

China sends survey team to Everest after season canceled

May 1 2020



In this April 30, 2020, photo released by China's Xinhua News Agency, the peak of Mount Qomolangma, also known as Mount Everest, is reflected in a pool at the mountain's foot in southwestern China's Tibet Autonomous Region. China sent scientists to climb Mount Everest while the world's highest peak is empty of commercial climbers because of the coronavirus pandemic. (Purbu Zhaxi/Xinhua via AP)

China sent scientists to climb Mount Everest while the world's highest peak is empty of commercial climbers because of the coronavirus pandemic.

China and Nepal canceled spring climbing on their sides of the mountain to prevent infections from spreading as expedition teams traveled to the region and lived for weeks in tightly packed camps at high altitudes with little access to emergency medical help.

The official Xinhua News Agency said Thursday a 53-member team from the Ministry of Natural Resources has been conducting preliminary scientific work since early March and survey work on the mountain is due to begin this month. China's network of Beidou satellites, a rival to America's Global Positioning System, will be used in a survey to determine the mountain's current height and natural resources, along with other domestically developed surveying technology, Xinhua quoted a ministry team leader, Li Guopeng, as saying.

No date was given for when the team would arrive at the top of the mountain via the northern approach. Data on snow depth, weather and [wind speed](#) would also be measured to "facilitate glacier monitoring and ecological protection," Xinhua reported.



In this April 30, 2020, aerial photo released by China's Xinhua News Agency, vehicles and tents are seen at the base camp at the foot of the peak of Mount Qomolangma, also known as Mount Everest, in southwestern China's Tibet Autonomous Region. China sent scientists to climb Mount Everest while the world's highest peak is empty of commercial climbers because of the coronavirus pandemic. (Purbu Zhaxi/Xinhua via AP)



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The People's Republic of China has conducted six major surveys of the [mountain](#) locally known as Qomolangma, Xinhua said. They have registered its height at 8,848.13 meters (29,029 feet) in 1975 and 8,844.43 meters (29,017 feet) in 2005.

China has also taken advantage of the lack of climbers to collect garbage from Everest and other popular climbing peaks.

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Citation: China sends survey team to Everest after season canceled (2020, May 1) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2020-05-china-survey-team-everest-season.html>

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