

YELLOWSTONE BISON POPULATION MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

This report summarizes the 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 October 1, 2002 through September 30, 2003. The reporting period for this summary is **19 April 2003 through 2 May 2003**.

Weather and Snow Pack Conditions

No weather report will be included due to the ending of daily weather reporting from ranger stations in the park as of April 30. There are large areas of bare ground in Hayden Valley but snow depths of 1-2 feet are common in areas. Similar conditions exist in Pelican Valley. Most areas that bison winter on in the northern range are snow free. While much bison spring habitat is snow free or covered by patchy snow, areas where new grass is growing is limited to lower elevations or near thermally influenced areas.

Monitoring

North Boundary Area

Date	Group size & Age/Sex	Location
4/24/03	11 bulls	Eagle Creek-Bear Creek area
4/25/03	1 bull	Blacktail Ponds
4/25/03	2 bulls	Blacktail Ponds
4/25/03	40 mixed	Blacktail Ponds area
4/25/03	4 bulls	Blacktail Ponds area
4/25/03	26 mixed	Blacktail Ponds area
4/25/03	35 mixed	Blacktail Ponds area
4/25/03	15 mixed	Blacktail Ponds area
5/02/03	1 bull	Across from North Entrance Station at Gardiner, MT
5/02/03	7 mixed	Near Slide Lake, just South of Gardiner, MT

West Boundary Area

No monitoring occurred in the West boundary area during this report period.

Hazing

North Boundary Area

On April 24, 2003 three NPS employees hazed two bulls from Stephen's Creek to Mammoth.

West Boundary Area

On April 22, 2003, 8 bulls were hazed from private property back across the park boundary. Two DOL employees performed the operation.

On April 24, 2003, 35 mixed bison, including a two-day-old calf, were hazed from Horse Butte back across the park boundary. Sixteen (16) people took part in the operation: two NPS, seven DOL, three FWP, two FS, and two Gallatin County Sheriff's Deputies.

On April 27, 2003, a total of 77 bison were hazed back into the park. Twenty-three bison (including 1 calf) were hazed from along the Madison River, 53 were hazed from Rainbow Point road along Highway 191, and 1 bull was hazed from the Duck Creek area. One DOL employee conducted the hazing with traffic control assistance provided by West Yellowstone PD.

On April 30, 2003, a total of 213 bison were hazed back into the park. Ninety-two bison were hazed from the Madison River/Rainbow Point road, 98 were hazed from Horse Butte, and 23 bulls were hazed from the Duck Creek area. Thirteen people took part in the operation: two NPS, 1 USFS, 2 FWP, and 8 DOL. During the hazing operation, the hazing crew detected a bison calf mortality. The calf appeared to be already dry and clean and it was collected for necropsy at the FWP laboratory in Bozeman, MT. Necropsy revealed that the calf was stillborn and the lungs had never inflated.

On May 1, 2003, a total of 71 bison were hazed from the Madison River, Madison Arm, Horse Butte, Yellowstone Village and Bakers Hole areas back into the park. Eleven people assisted with the operation: 2 NPS, 1 FWP, and 8 DOL.

On May 2, 2003, 8 bull bison were hazed from the Duck Creek area back into the park. One DOL employee conducted the hazing operation.

Capture and Testing

North Boundary Area

No capture and testing occurred in the North boundary area this reporting period.

West Boundary Area

No capture and testing occurred in the West boundary area this reporting period.

Bison Transported to Slaughter

This reporting period:	0 (West)	Total since October 1, 2002:	12 (West)
	0 (North)		231 (North)

Interagency Bison Management Plan Shooting Operations

Shooting operations may be conducted as part of the Interagency Bison Management Plan (IBMP).

This reporting period:	0 (West)	Total since October 1, 2002:	1 (West)
	0 (North)		0 (North)

Natural Mortality

Observations of natural mortality are usually limited to road corridors, incidental observations by NPS or field research personnel, or occasional observations from aircraft. Not all mortality reports are received in time for inclusion into the appropriate bi-weekly report and therefore are added to future reports.

Natural Mortality this reporting period – **3** Natural Mortality since October 1, 2002 – **29**

- 1 female adult – 4/30/03 – fell through ice**
- 1 unknown yearling – 4/30/03 – fell through ice**
- 1 unknown newborn calf – 4/19/03 – died ~24 hours after birth**
- 1 unknown – 4/16/03 – natural unknown
- 1 female yearling – 4/4/03 – possible drowning
- 1 male calf – 4/4/03 – possible drowning
- 1 female calf – 4/3/03 – natural unknown
- 1 male calf – 4/3/03 – natural unknown
- 1 calf – 3/23/03 – possible wolf kill
- 1 calf – 3/03 – wolf kill

1 unknown – 3/03 – wolf kill
 1 calf – 3/15/03 – wolf kill
 1 unknown – 3/15/03 – possible wolf kill
 1 unknown adult – 3/11/03 – unknown causes
 1 adult bull – 3/6/03 – wolf predation
 1 unknown calf – 3/3/03 – unknown causes
 1 adult female – 2/26/03 – probable wolf kill
 1 adult female – 2/24/03 - winter kill
 1 subadult male – 2/20/03 – fall from cliff
 1 unknown adult – 2/16/03 – unknown causes
 1 adult male – 2/16/03 – unknown causes
 1 adult female - 2/14/03 – possible wolf kill
 1 unknown age/sex – 1/30/03 – unknown causes
 1 unknown adult – 1/30/03 - drowning
 1 adult male – 1/30/03 - drowning
 1 yearling female – 1/23/03 – probable wolf kill
 1 adult male – 12/24/02 – possible wolf kill
 1 adult male (10+ yrs) – 12/02/02 – possible wolf kill
 1 unknown adult – 11/24/02 – drowning

Other Mortality

Observations of OTHER mortalities are usually limited to road corridors, incidental observations by NPS or field research personnel, or occasional observations from aircraft. OTHER mortalities are mortalities that are not covered under Natural Mortalities or Management Removals and may include, but are not limited to, animal/vehicle collisions (MVA), research mortalities, or dispatching of sick or injured animals that pose safety concerns.

OTHER mortality this reporting period – **2** Total since October 1, 2002 – **6**

1 adult cow – 4/13/03 - MVA
1 adult bull – 4/13/03 - MVA
 1 adult male – 3/9/03 – Snowmobile MVA/dispatched
 1 adult female – 3/7/03 – Snowmobile MVA/dispatched
 1 adult female – 11/30/02 - MVA
 1 adult male – 11/14/02 – MVA