



Shark's Tooth, The Great Shark Hunt; El Güpfi, Oasis; Peak ca 2,200m (Daderbrum), Northwest Couloir and Southwest Ridge

Greenland, East Greenland, Renland

Christian Ledergerber, Silvan Schüpbach (both Swiss), and I planned to climb the striking 900m northeast face of the Shark's Tooth (1,555m) in the best possible style: by fair means, clean, and completely free. This proved to be a rather bold, committing, and taxing adventure.

On August 5 we set off from the village of Ittoqqortoormiit in kayaks to cross Scoresby Sund. We had very little kayaking experience, having just learned basic paddle strokes and rescue techniques in April. On the first day it became evident that paddling in Scoresby Sund had little in common with training on a lake. Overloaded kayaks, ocean swell, and choppy waves really tested our ability to remain upright. Fortunately, conditions improved.

Spotting musk ox, seals, and a polar bear, as well as passing close to cracking icebergs, proved a profound experience. After a seven-day paddle and a two-day walk, we established base camp below the Shark's Tooth. For the moment, the big unknown for us—kayaking—was over. Now it was business as usual.

The Shark's Tooth was first climbed in 2011 by Mikhail Mikhailov and Alexander Ruchkin via the northwest ridge (AAJ 2012), and its northeast face looked stunning. It's incredible to find such a wall still virgin these days. It strengthened our desire to climb it free—opening an aid climb would almost have seemed like failure.

It took only three days to climb it. After the initial easy and mossy slabs we got to the real deal. Unfortunately, the rock was not of the best quality, and the aspect of the wall meant the climbing was cold and demanding. We gave it everything we had. Many times we were about to give up and say "take;" many times we had no idea how we were going to link crack systems free. But no one fell. On the evening of the second day we made a spectacular portaledge bivouac in the middle of the face, and next day, on much improved rock, climbed nine excellent pitches to the top, completing the first ascent onsite. We slept on the summit of our dreams, and the following day rappelled the Russian route. We named the 25-pitch route the Great Shark Hunt (900m, 7b+). Repeaters will find only two bolts on the route: one used for hanging the portaledge, and the other for the second climbers on a 30m traverse.

Although we were entirely satisfied, we still had some time left at base camp, and we didn't rest much. Soon we were heading up the Edward Bailey Glacier as far as the entrance to the Alpine Bowl. Here, in 2012, Christian and Silvan had put up a fine rock route called Die Ideallinie on the north-northwest face of a formation called El Güpfi (originally dubbed the Gherkin by an Irish team that attempted it in 2008; see AAJ 2013). They followed a line on the left side of the face. This time Silvan and I climbed a line on the right side, which we named Oasis (600m, 7a) because of the warm, pleasant conditions during the climb. The main difficulties are concentrated on the initial pitches; the upper part gives pleasant climbing in cracks and dihedrals. One bolt was left on the second anchor, but the rest is clean because we rappelled and down-climbed somewhat farther to the right.

Christian and I also climbed a large mountain closer to the Shark's Tooth. It is one of the most striking peaks in the region, and we estimate its height at 2,200m. In a 14-hour round trip from camp we

followed the easiest line, with classic snow, ice, and mixed terrain for ca 1,800m, finishing up a snow arête. We propose the name Daderbrum and suggest that its northwest face could be an interesting objective for future parties.

As we started our journey home, the weather became colder, wetter, and windier. On three days we were unable to move due to storms, and during the rest it was either misty or raining. We finally reached a hut 25km from Ittoqqortoormiit, where we met our final surprise. At 6 a.m. Christian heard snuffling sounds outside. It took him only seconds to realize: polar bear! Trapped in a sleeping bag he started to yell, hoping it would scare away the animal. The bear forced open two doors, and by the time it was standing in the middle of the room we were all making as much noise as possible. This last, great team effort had the desired effect, and the bear turned around and walked out. No doubt she'd been curious about the smell from our feet—she didn't deserve such a bad welcome. That same day we arrived safely in Ittoqqortoormiit.

– Matteo Della Bordella, Italy, with Silvan Schüpbach and Christian Ledergerber

Images



The Shark's Tooth and the line of the Great Shark Hunt (900m, 7b+). The Russian route Dance on Tiptoes climbs the snow couloir to the right, then the ridge above to the summit.



The crack and corner system of the Great Shark Hunt.



El Güpfi and the line of Oasis. Ideallinie lies on or behind the left edge of this face. The Irish tried the obvious couloir/depression on the right.



Peak 2,200m and the line of the first ascent in 2014.



Matteo Della Bordella negotiates tricky face climbing between two crack systems on the Great Shark Hunt.



Christian Ledergerber on the final pitches leading to the Shark's Tooth summit.



Silvan Schüpbach leading the crux (7b+) of Great Shark Hunt.



Silvan Schüpbach, Matteo Della Bordella, and Christian Ledergerber (left to right) during their seven-day kayak approach across Scoresby Sound.

Article Details

Author	Matteo Della Bordella, Italy
Publication	AAJ
Volume	57
Issue	89
Page	0
Copyright Date	2015
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions