

## 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. The reporting period for this summary is **20 April to 3 May 2002**.

### Weather and Snowpack Conditions

No weather report due to consistent temperatures above 32 degrees, inconsistent weather reports, and the ending of daily weather reports (April 30).

### Monitoring

National Park Service (NPS) personnel conduct daily road patrols to report bison locations and movements near the northern and western boundary areas. A mixed group of animals represents a cow calf group with some younger bulls and may or may not have any older bulls in the group. Only those dates for which reports were submitted are shown below.

North Boundary Area		
Date	Group size & Age/Sex	Location
20 April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 36 Mixed</li> <li>• 3 Bulls</li> <li>• 6 Mixed</li> <li>• 6 Mixed</li> <li>• 3 Bulls</li> <li>• 6 Bull</li> <li>• 3 Bulls</li> <li>• 1 Bulls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blacktail Deer Plateau</li> <li>• Undine Fall</li> <li>• Blacktail Deer Plateau</li> <li>• Blacktail Deer Plateau</li> <li>• Eagle Creek Campground</li> <li>• Bear Creek</li> <li>• Gardiner River/Yellowstone River</li> <li>• Northeast of Gardiner Airport</li> </ul>
21 April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11 Mixed</li> <li>• 16 Mixed</li> <li>• 25 Mixed</li> <li>• 16 Mixed</li> <li>• 54 Mixed</li> <li>• 15 Mixed</li> <li>• 2 Bulls</li> <li>• 6 Bulls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undine Falls</li> <li>• Undine Falls</li> <li>• Undine Falls</li> <li>• Blacktail Deer Plateau</li> <li>• Blacktail Deer Plateau</li> <li>• Blacktail Deer Plateau</li> <li>• Blacktail Deer Plateau</li> <li>• Blacktail Deer Creek</li> </ul>
22 April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 34 Mixed</li> <li>• 3 Bulls</li> <li>• 32 Mixed</li> <li>• 2 Bulls</li> <li>• 7 Bulls</li> <li>• 2 Bulls</li> <li>• 14 Mixed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wraith Falls</li> <li>• Blacktail Deer Creek</li> <li>• Near YCC Camp</li> <li>• Swan Lake</li> <li>• Swan Lake Flats</li> <li>• Golden Gate</li> <li>• Near YCC Camp</li> </ul>
23 April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 27 Mixed</li> <li>• 74 Mixed</li> <li>• 2 Bulls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swan Lake</li> <li>• Blacktail Deer Plateau</li> <li>• Lower Mammoth</li> </ul>
24 April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 Bulls</li> <li>• 1 Bull</li> <li>• 26 Mixed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blacktail Deer Plateau</li> <li>• Blacktail Creek</li> <li>• Blacktail Deer Plateau</li> </ul>
25 April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 Bulls</li> <li>• 8 Mixed</li> <li>• 45 Mixed</li> <li>• 5 Bulls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rusty Creek</li> <li>• Blacktail Deer Plateau</li> <li>• YCC Camp</li> <li>• Blacktail Deer Plateau</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 Bulls</li> <li>• 16 Mixed</li> <li>• 12 Mixed</li> <li>• 7 Mixed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blacktail Deer Plateau</li> <li>• Swan Lake Flats</li> <li>• Swan Lake Flats</li> <li>• Swan Lake Flats</li> </ul>
27 April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 Bulls</li> <li>• 20 Mixed</li> <li>• 7 Bulls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Near High Bridge</li> <li>• Blacktail Deer Plateau</li> <li>• Swan Lake Flats</li> </ul>
28 April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 Mixed</li> <li>• 26 Mixed</li> <li>• 27 Mixed</li> <li>• 28 Mixed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blacktail Deer Plateau</li> <li>• Blacktail Deer Plateau</li> <li>• Blacktail Deer Creek</li> <li>• Blacktail Deer Plateau</li> </ul>
29 April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 41 Mixed</li> <li>• 7 Mixed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undine Falls</li> <li>• Blacktail Deer Plateau</li> </ul>
30 April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 Bulls</li> <li>• 40 Mixed</li> <li>• 36 Mixed</li> <li>• 6 Bulls</li> <li>• 2 Bulls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gardiner River</li> <li>• Blacktail Deer Plateau</li> <li>• Blacktail Deer Creek</li> <li>• Blacktail Deer Plateau</li> <li>• Crag Rock</li> </ul>
1 May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 Bulls</li> <li>• 1 Bull</li> <li>• 48 Mixed</li> <li>• 16 Mixed</li> <li>• 2 Bulls</li> <li>• 20 Mixed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swan Lake</li> <li>• Mammoth</li> <li>• Blacktail Deer Plateau</li> <li>• Blacktail Deer Plateau</li> <li>• Wraith Falls</li> <li>• Blacktail Deer Creek</li> </ul>
2 May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 Mixed</li> <li>• 63 Mixed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Swan Lake Flats</li> <li>• Wraith Falls</li> </ul>
3 May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 Bulls</li> <li>• 65 Mixed</li> <li>• 4 Bulls</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wraith Falls</li> <li>• Blacktail Deer Plateau</li> <li>• Blacktail Deer Plateau</li> </ul>

### West Boundary Area

Only those dates for which reports were submitted are shown below.

Date	Group size / Age / Sex	Location
20 April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 Mixed</li> <li>• 15 Mixed</li> <li>• 15 Mixed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Madison River</li> <li>• Cougar Creek</li> <li>• Cougar Creek</li> </ul>
22 April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 Bull</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Madison River</li> </ul>
24 April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 37 Mixed</li> <li>• 19 Mixed</li> <li>• 6 Mixed</li> <li>• 12 Mixed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Madison River</li> <li>• Madison River</li> <li>• Cougar Creek</li> <li>• West of Cougar Creek</li> </ul>
25 April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 Mixed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cougar Creek</li> </ul>
26 April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 Mixed</li> <li>• 5 Mixed</li> <li>• 1 Mixed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Madison River</li> <li>• Madison River</li> <li>• Madison River</li> </ul>

## Hazing

### North Boundary Area

No hazing occurred in the North Boundary Area.

### West Boundary Area

On April 23 a total of 35 bison were hazed. 25 mixed bison were hazed from Horse Butte, 2 bulls from Duck Creek, and a mixed group of 8 bison were hazed from Cougar Creek. NPS personnel assisted at the request of the Montana Department of Livestock.

On April 24, 25 cows and yearlings were hazed to the Horse Butte capture facility. 14 bison were hazed, with only 8 being captured in the Duck Creek trap. NPS personnel assisted with the hazing operation at the request of the MTDOL.

On April 29, NPS personnel assisted with a hazing operation that began at the Madison River Bridge on US 91. Bison were hazed to Horse Butte trap. Another large group was hazed to the Horse Butte trap from Horse Butte. A total of 79 bison were trapped this day.

May 2, NPS personnel assisted with four different hazing operations on this day. In one operation, 16 bison were hazed up Duck Creek to the park boundary. 70-80 bison were hazed 1 mile into the park boundary, at the Duck Creek and Madison River area. A large group of bison was hazed from the Horse Butte area, up the Madison River drainage, into the park. A helicopter, contracted by MT DOL, was used this day in assisting with hazing.

## Capture and Testing

### North Boundary Area

No capture and testing was conducted at the Stephens Creek area during this time period.

### West Boundary Area

On 23 April all animals captured at the Horse Butte facility, were transported and tested at the Duck Creek facility. One previously collared cow, and one cow/calf pair that were released, and 32 were sent to slaughter. One cow suffered a broken leg, and was dispatched to a DOL lab for research.

On 29 April a total of 79 bison were trapped this day. These bison were transported to the Duck Creek trap and held over night, prior to being transported to slaughter. Of the 79, 72 were sent to slaughter the following day. 2 cows, and 2 new born calves were released, along with 3 collared research cows.

## Bison Transported to Slaughter

This reporting period – 104 (MTDOL)	Total for this winter – 170 (MTDOL)
0 (NPS)	0 (NPS)

## Interagency Bison Management Plan Shooting Operations

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

This reporting period – 0 (MTDOL)	Total for this winter – 1 (MTDOL)
0 (NPS)	0 (NPS)

## 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. During this reporting period there were six naturally occurring bison mortalities reported. The total number of known natural mortalities this winter has increased from 34 to 40.

Natural Mortality this reporting period – 6      Natural Mortality for this winter – 40

Natural Mortalities:

- 1 adult female – 4/26/02 – Obsidian Cliff (unknown causes)**
- 1 adult female – 4/22/02 – underneath the Firehole River Bridge, near Craig Pass (drowning)**
- 1 yearling female – 4/22/02 – behind the Old Faithful cabins, across the Firehole River (unknown causes)**
- 1 adult bull – 4/22/02 – behind the boardwalk near the Old Faithful Geyser trail/boardwalk (unknown causes)**
- 1 young of the year – 4/22/02 - Daisey Geyser Trailhead, along the Firehole River (stillborn?)**
- 1 adult bull – 4/21/02 – Biscuit Basin (unknown causes)**
- 1 young of the year – 4/12/02 – Blacktail Ponds (unknown causes)
- 1 adult female – 4/12/02 – Blacktail Ponds (unknown causes)
- 1 adult female – 4/11/02 – along Sentinal Creek (winterkill)
- 1 adult female – 4/11/02 – near Queens Laundry (wolf predation)
- 1 young of the year (unknown) – 4/11/02 – Sentinal Meadow (wolf predation)
- 1 adult female – 4/11/02 – across river from Excelsior Geyser runoff (pregnancy complications?)
- 1 young of the year (unknown) – 4/9/02 - (unknown causes)
- 1 young of the year (unknown) – 4/8/02 – (winterkill)
- 1 sub-adult female – 4/8/02 – Canyon employee trailer park (winterkill)
- 1 unknown adult – 4/3/02 – Pelican Creek just north of Footbridge (unknown causes)
- 1 newborn calf (unknown) – 4/3/02 – 1 mile west of Tanker Curve (abortion/stillborn)
- 1 young of the year female – 3/28/02 – behind Fishing Bridge Hamilton Store (winterkill)
- 1 adult female – 3/27/02 - Bridge Bay Flats on Lake shore (winterkill)
- 1 bull-3/22/02- Trout Creek (winterkill)
- 1 unknown –3/14/02 - Hellroaring (wolf predation)
- 1 adult female – 2/28/02 - ~1/4 mile west of Madison Junction (winterkill)
- 1 adult female – 2/27/02 – Steamboat Point (winterkill)
- 1 unknown adult – 2/27/02 – Ojo Caliente (unknown causes)
- 1 adult female – 2/24/02 – West of Lamar River Bridge (probable predation)
- 1 unknown adult bison – 2/14/02 - Hillside Springs area near Old Faithful (winterkill)
- 1 cow – 2/14/02 - Midway Geyser Basin (winterkill)
- 1 calf – 2/14/02 - Norris Geyser Basin (probable predation)
- 1 adult female- 2/13/02 – 100 Springs Plane, Norris Geyser Basin (winterkill)
- 1 unknown adult bison – 2/5/02 - Pelican Valley (probable predation)
- 1 unknown adult bison – 2/5/02 - Pelican Valley (probable predation)
- 1 cow – 2/1/02 - Norris Geyser Basin (winterkill)
- 1 calf- 1/31/02 - East of Slough Creek Campground Entrance (abortion)
- 1 calf – 1/24/02 Mary Bay - (wolf predation)
- 1 adult cow bison – 1/11/02 - (winterkill)
- 1 adult bull bison – 12/25/01 - (winterkill)
- 1 unknown adult bison – 12/8/01- Pelican Valley (probable predation)
- 1 unknown adult bison – end of November – Clearwater Creek Campground (unknown causes)
- 1 adult cow – 27 Mar 02 - Observed at Bridge Bay near road
- 1 calf (very young) – Observed along Madison River

## 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. One OTHER mortality (dispatch of a captured bison cow with a broken leg) occurred during this reporting period. The total number of OTHER mortalities increased from five to six.

This reporting period – 1	Total for this winter – 6...	1 cow – 4/23/02 – Dispatched (broken leg)
		1 cow – 1/25/02 - Dispatched (sick)
		1 calf – 1/2/02 - Snowmobile MVA
		1 bull – 9/24/01 - MVA
		1 unknown bison – 9/20/01 - MVA
		1 bull – 9/2/01 – MVA