

**BISON
ANNUAL SURVEY AND INVENTORY
PERFORMANCE REPORT**

STATE: Alaska

GRANT AND SEGMENT NR.: W-27-5

WORK LOCATION: Statewide

PROJECT NR.: 9.0

PERIOD: 1 July 2001– June 2002

PROJECT LOCATION: Game Management Regions 2 and 3

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

REPORT DESCRIPTION: This statewide performance report includes the two regions involved in bison survey and inventory activities. Statewide and regional activities are listed before specific activities by herd and game management unit.

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

Regionwide Activities

Activity 1: Write an annual survey and inventory performance report

This document satisfies this activity.

Activity 2: Draft a bison management report.

A draft bison management report was prepared during spring 2002.

Activity 3: Provide information to the Board of Game on bison management.
One Region 2 bison proposal was addressed during the spring 2001 Board of Game Meeting.

Activities by Unit

Unit 11

Copper River Herd

Activity 1: Conduct aerial surveys in June to determine herd size and annual calf production.

Copper River Herd Survey June 2002:

108 total bison
86 Adults
22 Calves (20%)

Activity 2: Conduct a drawing permit hunt with up to 12 permits issued. Monitor harvest, interview successful hunters.

Harvest:

3 bison (One illegal, killed by a nonpermit holder)
3 males (100%)

Hunter Effort:

12 permits issued
5 permittees hunted
5.6 days per hunter

Chitina Herd

Activity 1: Conduct aerial survey in June to determine herd size and annual calf production.

Chitina Herd Survey June 2002:

39 total bison
32 adults
7 calves (18%)

Activity 2: Conduct a drawing permit hunt with up to 2 permits issued for bulls only, monitor harvest, interview successful hunters.

Harvest:

1 bull

Hunter Effort:

2 permits issued
2 permittees hunted
3.5 days per hunter

Other activities funded by Federal Aid on this project: None

Total Regional Segment Period Project Costs (in thousands): \$4.0

Submitted by: Michael G. McDonald, Assistant Management Coordinator

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

Regionwide Activities

Activity 1: Write an annual survey and inventory performance report.

Wrote annual performance reports for both herds.

Activity 2: Draft a management report on bison.

Drafted management reports on bison for both herds

Activity 3: Provide information to the Board of Game and advisory committees on bison management.

Made presentations to the Board of Game and advisory committees.

Activities by Herd and Unit

Farewell Herd (Units 19C and 19D)

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

Conducted aerial surveys of radiocollared individuals and 35 associated bison.

Purchased 8 new radio collars for deployment to replace radio collars that are becoming inoperative in FY 03.

Activity 2: Assess range conditions and work with fire control agencies to improve habitat.

Worked with the fire control agency to reassess the burn prescription to better accomplish the proposed goals, and supported a wildfire “let burn” policy within the bison range.

Activity 3: Monitor the harvest of bison from the permit hunts and analyze harvest data.

We monitored the harvest of bison. A total of 20 bison were harvested, 4 in the fall and 16 during spring. An unplanned activity was purchasing 8 new radio collars for deployment to replace radio collars that are becoming inoperative in FY 03.

Delta Herd (Unit 20D)

Activity 1: Assess range conditions and work with fire control agencies to improve habitat.

Evaluated bison range by collecting and analyzing forage samples on the Delta Junction Bison Range.

Conducted no prescribed fires.

Activity 2: Monitor the harvest from the permit hunts and analyze harvest data.

Monitored permit hunts. Forty eight bison were killed during permit hunt DI403, and 49 were killed during permit hunt DI404.

Activity 3: Replace radio collars used in aerial surveys that are no longer functional or about to go dead.

Did not replace radio collars, however, new radio collars were purchased for replacement in FY03.

Activity 4: Conduct ground or aerial surveys to assess population size and sex and age composition.

Flew aerial surveys to assess population size (estimated a population of 471 bison), and conducted ground based surveys to assess sex and age composition (counted 278 bison with bull to cow ratio of 68 bulls:100 cows and a calf-to-cow ratio of 57 calves:100 cows).

Activity 5: Monitor timing of bison movements from the summer range to the Delta Junction Bison Range and the Delta Agricultural Project.

Monitored timing of bison movements by tracking radio-collared bison during ground and aerial surveys.

Bison were first observed on the Delta Junction Bison Range July 19 and were first observed in the Delta Agricultural Project on July 27.

Activity 6: Continue investigation of options to improve bison viewing opportunities.

Conducted no investigation of bison viewing opportunities due to lack of available time.

Other activities funded by federal aid on this project: None.

Total Regional Segment Period Project Costs (in thousands): \$34.5

Submitted by: Roy A. Nowlin, Management Coordinator

Statewide Project Costs (in thousands):

State Share = \$9.6 Federal Share = \$28.9 Total Costs = \$38.5