an open (30 %) canopy domi-

nated by *Rubus chamaemorus* (>25 % cover) and the presence of *Vaccinium myrtillus*, *V. uliginosum*, *Empetrum hermaphroditum*, *Cornus suecica* in the herb-dwarf shrub layer and *Sphagnum capillifolium* in the moss cover on acidic moist peaty soils. Despite the presence of common species with our 'community', the floristic differences are significant, which did not allow us to validate or describe a new association.

Community *Dryopteris carthusiana*–*Betula pubescens* var. *pumila* (Table 7, rel. 34–35; Table 8, column 40)

Birch krummholz (60–70 % cover, 8–10 m tall) with large ferns, in whose herb layer *Dryopteris carthusiana* (3) dominates, along with low-abundance *Cornus suecica*, *Rubus chamaemorus*, *Calamagrostis purpurea*, in mesotrophic wet habitats on the upper parts and at the foot of slopes of sandy ridges on the White Sea coast.

Conspectus of the syntaxa of birch krummholz

Class

Subclass

Order

Alliance

Suballiance

Association

Subassociation

Variant

Vaccinio–Piceetea Br.-Bl. in Br.-Bl. et al. 1939

Piceenea abieti-obovatae Ermakov 2025

Vaccinio myrtilli–Betuletalia pubescentis

Mucina et Willner in Mucina et al. 2016 nom. inval. et ined. (Art. 1, 2b)

Empetro hermaphroditi–Betulion pumilae
Lavrinenko et Braslavskaya **all. nov.**

Eu-Empetro hermaphroditi–Betulenion
pumilae **suball. nov.**

Cladonio stellaris–Betuletum pumilae
Nordhagen 1943 nom. mut. nov. Lavrinenko et
Braslavskaya

Empetro hermaphroditi–Betuletum
pumilae Nordhagen 1943 nom. mut. nov.
Lavrinenko et Braslavskaya

typica

Larix sibirica

Vaccinio myrtilli–Betuletum pumilae
Nordhagen 1943 nom. mut. nov. Lavrinenko et
Braslavskaya

typica

inops

Betula nana

Corno suecici–Betulenion pumilae
Lavrinenko et Braslavskaya **suball. nov.**

Corno suecici–Betuletum pumilae Regel
1927 nom. mut. nov. Lavrinenko et Braslavskaya
typicum

typica

Poa pratensis

luzuletosum pilosae Lavrinenko,
Braslavskaya, Churakova, Sidorova et Smirnova
subass. nov.

rhododendretosum tomentosi Lavrinenko,
Braslavskaya, Churakova et Chinenko **subass.
nov.**

Carici nigrae–Betuletum pumilae
Lavrinenko, Braslavskaya et Churakova **ass. nov.**

Dryopterido expansae–Betuletum
pumilae Lavrinenko, Braslavskaya, Churakova et
Smirnova **ass. nov.**

Com. *Calamagrostis purpurea*–*Betula pubescens* var. *pumila*
 Com. *Carex aquatilis*–*Betula pubescens* var. *pumila*
 Com. *Dryopteris carthusiana*–*Betula pubescens* var. *pumila*
 Com. *Equisetum sylvaticum*–*Betula pubescens* var. *pumila*
 Com. *Nardus stricta*–*Betula pubescens* var. *pumila*
 Com. *Rubus chamaemorus*–*Betula pubescens* var. *pumila*

Ordination of vegetation units

The results of UMAP ordination and coenoflora analysis confirmed and demonstrated (Fig. 3, 4) the floristic differentiation of the syntaxa of the alliance under the influence of ecological and climatic factors. The syntaxonomic structure of the alliance is represented by two suballiances, six associations, and six communities corresponding to the association rank, which need to be described as data accumulate.

Syntaxa whose communities occupy oligotrophic, little- to moderately snow-covered, dry to moderately moist habitats are united into the suballiance Eu-Empetro hermaphroditi–Betulenion pumilae (relevés in the upper right part of Fig. 3). In the lower layers of such krummholz, either lichens (ass. *Cladonio stellaris*–*Betuletum pumilae*) or hypoarctic dwarf shrubs *Empetrum hermaphroditum*, *Vaccinium myrtillus*, *V. uliginosum* and *V. vitis-idaea* with green forest mosses (ass. *Empetro hermaphroditi*–*Betuletum pumilae*, ass. *Vaccinio myrtilli*–*Betuletum pumilae*) dominate. In the spectrum of latitudinal fractions of the associations, with an approximately equal ratio of hypoarctic and boreal species, the proportion of arctic species is high (10–15 %) (Fig. 4). The range of the suballiance is limited to the subalpine belt in the mountains of Fennoscandia and the northern forest-tundra on plains and uplands of northern European Russia.

Syntaxa whose communities occupy mesotrophic, well-watered to waterlogged habitats, with higher snow accumulation and a longer snowmelt period in spring, are united into the suballiance Corno suecici–Betulenion pumilae (relevés in the central and lower left parts of Fig. 3). In the herb–dwarf shrub layer of such krummholz, along with hypoarctic dwarf shrubs, *Cornus suecica* – an amphioceanic hypoarctic species confined to the sea coast and low mountain areas – dominates or codominates. In the latitudinal fraction spectrum of the suballiance associations (Corno suecici–*Betuletum pumilae*, *Carici nigrae*–*Betuletum pumilae*, *Dryopterido expansae*–*Betuletum pumilae*), boreal species predominate (70–80 %) (Fig. 4B). A small proportion (4 %) of arctic species is present only in the typical subassociation of the ass. Corno suecici–*Betuletum pumilae*, whose communities at the rank of var. *Poa pratensis* are described from the easternmost site – in the subarctic delta of the Pechora River (Site 15), which has a moderating effect on the regional arctic climate. The main range of the suballiance extends from the subalpine belt and forest-tundra in the ocean-influenced areas of Fennoscandia to the coastal strip on the southern coast of the White Sea within the northern taiga.

The longitudinal fraction spectra (Fig. 4C) in all syntaxa are characterized by a predominance of circumpolar and Eurasian species; no fundamental differences between syntaxa in these spectra are observed, including when

comparing the suballiances. The biomorphs spectra (Fig. 4A) are quite similar among all syntaxa within the same suballiance, while a certain difference is observed between the suballiances: in the coenofloras of the more oligotrophic communities of the suballiance Empetro–Betulenion, herb species diversity is lower, and therefore the relative contribution (proportion) of dwarf shrubs is greater than in the coenofloras of the mesotrophic communities of the suballiance Corno–Betulenion. In the spectrum of ecological groups regarding moisture (Fig. 4D), with mesophytes predominating in all syntaxa of the alliance, the associations of the suballiance Eu-Empetro hermaphroditi–Betulenion pumilae have a higher proportion of eurytopes and contain mesoxerophytes (Fig. 4D), whereas the associations and 'communities' of the suballiance Corno suecici–Betulenion pumilae (except for *Dryopterido expansae*–*Betuletum pumilae*) are distinguished by a more hygrophytic composition – the proportion of hygrophytes varies from 14 to 34 %, and hygrophytes are present.

DISCUSSION

The analysis presented above of the North European oligotrophic and mesotrophic subarctic and subalpine krummholz formed by *Betula pubescens* var. *pumila* has shown that the most constant species across all established syntaxa are the character species of the class Vaccinio–Piceetea. Therefore, it is advisable to subordinate the higher syntaxa of such birch krummholz to this class. In the EuroVegChecklist (Mucina et al. 2016), European boreo-subarctic and orotemperate birch woods and krummholz are proposed to be united into a formally established order Vaccinio myrtilli–Betuletalia pubescentis. Birch krummholz forms under extreme climatic conditions where woody plants are continuously damaged by frost and wind during winter, and their regeneration is hampered by the short growing season. Coniferous tree species are less adapted to such a regime than the pioneer forest-forming birch (Serebryakov 1962). Birch possesses important adaptive abilities: to maximize the use of high light intensity for trunk regeneration and to maintain a large reserve of dormant buds (which are few in conifers). Rapid replacement of damaged trunks ensures that the plant retains its occupied site for a long time. The widespread formation in birches of crooked-stemmed and skirted (with low-growing shoots at the base of the trunk) growth forms is an indicator of regular damage, specifically as a result of weather factors. At the same time, the long-term persistence of birch trees beyond forested areas helps to maintain conditions there that at least partially correspond to the forest environment and are favorable for the growth of other, shorter cold-resistant forest plants – shrubs, dwarf shrubs, and herbs – alongside birches, amidst fragments of tundra and mountain-tundra vegetation. Thus, for birch krummholz, which naturally forms in forest-tundra and subalpine landscapes and has a distinctive physiognomy and species composition, it is legitimate to establish higher syntaxa.

Nordhagen (1943), in his original description of the syntaxa, considered the ass. *Betuletum empetro-cladino-*

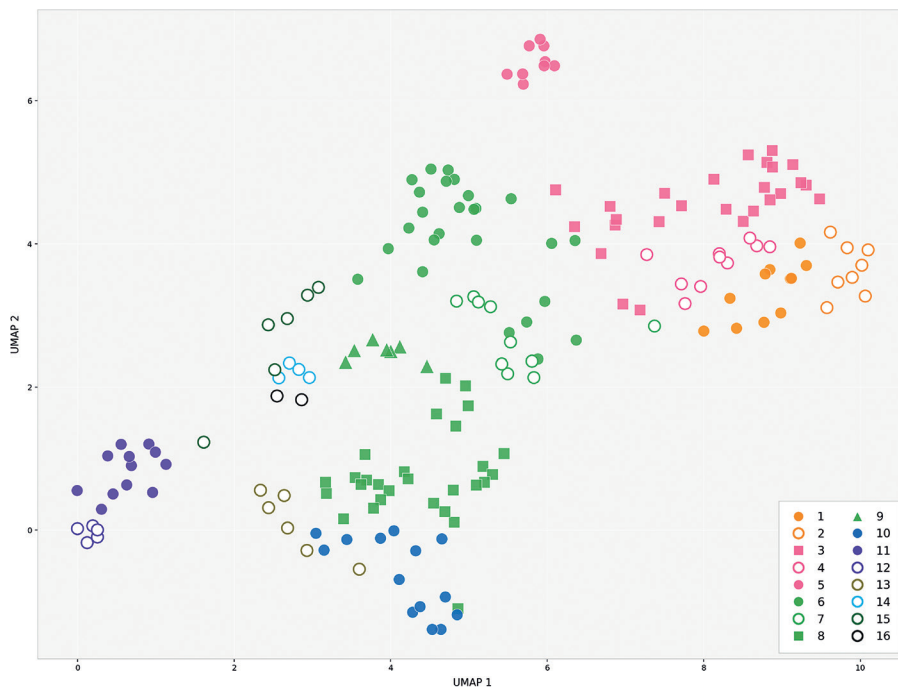


Figure 3 Diagram of UMAP-ordination (Bray-Curtis coefficient) of the alliance Empetro hermaphroditi–Betulion pumilae syntaxa. 1–5 – Eu-Empetro hermaphroditi–Betulenion pumilae: 1–2 – Empetro hermaphroditi–Betuletum pumilae: 1 – var. typica, 2 – var. *Larix sibirica*; 3–5 – Vaccinio myrtilli–Betuletum pumilae: 3 – var. *Betula nana*, 4 – var. *inops*, 5 – var. typica; 6–16 – Corno suecici–Betulenion pumilae: 6–9 – Corno suecici–Betuletum pumilae: 6 – subass. typicum var. typica, 7 – subass. typicum var. *Poa pratensis*, 8 – subass. *luzulosum pilosae*, 9 – subass. *rhododendretosum tomentosum*; 10 – com. *Dryopterido expansae*–Betuletum pumilae; 11 – com. *Carici nigrae*–Betuletum pumilae; 12 – com. *Nardus stricta*–*Betula pubescens* var. *pumila*; 13 – com. *Equisetum sylvaticum*–*Betula pubescens* var. *pumila*; 14 – com. *Carex aquatilis*–*Betula pubescens* var. *pumila*; 15 – com. *Rubus chamaemorus*–*Betula pubescens* var. *pumila*; 16 – com. *Dryopteris carthusiana*–*Betula pubescens* var. *pumila*

sum within the alliance Loiseleurio–Arctostaphylion, and the ass. Betuletum empetro–hylocomiosum and Betuletum myrtillo–hylocomiosum within the alliance Phyllodoco–Vaccinion myrtilli of the class Loiseleurio–Vaccinietea. This view on the syntaxonomic affiliation of these syntaxa was quite justified due to the similarity of the herb–dwarf shrub layers in the birch krummholz associations with the corresponding associations of tundra communities. However, for the purposes of vegetation classification, habitat typology, and mapping, the tree growth form cannot be ignored, as it represents a different type of vegetation. The distinctive vegetation in terms of structure and physiognomy, with a tree layer of low-growing crooked-stemmed and multi-stemmed *Betula pubescens* var. *pumila*, is united into a new alliance, Empetro hermaphroditi–Betulion pumilae.

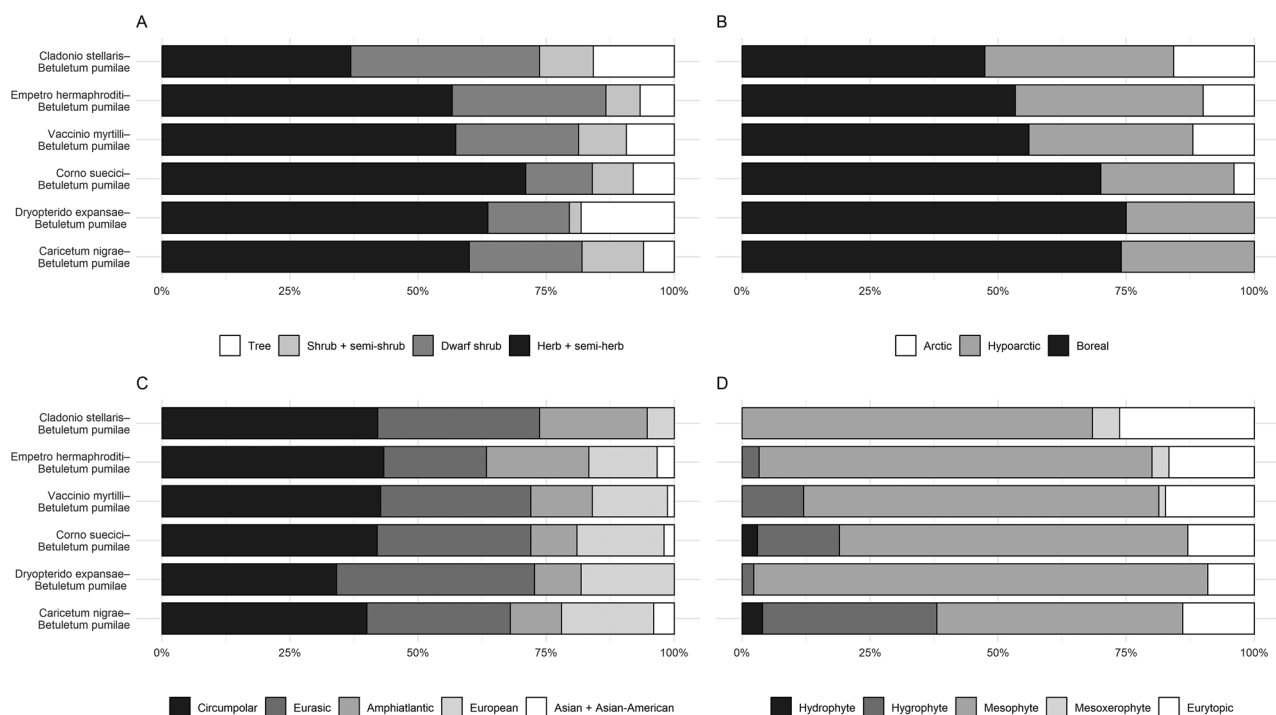


Figure 4 The percentage of the species of different biomorphs (A), latitude (B), longitude (C) and ecological (D) groups in coenofloras of the associations of alliance Empetro hermaphroditi–Betulion pumilae

The main range of the alliance covers areas located in sectors with high oceanicity of climate (O2–OC, see Table 1). Although the ranges of the suballiances overlap within Fennoscandia, a pattern emerges in the Russian territory – in the northernmost western and eastern parts of the range (Murmansk Region and Nenets Autonomous Area), associations of the suballiance Eu-Empetro hermaphroditi–Betulenion pumilae are described alongside a syntaxon of the suballiance Corno suecici–Betulenion pumilae (Corno suecici–Betuletum pumilae typicum). In Murmansk Region, there are also communities of the com. *Rubus chamaemorus*–*Betula pubescens* var. *pumila* (the association remains to be described). In contrast, the main range of birch krummholz of the suballiance Corno suecici–Betulenion pumilae is in the ocean-influenced areas of Fennoscandia and in the northern taiga subzone on the southern coast of the White Sea, where these communities show high syntaxonomic diversity. At the same time, the diversity of wet oligotrophic and mesotrophic birch krummholz (Table 8, columns 35–41) is more fully characterized in Russian materials than in Scandinavia, because depressions with excessive moisture are more widely represented in the lowland topography than in the mountains. The decision to place waterlogged birch krummholz communities into the suballiance Corno suecici–Betulenion pumilae is not final, and for some of them (*Carex aquatilis*–*Betula pubescens* var. *pumila*, *Calamagrostis purpurea*–*Betula pubescens* var. *pumila*) it may be revised as data on waterlogged communities accumulate.

It should be noted that almost all areas of foreign and Russian research, especially mountainous ones, are highly disjunct in space and thus isolated from each other. The diversity of conditions and isolation strongly affect the floristic similarity/difference of birch krummholz. Analysis of Table 8 shows that many species are distributed unevenly or quite locally, and these are not only species of the differential combinations of syntaxa, but also a number of character species of the class and suballiances. Therefore, the basis for syntaxonomic decisions was often expert knowledge of species' ecological preferences, developed during field research and gleaned from the literature, including for species with low constancy; both the presence and absence of ecologically informative species were taken into account. Although the similarity between all sets of relevés (original data and those of other authors) assigned to the same association is not always absolute (as it cannot be expected in nature) (see Table 8), we nevertheless selected the closest syntaxa in terms of species composition and ecology from among previously published ones for correlation with Russian phytocoenoses. In particular, for the four main associations, nomenclatural types were chosen from the descriptions of Nordhagen (1943) and Regel (1927).

The well-known name of the previously published Scandinavian syntaxon, the ass. Corno–Betuletum Aune 1973, has often been used in subsequent syntaxonomic treatments of subarctic and subalpine vegetation (Dierßen 1996, Wehberg 2007). In the diagnosis of this association (Aune 1973), there are no clear indications that the com-

munities included are indeed krummholz formed by *Betula pubescens* var. *pumila*, and moreover, in the communities of the subass. myrtilletosum (those closest in herb–dwarf shrub layer composition to the alliance Empetro hermaphroditi–Betulenion pumilae), *Pinus sylvestris* dominates in the tree stand. Furthermore, the communities of this association are well differentiated from the birch krummholz of the alliance by a set of megatrophic bryophyte and herb species, including the hemiboreal species *Anemone nemorosa* and *Oxalis acetosella* (see Table 8, columns 42–45). The presence of these two species is apparently determined by the favorable climatic conditions in Aune's study area, where the prevailing altitudes are no more than 450 m a.s.l., even though this territory is located further north (63.1°N) than Nordhagen's study area (61.6°N), where the most oligotrophic krummholz communities with arctic species were described at altitudes of about 1000 m a.s.l. These features of species composition do not allow the communities described by Aune to be assigned to the alliance Empetro–Betulenion. The syntaxonomic position of these communities remains to be clarified in future research.

In Western Siberia (Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Area), within the class Vaccinio–Piceetea, the ass. *Geranio krylovii*–Betuletum pubescentis Lashchinskiy et Lashchinskaya 2015 has been described, uniting krummholz formed in thermokarst depressions on flat drained watersheds along the northern border of the forest-tundra. The communities are characterized by a mosaic of species of different ecological affinities, which distinguishes this association from the syntaxa of the alliance Empetro hermaphroditi–Betulenion pumilae (Table 8, column 46). The authors placed it in the order Ledo palustris–Laricetalia cajanderi Ermakov in Ermakov et Alsynbayev 2004, but did not assign it to any alliance. Ermakov (Ermakov et al. 2026) has proposed to describe a new alliance, Vaccinio myrtilli–Betulenion pubescentis Ermakov nom. ined. (Art. 1), within the order Vaccinio myrtilli–Betuletalia pubescentis, for the subarctic birch krummholz of Western Siberia; this alliance remains to be described.

CONCLUSIONS

The syntaxonomic diversity of birch scrub and krummholz, distinctive in structure and physiognomy, with a dwarf shrub, dwarf shrub–green moss / lichen lower layer, is represented by 6 associations and 6 communities from 2 suballiances of the new alliance Empetro hermaphroditi–Betulenion pumilae within the class Vaccinio–Piceetea. The ecological features and the affiliation of the described syntaxa to vegetation zones and climatic regions are shown. Conducting such research is undoubtedly important, since birch krummholz represents the polar and altitudinal limit of woody vegetation, which is subject to significant transformations in community composition and spatial structure under climate change.

The authors' next planned publication will be devoted to herb-rich birch krummholz, united in the provisional alliance *Geranio sylvatici*–Betulenion pumilae prov. of the class Betulo carpaticeae–Alnetea viridis.

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