



## AAC Publications

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### **Akilisaq Bay and Anijaaq Fjord, New Routes**

Canada, Nunavut, Baffin Island

**Inspired by Erik Boomer and Sarah McNair-Landry's trip to Anijaaq Fjord in 2020 (see AAJ 2021), we visited the area in August with Scottish friends Steve Kennedy and Colin "Cog" Moody.** Using Skip Novak's Pelagic sailboat, operated by Chris Kobusch (Germany) and Tor Bovim (South Africa), we sailed from Iqaluit to Akilisaq (Victoria) Bay. There, we did two new routes on the obvious south-facing slab, including The Awakening (455m, 5.8 R), climbed by Steve and Colin.

We then moved north into Anijaaq Fjord (Lincoln Bay). Over two weeks, we did 11 new routes on the two-tiered, south-facing formation to the right (east) of the Sedna Wall. We called this the Nanook Buttress. All of these routes were moderate in difficulty (5.6 to 5.10a) and mostly excellent, ranging up to about 240m in length. [See below for descriptions of these climbs.]

On wet days, we did many hikes by the fjord as well as in Tuniqtaq (Napoleon) Bay and on nearby Qallunaat (Kodlunarn) Island. We saw fresh polar bear scat and one female bear with two cubs. Toward the end of our three-week trip, we crossed Frobisher Bay and reconnoitered the climbing potential near the Ajuittuq (Grinnell) Glacier before returning to Iqaluit.

– **Todd and Donette Swain, USA**

#### **Details of Routes Climbed in August 2022**

**By Stephen Kennedy**

#### **Akilisaq (Victoria Bay)**

On the north side of the bay is a clean south-facing slab stretching down close to the sea. The route provides excellent, bold climbing and involves a long traverse left at the top following a partly vegetated terrace.

The Awakening (455m, 5.8 R), Steve Kennedy, Colin Moody

Start at the lowest point on the right side below a prominent niche with a right-facing corner. Take a fairly direct line up the slabs to gain the foot of the niche (65m). Climb the left side of the niche, exit left by a steep corner, then move leftward on a crack system (30m). Move up then right to join a crack line leading to slabs and more broken ground (60m). Continue up leftward following a fault line to reach the terrace below the upper headwall (60m). The terrace is followed leftward in four rope lengths via discontinuous vegetated ledges and slabs (serious and poorly protected) to eventually reach a gully defining the left side of the slab. The gully was descended with one short abseil (probably avoidable) near the base.

#### **Anijaaq (Lincoln Bay)**

A series of buttresses comprising steep, extensive areas of slab, often falling directly into the sea, define the north side of the bay. These include the buttress previously named Sedna Wall containing

two routes climbed in 2020 by Sarah McNair-Landry and Erik Boomer. The next significant buttress some distance to the right (east), just beyond a wide scree gully, named Nanook Buttress, was explored by dinghy over a number of days resulting in a fine batch of routes on excellent rock. The buttress comprises a lower section of slab rising from the sea and finishing on a terrace (Lower Slabs), an upper wall overlooking the terrace (Upper Wall), and a slabby left-hand section (Southwest Face). The foot of the two right-hand routes on the Lower Slabs are accessed by boat. The scree on the left side provides a convenient dinghy landing spot.

## **Nanook Buttress**

### **The Lower Slabs**

The sweep of slabs rising from the sea on the front of the main south-facing cliff leading to a prominent sloping terrace (below a steeper wall). An anchor near the left edge of the terrace was used to rappel back to the base of the cliff using two 70m ropes.

1. The Bone (91m, 5.10a), Steve Kennedy, Colin Moody

This route starts on the far left side of the slabs (near the landing spot) and aims for the vegetated crack above an alcove, right of the first black streak. From the scree, near the base of the black streak, traverse right, passing a deep groove, then climb a thin crack then up and rightwards via some thin moves to gain the main crack. Continue up immediately right of the crack (passing the small "bone" feature) before moving back left into the crack (36m). Climb the slabs above fairly directly to finish on the terrace (55m).

2. Polish (80m, 5.7), Steve Kennedy, Colin Moody

The foot of this route was accessed by boat. Start about 12m right of the scree and gain a small ledge below some vegetated patches. Move rightward to reach and follow a crack which runs through a black streak to a belay below a vegetated alcove (30m). Climb slabs right of the alcove then trend leftwards, passing a bulge, to reach the terrace (50m).

3. Corrugations (105m, 5.8), Steve Kennedy, Colin Moody

The slabs are dominated by a huge, right-facing corner/chimney on the left side. Climb the corner for about 20m before moving left into a further corner running up the left wall. Follow the corner on the left and pull out onto the slabs above (45m). Continue as directly as possible up cracks and slabs to the terrace (60m).

### **Upper Wall and Southwest Face**

The following three routes are situated on the wall above and near the left side of the sloping terrace above the Lower Slabs (Nanook comes in from the far left to reach the terrace).

#### **Upper Wall**

1. Malina (30m, 5.6), Donette & Todd Swain

Start about 20 feet to the right of Igaluk below a right-slanting crack leading to a vertical crack. Climb the crack to a dihedral with an anchor at its top. Rappel descent. (Malina is the Inuit god of the sun and sister of Igaluk.)

2. Igaluk (30m, 5.7), Todd & Donette Swain

Start just right of P2 of Nanook. Climb a left-facing corner to a face. Go up past a bolt to gain an obvious right-leaning crack/corner. Follow the crack/corner to its top and an anchor. Rappel descent. (Igaluk is the Inuit god of the moon and brother of Malina.)

3. Nanook (135m, 5.9+), Todd & Donette Swain

P1: Climb a crack and right-facing corner on the far left of the upper wall to a small, vegetated ledge (bolt). Downclimb a short crack then move right to a bolt anchor at the left end of the sloping terrace. 5.6R (40m).

P2: Directly above the bolt anchor, face climb past four bolts to gain a long, prominent crack. Follow the crack to a bolt anchor. 5.9+ (50m).

P3: Continue up the crack to a stance in a right-facing corner with a bolt anchor. 5.7 (25m).

P4: Climb the mossy, right-facing corner, then up and slightly right to a bolt. 5.7 (20m).

The route was rappelled with two 70m ropes.

### **Southwest Face**

The routes are described from right to left as per the approach up the scree and finish at or close to an amphitheatre formed by the headwall. Descent is made from the left bounding ridge by descending the ridge slightly then traversing left into the scree gully which leads back to the base.

4. Kelp Cutter (240m, 5.10a), Steve Kennedy, Colin Moody

A prominent hanging flake will be seen high on the right. To the right of the flake is a small overhang with cracks running up both sides. This route follows the left-hand crack. A short groove and slabs lead to the overhang and a belay on the right (30m). Move left below the overhang into the crack which was followed in two pitches (65m) to join Drone Age above the prominent flake, about 20m below the overlap at the end of the third pitch of that route. Finish as for Drone Age.

5. Drone Age (240m, 5.9), Steve Kennedy, Colin Moody

This route follows a crack system leading to the prominent hanging flake right of a black streak, starting about level with the terrace on the front face. Start directly below the flake at the base of the streak and climb a crack and ramp leading rightwards to a steeper section (30m). Continue up the crack and left facing corner to the flake. Move left around the base of the flake and continue up the left side to a ledge (30m). Climb a crack leading up from the right side of the ledge then trend right to join a deep crack. Follow the crack to a belay just above an overlap (55m). Continue up the crack to reach a right facing corner which is followed close to the point where the upper slabs are reached (55m). Pull out left from the corner onto the upper slabs then traverse left and up to reach the upper left side of the amphitheatre (50m). Traverse left and slightly down to reach the left ridge (20m). Descend slightly and traverse left via slabs and broken ground to reach the left ridge and the scree gully bounding the left side of the buttress which leads back to the base.

6. Seas and Summits (232m, 5.8), Steve Kennedy, Colin Moody

Start midway along a wide gravel ledge approximately 80m above the high tide mark. Climb a right trending ramp to below a steep wall (28m). Move up and right to circumvent the wall and follow the

prominent right facing corner (34m). Continue up the corner passing an overhang on the right side to gain the upper slabs (60m). Climb the slabs into the amphitheatre below the overhanging headwall (60m). Traverse left under the head wall to reach the left ridge (50m).

7. Blue Barrel (190m, 5.8), Steve Kennedy, Colin Moody

Start 10m left of Seas and Summits near the left end of the ledge. Climb a short groove to the base of a vertical hand crack above a grassy alcove. Climb the crack to below an overhang then move right into the right facing corner (40m). Continue up the corner then follow slabs above (50m). Climb the slabs above fairly directly to vegetated ledges left of the amphitheatre (60m). Traverse left on broken ground to reach the left ridge (40m).

8. Garbh Beinn (116m, 5.7), Steve Kennedy, Colin Moody

Climbs the slabby rib starting about 10m above and left of Blue Barrel. Climb the initial slab (left of a groove) leading to a crack running through an overlap. Continue up the crack and slab above, moving rightwards into a deep groove, bounding the left side of the overhang on the right, leading to a ledge (36m). Continue up the clean slabs trending rightwards then directly (avoiding broken ground to the left) to reach vegetated ledges below and left of the amphitheatre (60m). Traverse left to reach the left ridge (20m).

## Images



Pelagic anchored in Anijaaq (Lincoln Bay).



Pelagic anchored in Anijaaq (Lincoln Bay), where the 2022 team climbed nearly a dozen new routes.

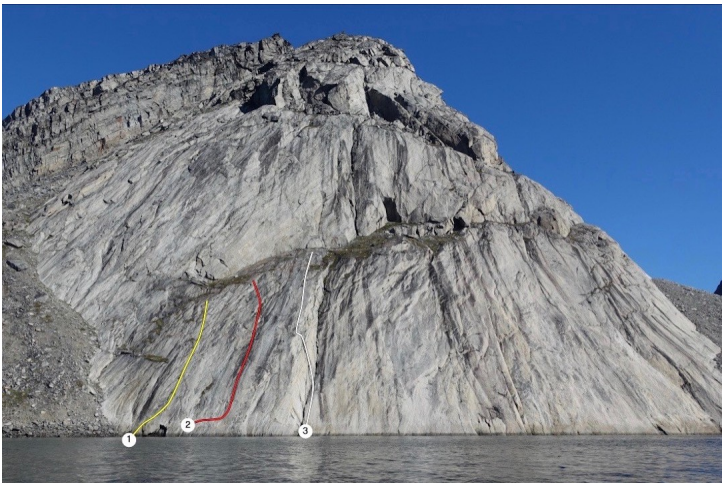


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Topo of The Awakening in Akilisaq (Victoria Bay).



Steve Kennedy climbing on Polish (80m, 5.7) on the lower slabs of Nanook Buttress.



Routes climbed on the lower slabs on Nanook Buttress. Refer to the report for route descriptions.



Steve Kennedy on Corrugations (105m, 5.8), on the lower slabs of Nanook Buttress.



Steve Kennedy on the route Seas and Summits (232m, 5.8) on the southwest face of Nanook Buttress.



Routes climbed on the upper wall and southwest face of Nanook Buttress. Refer to the report for route descriptions.

## Article Details

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