



TOM MANGELSEN

# HELP SAVE THE YELLOWSTONE BISON OUR NATIONAL MAMMAL

There are over 500,000 bison in North America. Nearly all of them are livestock or “beefalo,” a hybrid of cattle and bison raised for food. From 11,000 to 13,000 remain in the public trust as wildlife. The wild herds in Yellowstone are unique: they are not landlocked, or living behind fences, or domesticated as livestock. They are the direct descendants of the 30 million bison that roamed wild across North America.

- Prior to the arrival of Europeans, bison inhabited and roamed vast reaches of land covering one-third of North America’s land mass. Hornaday 1889.
- Bison currently occupy <1% of their historical range. Sanderson et al. 2008.
- In the first decades of Euro-American contact with the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem, bison were “spectacularly abundant in lower river valleys and prairie habitats and were all but exterminated” by 1882. Schullery & Whittlesey 2006.
- Because of the severe curtailment and loss of range historically and currently (>99%), bison are “ecologically extinct” and no longer can fulfill their keystone ecological roles in the wild. Freese et al. 2007; Sanderson et al. 2008.
- No self-sustaining herds of wild plains bison exist on National Forest System lands. Warren 2011.
- Bison are near threatened with few populations functioning as wild. Aune, Jørgensen & Gates 2018.
- Traill (2010) and colleagues found that populations of endangered species are unlikely to persist in the face of global climate change and habitat loss unless they number around 5,000 mature individuals or more.
- Just 200 years ago, plains bison *Bison bison* numbered 30–50 million in herds of up to 10,000 animals (Redford & Fearn 2007). By the late 1800s, massive overhunting and land use change reduced the population to roughly 1,000 individuals, <1% of the historical population size. Giglio et al. 2016.

Please help BFC protect Yellowstone bison under the Endangered Species Act.  
**More info [BuffaloFieldCampaign.org](http://BuffaloFieldCampaign.org)**