



AAC Publications

Kara-sai Valley, Various Ascents

Kyrgyzstan, Tien Shan, Ak-Shyyrak Range

Caitlin McHale and Isabel Jones descending from the top of Peak 4,749m in the Ak-Shyyrak Range, on the south side of the south fork of the Kara-sai Glacier, after the first ascent. The team attempted Peak 4,825m, at far left, reaching a point about 200 meters below the top in very warm snow.

In July 2024, Jing-jie Cheng, Martha Gutteridge, Isabel Jones, Charlotte Krishek, Caitlin McHale, and I (all U.K.) traveled to the Kara-sai Valley on the southwest side of the Ak-Shyyrak Range. This range, a part of the larger Terskey Ala-Too, has been visited a number of times over the last two decades, mostly for ski mountaineering.

After acclimatizing at a base camp (3,790m) in the upper Kara-sai Valley and making an unsuccessful attempt on the nearest peak, due to soft snow, Jones, McHale, and I returned much earlier in the day to reach Peak 4,660m (41.710065N, 78.227877E). The route ascended the northeast glacier before climbing a steeper section onto a col east of the summit, then the short and nontechnical south ridge to the top (PD+).

After attempts on other mountains impeded by bad weather and poor rock, Jones, McHale, and I moved east to an advanced base and reached the summit of Peak 4,749m (41.719439N, 78.249644E) on July 21 via its northeastern glacier and a snowy shoulder (F+).

The Ak-Shyyrak continues to offer potential for first ascents, especially on the eastern side of the range, which is still relatively unexplored. However, we recommend traveling earlier in the season to avoid the warm weather and poor snow that thwarted many of our attempts. [\[Download the team's detailed trip report here.\]](#)

—Elizabeth Porter, U.K.

Images



Isabel Jones emerging onto the summit ridge of Peak 4,660m in the Ak-Shyyrak Range.



Caitlin McHale and Isabel Jones descending from the top of Peak 4,749m in the Ak-Shyyrak Range, on the south side of the south fork of the Kara-sai Glacier, after the first ascent. The team attempted Peak 4,825m, at far left, reaching a point about 200 meters below the top in very warm snow.

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