

2017 Wild Bison Hunting Information



MANDATORY REPORTING

Wyoming Game and Fish Commission (WGF) regulation requires that you report, via submission of a Hunter Information Card, the sex, age class (calf or adult) and location of your harvest within three days (72 hours) of taking a wild bison to the Jackson Regional Office. **If you are unsuccessful, you must still submit a completed Bison Hunter Information Card to the Jackson Regional Office within three days (72 hours) of the end of the season.** For 2017, you will also be required to submit biological samples which include blood for brucellosis testing and the two front incisor teeth for aging data along with your Hunter Information Card that will be provided in a sampling kit available from the Jackson Regional WGF Office, Jackson WGF field personnel, Refuge personnel and Double Diamond Tag-n-Drag. Complete all the information requested on the tooth envelope, in April you will be able to log onto the tooth aging database on the WGF website using your bison license number to get the age analysis. When you drop off the tooth envelope, blood vial and Bison Hunter Information Card at the Jackson Regional Office, (either during office hours at the front desk, or after hours in the cooler by the east door) you have fulfilled the

FAILURE TO SUBMIT THE Hunter Information Card WILL RESULT IN A CITATION.

Bison Management

Wild bison are designated as “wildlife” by the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission and Wyoming Livestock Board. The Jackson Wild Bison Hunt Area excludes Grand Teton National Park (GTNP), John D. Rockefeller Jr. Memorial Parkway and Yellowstone National Park. The majority of the bison herd is distributed in GTNP during the summer and fall months. Small groups of bison sporadically utilize Bridger-Teton National Forest (BTNF) lands east of GTNP, (Shadow Mountain and Blackrock/Spread Creek areas) during the summer and fall. Typically in late November or December, cow/calf groups begin seasonal movements toward the National Elk Refuge (NER).

Hunting Access Restrictions for Area 2 (Jackson)

Bison hunting in the Jackson area is limited to a portion of the NER as well as lands of the BTNF, small parcels of state owned land outside the jurisdictional boundary of GTNP and potentially some private lands with landowner permission. One complication of this bison hunt is the animals often roam between lands that are open to hunting and lands of GTNP and the John D. Rockefeller Jr. Memorial Parkway, where bison hunting is **not** allowed. Because bison are often drifting from open hunting areas to closed areas, it is imperative that you become very familiar with the boundaries to ensure you are hunting on land open to bison hunting. We encourage you to call or come to the Jackson Regional Office to verify boundaries and Forest Service access points, get updated information about bison movements or clarify rules and regulations for the bison hunt.

A limited number of bison hunters will be issued permits to access a portion of the NER for each hunt period. Refer to the enclosed Harvest Comparison spreadsheet to assist you with historical migration information. August harvest takes place on or within a few days of the August 15 opener. After that initial harvest, there is essentially no opportunity on the NER until the migration. You will see in the spreadsheet that the migration takes place late in the season, in recent years somewhere between late November and late December. Generally, weather and forage conditions dictate bison movements, and every year is different. A National Elk Refuge bison access permit is required to hunt on the NER, information about permits and how to obtain them is included in this packet. These permits are issued through the WGF Hunter Management Area program at <https://wgfd.wyo.gov/Public-Access/Access-Yes>. All information about permits and hunt periods is available in this mailing or at <https://wgfd.wyo.gov/Hunting/Wild-Bison-Hunting-Information>.

Starting December 1st, BTNF lands in Jackson Hole begin closing to protect wildlife and habitat. South of the Gros Ventre River and east of the NER, much of the Forest is closed to human presence. BTNF lands north of the Gros Ventre River remain open to vehicular and foot traffic until December 15th. Thereafter, travel restrictions are in place, with some allowances for motorized travel on designated routes. Hunters should refer to the Blackrock and Jackson Ranger District maps for the BTNF, which can be purchased from the Jackson Interagency Visitor Center at 460 N. Cache. Vehicle use maps are also available online at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/btnf/maps-pubs>.

Should a wounded bison move onto GTNP, or closed NER or BTNF lands, do not pursue the animal. IMMEDIATELY contact the GTNP Interagency dispatch at 307-739-3301 and authorized personnel will direct you in the recovery of the animal.

Stalking and Selecting Your Bison

As with other wild animals, how close you can approach a bison depends on the amount of cover, your stalking ability, and the wariness of the animal. Naturally, the closer you are, the better the chance of making a clean, quick kill. Bison can be dangerous animals and it is important that you recognize signs of agitation in an animal to avoid getting injured. Typical signs of agitation include a raised tail, snorting and scraping of the ground with the front hooves.

It is possible you may encounter a large herd of bison. If so, it is advised you select an animal away from the herd to avoid losing it among the others if it is wounded and able to run off. The bottom line is to take your time and study the animals before pulling the trigger.

Distinguishing cows from yearling bulls can be difficult. If you hold a Type 4 cow/calf license, it is recommended you spend time prior to your hunt observing bison in the field. Groups of bison are easily visible from the road in GTNP in the Antelope Flats and Elk Ranch areas. You are also strongly encouraged to review and take the Bison Identification Exam on the Game and Fish website <https://wgfd.wyo.gov/bisonid/default.aspx>. Taking the wrong sex bison will likely result in a citation and possible seizure of the animal. **In 2016, there were 17 bison confiscated from hunters due to misidentification!** Look for all the identifying characteristics – circumference of horn bases, shape of head, penile sheath are all clues, don't base your decision to shoot on only one physical characteristic. When in doubt, don't shoot.

Recovering Your Bison From the Field

IF YOU ARE CONSIDERING CARCASS RETRIEVAL SERVICES, BE SURE YOU ARE IN CONTACT WITH THEM PRIOR TO YOUR HUNT. RETRIEVAL SERVICES MAY OR MAY NOT BE AVAILABLE AT ALL TIMES DURING THE SEASON, ESPECIALLY PRIOR TO NOVEMBER 1st.

The American bison is the largest land mammal in North America. Most hunters do not fully appreciate the size and undertaking of field dressing such an animal until they've actually done it. Do not underestimate the amount of work involved in recovering your bison from the field. It is absolutely imperative that the meat be cooled as quickly as possible to avoid spoilage. As with big game animals, such as elk or moose, the neck meat is particularly susceptible to spoilage and the massive neck on a bison makes it far more difficult to cool.

There is only one access for retrieval of bison across lands administered by GTNP, refer to the GTNP retrieval map included in this packet. On the NER, successful bison hunters may access NER retrieval roads by vehicle once their animal is down. All NER regulations and restrictions available from the NER website or when you print your NER permit when you successfully apply for and receive your NER permit through the online application process.

Meat Processors in Jackson Region	Retrieval Services Operating on National Elk Refuge	Retrieval Services Operating on National Forest
<p>Matt's Custom Meats 1655 Berger Lane, Jackson 208-690-9381</p> <p>Dana's Cold Storage 50 Westwood, Thayne, WY 307-883-2397</p>	<p>Double Diamond Tag-n-Drag 307- 248-1490</p>	<p>Blackrock Ranger District/ Spread Creek Contact Blackrock RD – 307-543-2386</p> <p>Jackson Ranger District – Gros Ventre Contact Jackson RD – 307-739-5400</p>

If you have questions about Refuge-specific topics, please feel free to contact the National Elk Refuge hunt line 307-201-5437 and leave a message, a Refuge Officer will return your call.