



## Thalo Zom, South Face and Southwest Ridge

Pakistan, Hindu Raj, Thalo Zom Group

Thalo Zom from the west-northwest. Photo by Andrea Bollati

**The Mountain Wilderness organization strives not only to preserve the natural environment of the world's mountains and deserts, but also to maintain the quality of the experience for visitors to these extraordinary landscapes.** The Swat Project of Mountain Wilderness International's Asian Desk is trying to encourage respectful behavior among the increasing number of visitors to this region by discouraging the building of access roads, cable cars, hotels and mountain huts, and encouraging the climbing of smaller summits, mistakenly considered "minor" because they are of relatively low altitude and less fashionable. It also encourages good style for expeditions, without extensive use of hundreds of porters, fixed ropes, oxygen, etc.

Supporting these principles, a team representing Mountain Wilderness International's Asian Desk left Kalam on August 19 with the aim of climbing Thalo Zom (5,990m GPS, 35°46'54.35"N, 72°16'54.49"E) on the Swat-Chitral border. We traveled from there by jeep, with our porters, along the Utrar road to the Kumrat Valley. The climbing party was Koki Gassiot (Catalonia-Spain), Massimo Marconi and I (both Italian), and Samiullah Ghaznavi, Sadam Hussain, and Abrar Saeed, three young local mountaineers previously trained by the Asian Desk and the Pakistani Chapter of Mountain Wilderness.

From a starting point of 2,700m in the Kumrat Valley, it took several days to cross Thalo Pass (4,220m) and establish base camp at 4,090m in the Thalo Gol. On the 23rd we began the first forays up the lateral moraine of the wide Thalo Zom Glacier.

After three days working south up the glacier, with camps at 4,750m and 5,100m, a high camp was placed below the south face of the mountain at 5,400m. From there, at 1 p.m. on the 29th, all the team reached the summit via a 600m ice route up the south face and southwest ridge. We named it Guides' Way (D-, 60°).

At the time we thought this was the first ascent of the mountain but later discovered it had been climbed on August 12, 1971, by a team from Graz, Austria, led by Herbert Zefferer. Looking at the available information, it seems most likely they ascended the Thalo Zom Glacier to the snow col at the foot of the northeast ridge, then climbed on the south flank of that ridge to the top, perhaps finishing up the southeast ridge.

– **Andrea Bollati, Italy**

## Images



Thalo Zom seen from the Thalo Zom Glacier to the northwest. The 2019 expedition passed around the right side of the mountain to reach its south face. A 1971 Austrian expedition is believed to have crossed the snow col left of the mountain and climbed the south flank of the northeast ridge to make the first ascent.



The south face of Thalo Zom and route of the 2019 expedition.



The ascent of the south face of Thalo Zom from base camp in the Thalo Gol. The expedition approached from the Kumrat Valley via Thalo Pass, off picture to the left.



Thalo Zom from the west-northwest.



On the south face of Thalo Zom. Camp 3 at 5,400m is visible on the glacier near the right edge of the picture.

## Article Details

Author	Andrea Bollati
Publication	AAJ
Volume	62
Issue	94
Page	
Copyright Date	2020
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions