

BISON



FACTS

Symbols of strength and determination, bison are Ice Age survivors. Clearing away snow and brush with their massive heads, they weigh up to 2,000 pounds and can run up to 40 miles per hour. Once numbering 30 million-60 million in North America, their numbers were decimated in just a few decades as expansion pressed westward. No other species on Earth has declined so quickly. Several Native American tribes are working with WWF to grow bison numbers once again across vast grasslands under their management.

WHY THEY MATTER

Historically bison were the dominant grazer on the Northern Great Plains landscape. This dominance shaped the landscape by affecting the pattern and structure of the grasses and vegetation that grew. Expansive areas of native grasslands allowed animals to flourish along with many species of other prairie wildlife.

THREATS

The plains bison is the largest land mammal in North America with some adult bulls weighing in excess of 2,000 pounds. Tens of millions of these iconic animals once roamed across much of North America. Today, the largest remaining wild herd of approximately 4,500 individuals can be found in Yellowstone National Park. Large North American grazers including the plains bison traditionally roamed across millions of acres, which kept the grasslands and herds healthy and diverse. However, early settlement and current land use by present-day communities have redefined where these large animals are able to roam. WWF's Northern Great Plains Program is working with National Parks, native tribal communities, and its ranching partners to find common ground on returning bison to suitable intact prairie landscapes.

PROTECTION

WWF is identifying opportunities and creating places where bison can thrive in large herds (numbering over 1,000 bison) on vast landscapes in the Northern Great Plains, the heart of the plains bison's historic range. We are partnering with the Oglala Lakota to create the nation's first tribal national park and restore a herd of bison to ancestral homelands. We work with Fort Peck Reservation, Fort Belknap Reservation, and Yellowstone National Park to conserve the genetically important bison from the Park by supporting the movement of animals into new landscapes where they are welcome. We also engage in research and public outreach activities aimed at reminding the American public why bison, symbols of strength and determination, are so critical to the restoration of the American prairie.

All information comes directly from the World Wildlife Fund Website

