



AAC Publications

Wolf Peak, North-northwest Ridge

Kyrgyzstan, Tien Shan, Kuilu Range

Tucked away to the south of the Terskey Alatau Range and west of the Inylchek Valley is the compact range known as Kuilu (Kuylyu). The first recorded expedition to the Kuilu Range took place in 1937, when a team led by I. Cherepov made the first ascent of the highest summit, Pik Konstituzii (5,281m).

There appears to have been no other activity until 1956, when the B. Gavrilov expedition climbed half a dozen peaks from the Karytor and Sarytor valleys. Then came another large time gap, with only a couple of other visits from Soviet-era climbers before the turn of the century, until a succession of mostly British teams (largely from the International School of Mountaineering, ISM, led by Pat Littlejohn) explored the western end of Kuilu. The last visit, in 2016, concentrated on the Kindyk Glacier in the northeast of the range (see editor's note below). In 2018, Rob Reynolds and I decided to visit the Oroy Glacier, the next valley west of Kindyk, which as far as we could tell had no previous visits.

After a two-day drive from Bishkek, close to the mountains, we were stopped by the military, seeking a permit to enter this border area with China. Our agent at ITMC had assured us the Kuilu wasn't in the military-controlled area, but, unbeknownst to ITMC, the border had moved within the last two years. Fortunately, we managed to contact ITMC via our satellite phone, and after much discussion we were allowed to proceed after paying the permit fee.

We established base camp at 3,349m (42°09.4'N, 78°51.5'E) on August 24. Bad weather allowed little upward progress until the 29th, when we established a high camp in a small amphitheater on the western side of the valley below a 4,631m summit (4,648m on Soviet maps, 42°6'44.69"N, 78°50'16.50"E). We dubbed this Wolf Peak. Next day we climbed to a col at the base of the north-northwest ridge and returned to camp. On the 31st we climbed the north-northwest ridge, with 400m of 45° ice covered with a thin layer of snow, to the summit (PD). It was the highest either of us had climbed. Unable to see how we would protect this terrain, we had left the rope behind. Wind slab in the upper section was far from reassuring.

We had no time to climb another mountain. On September 4 we dismantled base camp and descended to the main Kuilu Valley for our pickup.

— Jon Burgess, U.K.

Climbs in the Kindyk Valley: In August 2016, Miles Gould and Andrew Vine (U.K.), though not the first visitors, were probably the first to climb from the Kindyk Valley. From an advanced base camp at 3,830m (42°7'38.88"N, 78°53'50.94"E), they made first ascents of Tülkü Chokusu (4,605m, 42°7'2.34"N, 78°54'47.21"E) via the East Kindyk glacier and east ridge (PD), and Karga Chokusu (4,714m, 42°5'54.00"N, 78°53'47.83"E) via the east ridge (PD). They also climbed two minor peaks west of advanced base: Töö Chokusu (4,554m, 42°7'20.13"N, 78°52'44.76"E) via the west Kindyk Glacier and north ridge (PD), and Suurdun Chokusu (4,444m, 42°7'57.00"N, 78°52'44.67"E) via the south ridge. A full report can be downloaded [here](#).

Images



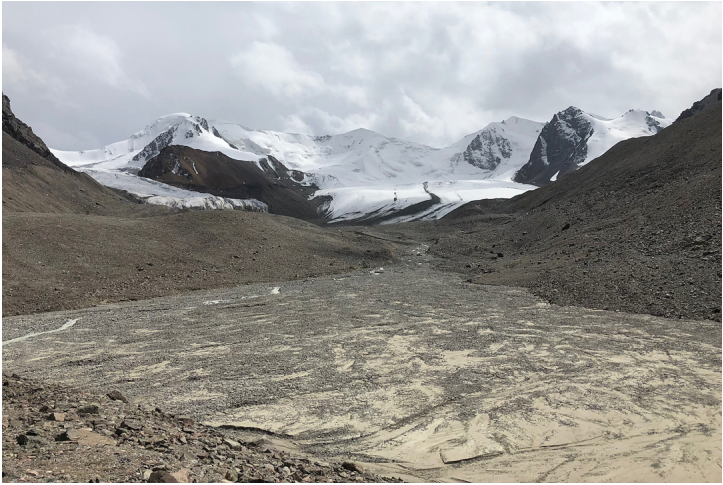
The summit of Wolf Peak (top left) with the north-northwest ridge along the right skyline.



Looking southeast from the summit of Wolf Peak, over unclimbed peaks at the head of the Oroy Glacier, to the large summit of Pik Konstituzii (5,281m, left of center), the highest point in the Kuilu Range.



Looking approximately south to unclimbed peaks up to 4,800m at the head of the Oroy Glacier cirque.



Compared with Soviet maps from around 1980, and even Google Earth imagery, glacial recession in the Kuilu has been substantial. This picture, looking at the distant glacier terminus in 2018, was taken from the point where the same glacier's terminus is located on the Soviet maps.

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