

2016 Wild Bison Hunting Information

MANDATORY REPORTING

Wyoming Game and Fish Commission regulation requires that you report 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 2016, you will also be required to submit biological samples which include blood for brucellosis testing and the two front incisors for aging data along with your Hunter Information Card that will be provided in a sampling kit available from the Jackson Regional Office or Jackson Regional field personnel. The mailing address for the Jackson Office is PO Box 67, Jackson, WY 83001.

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 during the late summer and fall and cow/calf groups begin seasonal movements to the National Elk Refuge (NER), Shadow Mountain, and Spread Creek areas during this time.

Hunting Access Restrictions for Area 2 (Jackson)

In 2007, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) began working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to identify areas open to bison hunting on the NER. 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. Biological sampling kits will be available at the Jackson Regional Office throughout the bison season, please contact us at (307) 733-2321 to arrange to get a kit. The tooth envelope shows a diagram of the two teeth we need to collect to determine age. Complete all the information requested on the envelope, this will ensure that you get the results of our lab’s age analysis a few months after your harvest. 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 requirement for reporting your harvest.

A limited number of bison hunters will be issued permits to access a portion of the NER for each hunt period. To apply for a bison hunting permit to hunt on the NER, hunters must complete an application online between July 11 – July 29, initially applying for only one hunt period. The results of the computerized random draw will be posted on the application website by 11:00 a.m. on August 1. Permits will be issued through the WGFD Hunter Management Area program at <https://wgfd.wyo.gov/public-access>. All information about alternate permits and hunt periods is available through this website as well.

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 traffic through December 15th. Thereafter, travel restrictions are in place, with some allowances for motorized travel on designated routes. Hunters should refer to Blackrock and Jackson Ranger Districts map for the BTNF, which can be purchased from the Jackson Interagency Visitor Center at 460 North Cache. Vehicle use maps are 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. 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 could result in a citation and possible seizure of the animal.

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 other 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 limited access for retrieval of bison across lands administered by GTNP, refer to the GTNP retrieval map. On the NER, successful bison hunters may access NER retrieval roads by vehicle once their animal is down. All NER regulations and restrictions are included with 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
Hog Island Meats 7700 S. Highway 89, Jackson 307-413-0343	Double Diamond Tag-n-Drag 307-413-7226	Blackrock Ranger District Spread Creek permittees Contact Blackrock RD – 307-543-2386
Matt’s Custom Meats 1655 Berger Lane, Jackson 307-733-4026 or 208-690-9381	Trefren Outfitters 307-883-3400	Jackson Ranger District – Gros Ventre Contact Jackson RD – 307-739-5400
Dana’s Cold Storage 50 Westwood, Thayne, WY 307-883-2397		