

APPENDIX B — FWS Determination on the status of wood bison in Alaska under the Endangered Species Act



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Washington, D.C. 20240



In Reply Refer To:
FWS/AIA/018417

OCT 26 2004

Mr. Kevin C. Duffy
Commissioner
Department of Fish and Game
P.O. Box 25526
Juneau, Alaska 99802-5526

Dear Mr. Duffy:

Thank you for your letter of August 2, 2004, concerning the import of wood bison into Alaska, and your request to clarify the status of wood bison under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) should they be imported to Alaska.

We note that there has been considerable confusion over this issue due to the historic listing designation of the species (35 FR 8495; June 2, 1970) and the subsequent publication of our Distinct Population Segment Policy (61 FR 4722-4725, Feb. 7, 1996), some 26 years later.

The wood bison is listed as a foreign species throughout its known range (Canada) at the time of listing. As such, any imports would be treated consistently with all imports of foreign listed species into the United States. An ESA import permit is required to import Canada wood bison into the United States, and commercial movement within the United States, outside of Alaska, would be controlled through ESA interstate commerce permits. These individuals and their progeny would remain under the jurisdiction of the ESA for import, export, and interstate commerce purposes, as long as the wood bison continues to be listed in Canada.

Within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, foreign species listings and all permitting issues for foreign species are handled routinely by our International Affairs Program, and they would be happy to provide assistance to your staff to outline the permit requirements. As you are aware, the wood bison is included on Appendix II of CITES, and export permits from Canada will be required for any animals imported into Alaska. We would be happy to work with our colleagues in Canada to assist with your CITES permit application as well.

For your information, biologists in the International Affairs Program have been working directly with the Canada Wood Bison Recovery Team to track the continued recovery of wood bison in Canada, in order to ensure the current listing accurately reflects the status of the species. We will keep you informed of any contemplated changes in that listing that may affect your proposed importation.

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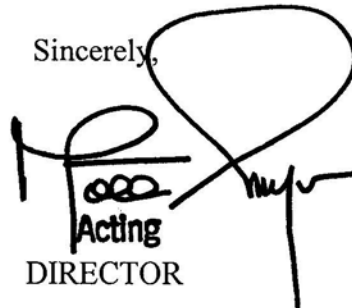
Mr. Kevin C. Duffy

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We concur with your opinion that the listing of the wood bison in Canada under the ESA does not need to be modified to add the imported population of wood bison in Alaska as endangered or threatened. We intend to treat any wood bison imported into Alaska as a foreign listed species and have no intention of revising the list so that they are listed domestically.

We look forward to learning more of your proposed importation of wood bison to Alaska. Please feel free to contact Kenneth Stansell, the Assistant Director for International Affairs, at 202-208-6393, regarding the permits issue, and if I can be of future assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely,



Acting
DIRECTOR