



News Release

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New wood bison herd released onto Minto Flats State Game Refuge

(Fairbanks, AK) On May 13th, 61 wood bison, including 1 newborn calf were released into the wild 50 miles southwest of Fairbanks on the Minto Flats State Game Refuge, establishing the second wild population of wood bison in the United States. This new herd is called the Lower Tanana wood bison herd.

The animals were barged to the area last summer and held in a 100-acre soft-release pen over the winter. With the flush of new green vegetation, the gates were opened and the bison set free. "This is a very exciting moment for international wood bison conservation", said wood bison biologist, Tom Seaton. Their release onto the Minto Flats State Game Refuge marks a significant contribution towards returning wood bison to portions of their original range, with the long-term goal of establishing a public trust resource. This has been a decades long effort by many Alaskans throughout the state, working together towards a common goal.

Local communities were instrumental in transporting the bison, building the soft release pen, caring for the animals, and planning for future management. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game would like to thank the many individuals that helped, including staff, volunteers, planning team participants and local community members. "ADF&G is committed to continued communication and collaboration among all interest groups and publics involved in the wood bison restoration process", said Luke Rogers, assistant wood bison biologist.

ADF&G biologists will closely monitor the herd in the months and years to come to better understand movements, diet, survival, and reproduction within this experimental herd.

The first wild wood bison herd in the U.S. was released in the lower Innoko-Yukon rivers area of Alaska in 2015. For more information about wood bison in Alaska and the complete history of the restoration efforts visit our website:

<https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=woodbisonrestoration.main>

And follow the wood bison story on Facebook here:

www.facebook.com/adfgwoodbisoninalaska/ADF&G



Dawn rises over wood bison in the Minto Flats State Game Refuge, Alaska. Bison were released into the wild on May 13th, 2025. Photo credit: Mark Lindberg

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