

YELLOWSTONE BISON POPULATION MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

This report summarizes management activities associated with implementation of the Record of Decision for the Final Environmental Impact Statement and Bison Management Plan for the State of Montana and Yellowstone National Park for the time period 1 September 2006 through 30 June 2007. The reporting period for this summary is **15 June through 30 June 2007**.

PARKWIDE DISTRIBUTION:

There are very limited bison in Pelican Valley (bulls only) and around the Lakeshore. Most interior bison have moved into Hayden Valley from the geyser basins and Blacktail Deer Plateau. The bison that had been in the Geyser Basin area have moved into Hayden Valley. On the Northern Range bison have been moving back and forth between Lamar Valley and Little America with some movement up the Cache-Calfe ridge.

A parkwide, population count flight was conducted on Thursday, June 14th to determine the abundance and distribution of bison in and adjacent to Yellowstone National Park. Observers in two airplanes counted 4,554 bison, with 1,826 bison on the northern range and 2,728 bison in the central interior portion of the park. Included in these numbers we counted 321 calves of the year on the northern range and 349 calves in the central interior portion of the park. This is the highest northern range count in the previous six years and a fairly low central herd count possibly due to pre-breeding mixing among the north and central breeding populations. We suspect that by late July more bison will have left Blacktail Plateau and other northern range areas to return to Hayden Valley for the breeding season.

This count follows logically with a mild winter of limited winter kill and high recruitment. This is **not** a final summer population estimate, we will perform a population estimate two more times in July and August and use all of the numbers together to provide a much better bison population estimate which may be *higher or lower* than the numbers above.

MANAGEMENT ZONE COUNTS:

NORTHERN MANAGEMENT ZONE	18 December 2006	18 January 2007	24 February 2007	24 March 2007
IBMP Zone 1	4	43	196	4
IBMP Zone 2	0	0	0	0
Eagle Creek SMA	8	0	0	6
Hellroaring/Cottonwood Creek	67	524	307	50
Blacktail Plateau	87	130	255	414
Swan Lake Flats/Gardner's Hole	57	39	65	100
Total For Northern Zone	223	736	823	574
WESTERN MANAGEMENT ZONE	18 December 2006	18 January 2007	24 February 2007	24 March 2007
IBMP Zone 1	5	93	33	428
IBMP Zone 2	4	3	0	2
West of Madison Junction	86	45	150	126
Total for Western Zone	95	141	183	556

HAZING OPERATIONS:

Hazing operations that occur near the North and West Boundaries are primarily conducted and reported by the YNP Division of Resource Management and Visitor Protection and MT Department of Livestock, respectively.

North Boundary Area: 1 hazing event was reported this period.

22 June 2007: 5 mixed bison were released from Stephen’s Creek Capture Facility and hazed to slide lake south of the arch. The hazing was conducted by NPS employees on horseback.

West Boundary Area: 1 hazing event was reported this period.

20 June 2007: 5 mixed bison were hazed from the Horse Butte area to a temporary capture facility north of the West Yellowstone Airport. From there the bison were transported to the Stephen’s Creek Capture Facility on the northern boundary of Yellowstone National Park.

CAPTURE OPERATIONS:

Capture operations that occur near the North and West Boundaries are primarily conducted and reported by the YNP Division of Resource Management and Visitor Protection and MT Department of Livestock, respectively.

North Boundary Area: 0 bison were reported captured

West Boundary Area: 5 bison were reported captured

20 June 2007: 5 mixed bison (1 young bull, 3 cows, 1 calf) were captured at the temporary facility north of the West Yellowstone Airport. These bison were then transported to the Stephen’s Creek Capture Facility on the northern boundary of Yellowstone National Park, held for one day and released without incident on the morning of 22 June 2007.

Bison Transported to Slaughter

<i>Boundary</i>	<i>Bison to Slaughter this reporting period</i>	<i>Total to Slaughter (Sept 1 – pres)</i>
West	0	4
North	0	0

Bison Transported to Quarantine:

<i>Boundary</i>	<i>Bison to Quarantine this reporting period</i>	<i>Total to Quarantine (Sept 1 – pres)</i>
West	0	0
North	0	0

Capture Pen Mortalities:

<i>Boundary</i>	<i>Capture Pen Mortality this reporting period</i>	<i>Total Pen Mortality by this operating season (Sept 1 – pres)</i>
West	0	0
North	0	0

INTERAGENCY BISON MANAGEMENT PLAN SHOOTING OPERATIONS:

<i>Boundary</i>	<i>Bison Shot this reporting period</i>	<i>Total Shot this operating season</i>
West	0	0
North	0	0

HUNTER HARVEST:

<i>Boundary</i>	<i>Total FWP Hunter Take this operating season (Nov 15 – Feb 15)</i>	<i>Total Nez Perce Hunter Take this operating season (Nov 15 – Mar 11)</i>
West	12	0
North	19	28
Total	31	28

Montana Bison Hunt for 2006-2007 administered by the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks closed on February 15, 2007. Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks provided the final numbers for this hunt.

The Nez Perce Tribal Hunt for winter 2007 began on January 10, 2007 and ended on March 11, 2007. Numbers for the Nez Perce Tribal Hunt were based on information from Montana FWP, the Buffalo Field Campaign and individual reports. Confirmation of the harvest numbers was received from the Nez Perce Fish and Wildlife Commission.

FY Year	Boundary	Month	Hazing Events	Mngmt Shootings	Total Captured	Captured & Tested	Slaughtered & Not Tested	Slaughtered & Tested Positive	Slaughtered & Tested Negative	Released/Held & Tested Negative	Released & Not Tested	Vaccinated	Quarantine	Capture/Pen Mortality	Hunter Take
2006	West	September	1	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2006	North	September	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2006	West	November	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
2006	North	November	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
2006	West	December	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
2006	North	December	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
2007	West	January	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5
2007	North	January	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	19
2007	West	February	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2007	North	February	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
2007	West	March	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2007	North	March	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16
2007	West	April	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2007	North	April	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

(summary chart continued on next page)

FY Year	Boundary	Month	Hazing Events	Mngmt Shootings	Total Captured	Captured & Tested	Slaughtered & Not Tested	Slaughtered & Tested Positive	Slaughtered & Tested Negative	Released/Held & Tested Negative	Released & Not Tested	Vaccinated	Quarantine	Capture/Pen Mortality	Hunter Take
2007	West	May	48	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2007	North	May	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2007	West	June	7	0	57	0	0	0	0	0	57	0	0	0	0
2007	North	June	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sum			126	0	61	0	4	0	0	0	57	0	0	0	59

Bold – indicates new data from this reporting period