



AAC Publications

Pool Wall, Two Ravens; Ingmikortilaq, Northeast Ridge

Greenland, Renland

Hazel Findlay on the northeast ridge of Ingmikortilaq with the Nordvestfjord below. Photo by Alex Honnold

On a trip to East Greenland that was filmed for a TV show to be released by National Geographic in 2023, Hazel Findlay (U.K.) and I, along with various partners, put up two big routes and helped carry out scientific research.

Our first route was on Pool Wall near the upper end of the Edward Bailey Glacier at approximately 71.194754°N, 26.865670°W. The rock was gneiss and the climbing characterized by discontinuous crack systems linked by face climbing, which we bolted as needed. The climbing was split between Hazel, Aldo Kane, Mikey Schaefer, and me. We also fixed ropes so that Adam Kjeldsen and Heidi Silvestre could ascend the wall. The route, which we named Two Ravens, wound up being a 13-pitch 5.12c, though the true crux may have been an incredibly crumbly 5.11+ crack pitch, which Hazel impressively cleaned and led in subfreezing temperatures.

The top of Pool Wall gave us direct access to the Renland Ice Cap, which we traversed, south to north, to reach the Nordvestfjord. During this traverse Heidi, our team glaciologist, used two different radar systems to measure the recent snowfall and total depth of the ice sheet. This was just one of many climate-related experiments she carried out during our journey. When we reached the fjord, she deployed a NASA probe as part of the Oceans Melting Greenland project. The probe will spend the next several years bobbing up and down the depth of the fjord, measuring temperature and salinity, and helping us to understand how rising and warming seas contribute to glacial retreat.

The second wall we climbed, and the main goal for the expedition, was Ingmikortilaq (“Separate One” in Greenlandic), which lay further up the Nordvestfjord at approximately 71.879420°N, 28.112194°W. It was another gneiss wall that rose around 1,150m straight out of the sea. After making a landing by dinghy on the north side, we wound up climbing the left-hand skyline, which we simply called the Northeast Ridge. It went at 5.11- X; the protection was very sparse and the rock was quite loose. We fixed lines halfway up for filming and commuting, and then spent one night on the wall before Hazel and I climbed the upper headwall in one big day. The rest of the team decided the rock quality made it too dangerous for more people to be on the wall.

While we were climbing, Heidi and the rest of the team installed temperature sensors in the face to help understand what happens to the rock as permafrost thaws. They also mapped icebergs by drone, and measured the calving face of the nearby Daugaard-Jensen Glacier, which is one of the biggest outlets of the main Greenland Ice Sheet.

— Alex Honnold, USA

Images



The approximate line of Two Ravens on the south-facing Pool Wall near the head of Renland's Edward Bailey Glacier.



The upper section of Two Ravens on Pool Wall.



Aldo Kane jumarining during the first ascent of Pool Wall. The Edward Bailey Glacier lies below.



The approximate line of the northeast ridge of Ingmikortilaq seen from Nordvestfjord.



Hazel Findlay on the lower section of Ingmikortilaq, above the Nordvestfjord.



Hazel Findlay on the northeast ridge of Ingmikortilaq with the Nordvestfjord below.



The approximate line of the northeast ridge of Ingmikortilaq.

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