



AAC Publications

Gissar Range, Soming Valley, various ascents

Tajikistan, Pamir

In September we made a four-day trip to Soming Valley in the central Gissar Range, just south of Iskanderkul Lake. According to the Tajik Federation of Mountaineering (FAT), all peaks west of the Belaya Pyramida–Hodzhական area are still virgin, owing to their remoteness from former Soviet alpine camps. Prior to 1990, climbers had plenty of closer peaks to try, and afterward this area's 4,000m peaks were no longer of interest to climbers.

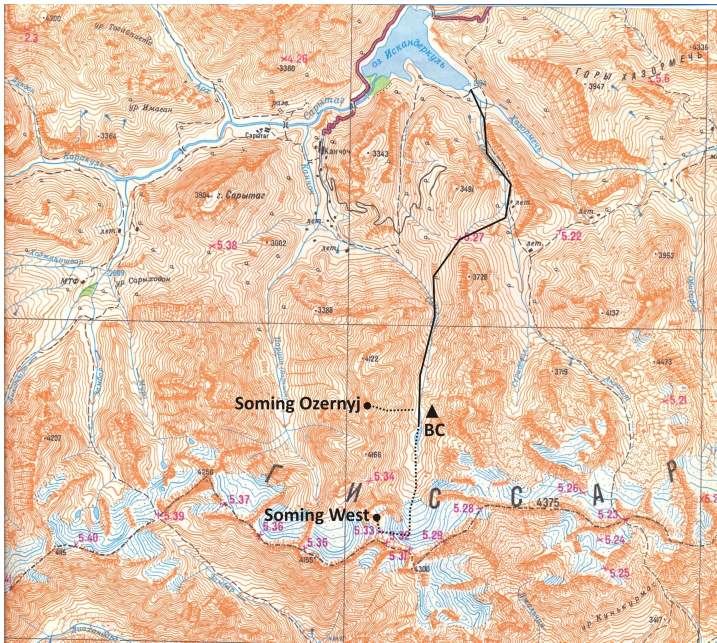
From a tourist camp at Iskanderkul Lake, we hiked one day to reach our base camp near Lake Soming. On day two, Jan Dolezal (Slovak) and I climbed an unnamed peak in western Soming Valley via its southern ridge. A glacier traverse and steep scree slopes brought us to Tomsk Pass (4,100m), from which the south ridge gained the top in five 30m pitches (III-IV) on slabs and in chimneys, with surprisingly solid rock. Descent was via a 200m scramble along the northeast ridge, followed by a scree traverse back to Tomsk Pass. We called the peak Soming West (4,290m).

On day three, we tried to climb the highest peak in this valley but were forced back from the pass by snow and fog. On the last day we managed to climb an easy peak above camp via the eastern couloir. Due to its position directly above Soming Lake, we suggest naming the peak Soming Ozernyj ("Lake Soming," 4,240m).

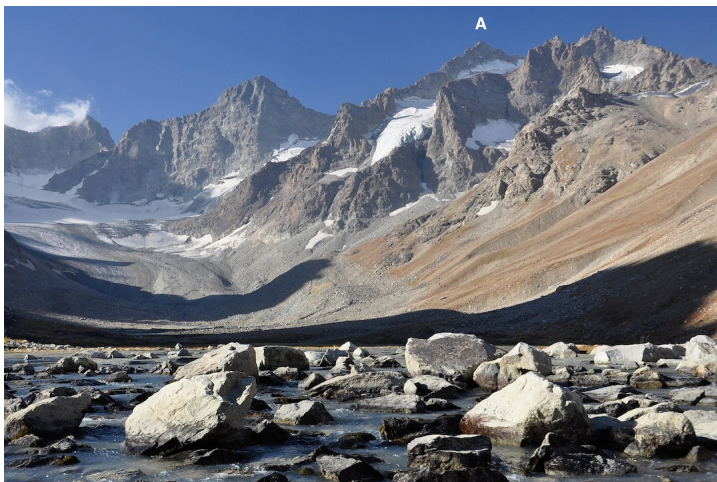
If anyone wants to climb some easy, virgin peaks, the western Gissar Range is your playground. From Dushanbe airport you can drive to the trailhead in two and a half hours.

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Images



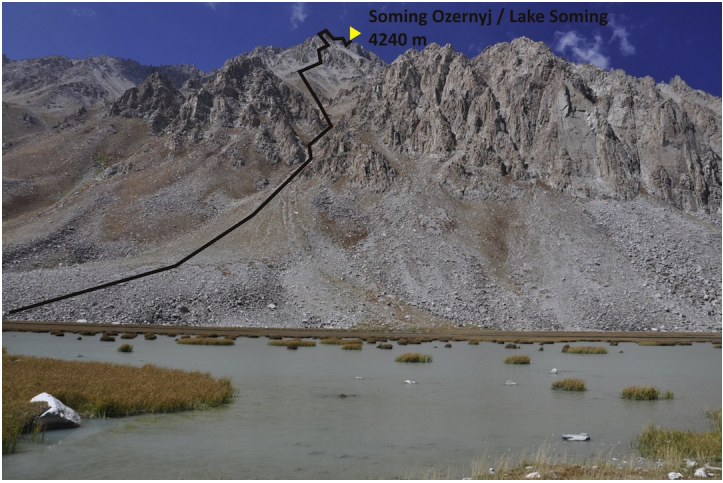
Soming Valley area (Gissar Range) map



(A) Soming West (4,290m). The route lay beyond the sunlit ridge dropping into the valley.



Soming West



Soming Ozernyj

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