



## AAC Publications

---

### **Mt. Kenya, new routes**

Africa, Kenya

The east face of the Nelion (5,188m) is surely the steepest and most impressive big wall on the Mt. Kenya (5,199m) massif. When Lena Hölzler, Niels Delenk, and I (all Germany) visited in August 2007, our goal was to establish a direct free climb through the center of this east face.

During our two-week stay at Shipton's Camp we initially completed some preparatory work on our route, placing some hand-drilled bolts at the belays and key places on route. On August 14 we completed our climb from the start: African Skyline (400m, 6c+). The majority of the route was climbed with clean gear. The route climbs the left (southern) side of the upper east wall, beginning close to the prominent saddle that separates the steep east face from the more broken southeast face.

On August 16 we succeeded on another first ascent, this time up the central groove on the Kraft Rognon, a large buttress below the east wall of the Nelion. This buttress is readily visible from Shipton's Camp. We called this route Way to Skyline (250m, 6c). From the top of this buttress one could walk the ridgeline to the saddle and finish on African Skyline. Independently, the routes should be classified as extremely worthwhile; climbed as a linkup, they would make for one of the longest and most beautiful free climbs on all of Mt. Kenya.

The main problem with our climbs was the weather. The mountain was often enveloped in fog and snow every afternoon from the warm air of the tropical rain forest condensing on the cold rock walls. The rock quality was variable, a mixture of granite and volcanic rock, from outstanding to extremely brittle.

[Editor's note: Way to Skyline was repeated soon afterward by a party who climbed all free, without clipping any of the bolts placed (see AAJ 2008).]

–Walter Hölzler, Germany

## Images



Mt. Kenya from the air.



The view from camp up to Mt. Kenya. The Nelion is the big wall on the left. The prominent lower-left buttress is the Kraft Rognon.



Lena Hölzler and Niels Delenk belaying on African Skyline (400m, 6c+).



Walter Hölzler leading through a roof on African Skyline (400m, 6c+).





Way To Skyline (250m, 6c), up the central groove of the Kraft Rognon, is the lower line. African Skyline (400m, 6c+) climbs the upper wall. The dotted line shows how one could traverse between the two and climb them as a linkup.



Walter Hölzler leading a blocky corner on African Skyline (400m, 6c+).



## Article Details

Author	Walter Hölzler
Publication	AAJ
Volume	0
Issue	0
Page	0
Copyright Date	2015
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions