

# Chinese survey team plans to summit deserted Everest

May 17 2020

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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)

A Chinese government-backed team plans to summit Mount Everest this week at a time when the world's tallest peak has been closed to commercial climbers.

Bad weather forced the team charged with measuring the mountain's current height to return to [base camp](#), but they have since taken up their former position, the official Xinhua News Agency reported.

As long as the weather holds, the team expects to reach the summit on Friday morning, Xinhua quoted Wang Yongfeng, deputy director of the mountaineering administrative center of the General Administration of Sport, as saying.

Everest straddles the border of China and Nepal and both countries canceled spring climbing to prevent the coronavirus from spreading among expedition teams that typically live for weeks in tightly packed camps at [high altitudes](#) with little access to emergency medical help.

China's network of Beidou satellites, a rival to America's Global Positioning System, is being used to survey the mountain's current height and natural resources. Data on snow depth, weather and [wind speed](#) is also being measured to monitor the deterioration of glaciers and other ecological impacts of climate change.

China has conducted six major surveys of the mountain locally known as Qomolangma, registering its height at 8,848.13 meters (29,029 feet) in 1975 and 8,844.43 meters (29,017 feet) in 2005.



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

Last year, too many climbers formed long lines at the summit and some died from lack of oxygen. A total of 876 people climbed the peak in 2019, according to the Himalayan Database.

The absence of climbers this year has caused major hardship among Sherpa guides in Nepal, who have virtually no source of income apart from foreign tourists visiting national parks and high-altitude trekking routes.

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Citation: Chinese survey team plans to summit deserted Everest (2020, May 17) retrieved 4 May 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2020-05-chinese-survey-team-summit-everest.html>

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