

# 2020 WILD BISON HUNTING INFORMATION— JACKSON REGION

## Where is an Area 2 bison license valid?

- Primarily on Bridger-Teton National Forest (BTNF) and National Elk Refuge (NER) lands in Teton County. There is NO bison hunting allowed in Grand Teton National Park (GTNP) at any time.
- Bison tend to stay in GTNP where they are safe for most of the hunting season. Occasionally throughout the season bison, typically bulls, will cross onto lands where hunting is permitted. Cows, calves, and bulls typically move onto the NER very late in the season. You need to be familiar with the boundaries and seasonal closures of all land management agencies and be sure both you and the bison are in a legal hunt area.
- Private land bison hunting opportunities are extremely rare in the Jackson Region, a landowner may contact the Wyoming Game and Fish Jackson Regional Office (WGF-JRO) to coordinate some limited hunting opportunity. Bison on private lands can only be pursued if the hunter obtains landowner permission.

## Is bison hunting allowed in GTNP?

- No, bison hunting is not permitted on GTNP. Elk hunting is allowed only to those in possession of an Area 75 elk license as set forth in the enabling Legislation that created GTNP in 1950.

## What if a wounded bison goes into GTNP?

- **STOP!** Do not pursue or shoot at a wounded bison on GTNP.
- You must call Teton Interagency Dispatch at 307-739-3301 to request permission, which may or may not be granted.

## What is a good, detailed map for Area 2 bison?

- There are bison hunt specific maps included in this mailing.
- For a hard copy map, BTNF maps available at the Forest Service Office or the Multi-agency Visitors Center, WGF-JRO on N. Cache Street in Jackson.
- Digital maps include OnX maps or Avenza maps and can be downloaded on to your phone or Garmin GPS. See the attached page “Other Useful Resources”.

## What is needed to hunt bison?

- A current year bison license.
- A current year conservation stamp - unless you are exempt.
- A Hunter Safety card - unless you are exempt.
- A fluorescent orange or pink garment, unfaded and visible from all directions. There is no archery season for bison so you are always required to wear a fluorescent orange or pink garment.
- A biological sampling kit, this should be picked up from WGF-JRO which includes a blood tube, tooth envelope and Hunter Information Card. **Submission of these items at the end of your hunt is mandatory, successful or not.**
- Legal firearm or archery equipment as defined in **Chapter 15, Wild Bison Recreational Hunting** regulation included in this mailing.



## When is the bison season open in Area 2?

- Wild bison hunting season begins August 15<sup>th</sup> and continues through January 31<sup>st</sup> if conditions allow.
- On December 1<sup>st</sup>, many of the BTNF lands adjacent to the NER and GTNP begin seasonal closures. These closures may be for an array of restrictions from ‘no motorized travel’ to ‘closed to human presence’, you will need to contact the Bridger-Teton National Forest Service to determine where and to what extent these closures are in effect.
- Beginning January 2<sup>nd</sup>, access to the NER may be closed with 48 hours’ notice if weather or snow conditions dictate that supplemental elk feeding is needed. For this reason, you cannot apply for NER permits for January, they are issued first-come, first-served through the WGF-JRO in January on a day-to-day basis. You can come in or call the WGF-JRO to reserve a permission slip within a day or two of your planned arrival.

## Is an outfitter necessary to hunt bison?

- Bison do not typically reside in wilderness areas in hunt area 2, therefore you are not required to have a guide or outfitter. Most outfitters in the Jackson Region are permitted to guide and/or retrieve on BTNF lands, the only permitted outfitter/retrieval service for the NER - Double Diamond Tag n’ Drag.
- We would suggest you contact retrieval services in advance of your hunt in the event you need them to assist with recovering a harvested bison.
- You can self-hunt for bison, just realize it is a big undertaking, especially if the weather is warm and you need to get the bison out of the field quickly.

## What are the regulations for and how can we get access to hunt the NER?

- This packet contains step-by-step instructions for applying for NER access titled “NER Permit Application Process”.
- See the included “National Elk Refuge Bison Hunting Information and Regulations” brochure.
- As a general rule, NER regulations are very similar to Wyoming State regulations, with a few exceptions. Be sure to read and thoroughly understand the NER regulations prior to your hunt.

## How many wild bison are in the Jackson Region?

- The Jackson Bison Herd has a management objective of 500 animals post hunt. We currently are slightly above 500 animals and with anticipated calf production this spring, assume that there will be ~650 animals in the population this fall.

## When do bison migrate to the NER?

- Migration is weather-dependent, it typically takes an extended stretch of severe winter weather to move bison.
- As with any other hunt, you are responsible for doing your research and staying in touch with local resources to determine hunting opportunities.
- The NER has a hotline number, 307-201-5437, that we recommend you contact for recorded updates. This message will change only as conditions change so there could be considerable time between updates on bison movements to the NER.
- WGF-JRO also has a hotline number, 307-249-5808, which focuses primarily on updates and harvest opportunities off the NER in addition to NER harvest information.

## Stalking and selecting your bison

- As with other wild animals, how closely 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. Refer to the enclosed information titled **“Know the Difference”** that gives some information to help with identifying age class and sex of bison and some pictures of shot placement.
- Distinguishing between male and female bison is difficult and requires practice. We highly recommend that you review the Bison ID Exam at <https://wgfapps.wyo.gov/bisonid/default> . Also, 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 usually visible from the road in the Elk Ranch area of GTNP south of Moran.
- 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.
- Taking the wrong sex of 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, curvature of horns, shape of head, and penile sheath are all clues. Don't base your decision to shoot on only one physical characteristic. When in doubt, don't shoot.



## What if I shoot the wrong sex bison?

- In the unfortunate event that a bison is misidentified and a wrong sex bison is harvested the hunter is required to contact Teton Interagency Dispatch at 307-739-3301. They will find a Game Warden or NER Law Enforcement Officer to assist you.

## What do I need to do once I harvest a bison?

- Jackson bison can carry brucellosis, which is a disease that can be transmitted to humans. It is recommended that you protect yourself from exposure by wearing latex gloves while field dressing your bison and avoiding contact with reproductive organs (such as the uterus) in cow bison.
- Field dress and skin your bison as quickly as you can. The hide is very thick, you will want to open up the animal and skin back around the neck and shoulders quickly to cool the meat and avoid spoilage. You may quick quarter your bison as long as you take all edible portions of meat as defined in **Chapter 15, Wild Bison Recreational Hunting** regulation included in this packet. This means “the meat of the front quarters as far down as the knees, the meat of the hindquarters as far down as the hocks, and the meat along the backbone between the neck and hindquarters including the loins and tenderloins, excluding meat on the ribs and neck”.
- Collect the required samples, and return these items to the WGF-JRO within 72 hours of harvest. If a blood sample is required, fill the blood tube with flowing arterial blood, not pooled or coagulated blood from the body cavity. Try to keep the blood from freezing or getting too hot, putting the full vial back into the Ziploc bag and then into an inside vest or jacket pocket works well. It's best to turn biological samples in as soon as possible to the front counter of the WGF-JRO during business hours, or to the insulated box at the East door of the labeled “Bison Harvest Samples”.
- Complete your Hunter Information Card and return along with your samples if successful. **If unsuccessful, the Hunter Information Card is still required to be returned by mail, to the front office or to the drop box for Bison Harvest Samples within 3 days of the end of the bison season. Be sure to complete the top portion with name, address and number of days hunted.**

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Teton Interagency Dispatch

307-739-3301

Stop Poaching 877-943-3847

WGF-JRO 307-733-2321

WGF hotline 307-249-5808

NER 307-733- 9212

NER hotline 307-201-5437

Tag n' Drag 307-248-1490

Matt's Meats 208-690-9381

