

**BISON
ANNUAL SURVEY AND INVENTORY**

STATE: Alaska

GRANT AND SEGMENT NO. W-33-12

PROJECT NO. 9.0

PERIOD: 1 July 2013 – 30 June 2014

PROJECT LOCATION: Statewide

PROJECT TITLE: The Status of Bison and Factors Influencing Their Populations

REPORT DESCRIPTION: This performance report describes bison survey and inventory activities. Regionwide activities are listed before specific activities by game management unit.

**The Status of Bison
and Factors Influencing Their Populations in Region III**

Regionwide Activities

ACTIVITY 1: Provide bison management information to State and Federal regulatory processes.

Provided information to McGrath and Delta Fish and Game advisory committees.

ACTIVITY 2: Monitor harvest from permit hunts and analyze harvest data.

Monitored and analyzed preliminary harvest of 75 bison by 95 hunters from the Delta herd and 6 bison by 10 hunters from the Farwell herd.

ACTIVITY 3 Maintain a sample of radiocollared bison to monitor the herd distribution and movements.

Monitored 37 radiocollared bison in the Farewell herd and 9 radiocollared bison in the Delta herd.

Activities by Herd:

Units 19C and 19D the Farewell Herd:

ACTIVITY 1: Conduct ground or aerial surveys to assess population distribution, size and sex and age composition.

Conducted aerial minimum population estimation surveys in April 2014 and found 281 adult bison plus 4 newborn calves; 271 total; and in June 2014 and found 319 adult bison plus 85 newborn calves; 404 total.

Unit 20D the Delta Herd:

ACTIVITY 1: Conduct ground or aerial surveys to assess population distribution, size and sex and age composition.

Conducted aerial surveys to estimate the fall pre-hunt herd size of 460 bison. Composition counts were accomplished and the sex ratio objective was met. The Delta bison herd had composition of 53 bulls:100 cows and 38 calves:100 cows.

ACTIVITY 2: Monitor timing of bison movements from the summer range to the Delta Junction Bison Range (DJBR) and Delta agricultural lands.

Delta bison herd movements were monitored to determine bison moved from summer range to the DJBR on 29 July 2013 and individual bison began moving from the DJBR to private agricultural lands on 13 August 2013.

ACTIVITY 3: Plant and fertilize preferred bison forage species and control invasive, non-desirable species within the DJBR.

Planted oats on approximately 360 acres; fertilized 700 acres of perennial grasses; and mowed 380 acres of brush.

ACTIVITY 4: Provide trace mineral and water supplements within the DJBR.

Provided 15 trace element mineral blocks and kept 4 stock tanks full of water during July–September 2013 (bison drank approximately 14,000 gallons of water).

ACTIVITY 5: Monitor forage quality within the DJBR

Forage quality monitoring was not accomplished due to reduction in personnel.

ACTIVITY 6: Collect biological samples from hunter-killed bison for genetic analysis and disease screening.

Skeletal muscle tissue was collected from 75 harvested bison for genetics research. Lung tissue was collected from 50 bison for respiratory disease screening.

ACTIVITY 7: Conduct bison presence and crop field assessment surveys on private farm land.

Conducted 2 aerial bison presence and crop field assessment surveys on privately-owned agricultural land located within the Delta bison herd range.

The Status of Bison and Factors Influencing Their Populations in Region IV

PROJECT LOCATION: Game Management Unit 11

Regionwide:

ACTIVITY 1: Prepare biennial bison management report.

The biennial bison management report was drafted and submitted to the region for review.

ACTIVITY 2: Monitor the harvest of bison from the permit hunts and analyze harvest data.

2013-2014 Harvest	Permittees	Hunters	Males	Total harvest
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Unit 11 Chitina River	2	2	2	2 <i>bison</i>
Unit 11 and 13D Copper River	24	13	3 (60%)	5 <i>bison</i>

Activities by Unit:

Unit 11 Chitina River and Copper River Herds

ACTIVITY 1: Monitor the harvest of bison from the permit hunts and analyze harvest data.

See table above.

ACTIVITY 2: Conduct aerial sex and age population composition surveys to determine status trend productivity and mortality of bison.

Chitina River Herd - June 2014: 51 total bison, 46 adults and 5 calves

Copper River Herd - June 2014: 115 total bison, 94 adults and 21 calves

Submitted by: Lem Butler, Region IV Regional Supervisor

Date: 20 August 2014