

**BISON
ANNUAL SURVEY AND INVENTORY
PERFORMANCE REPORT
(revised 11/03)**

STATE: Alaska

GRANT AND SEGMENT NR.: W-33-1

WORK LOCATION: Statewide

PROJECT NR.: 9.0

PERIOD: 1 July 2002– June 2003

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**

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.

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.

There were no Region 2 bison proposals for the Spring 2003 Board of Game Meeting.

Activities by Unit

Unit 11

Copper River Herd

Activity 1: Conduct aerial sex and age population composition surveys to determine status, trend productivity and mortality of bison.

Conducted aerial surveys in June 2003 with the following results

Copper River Herd Survey June 2003:

110 total bison
88 Adults
22 Calves (20%)

Bison mortality was assessed by analyzing harvest results

Harvest:

11 bison
8 males (73%)

Hunter Effort:

20 permits issued
16 permittees hunted
5.2 days per hunter

Chitina Herd

Activity 1: Conduct aerial sex and age population composition surveys to determine status, trend productivity and mortality of bison.

Conducted aerial surveys in June 2003 with the following results

Chitina Herd Survey June 2003:

50 total bison
41 adults
9 calves (18%)

Bison mortality was assessed by analyzing harvest results

Harvest:

2 bulls

Hunter Effort:

2 permits issued
2 permittees hunted
5.5 days per hunter

Other activities funded by Federal Aid on this project: None

Total Regional Segment Period Project Costs (in thousands): \$3.5

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: 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 to assess population sex and age ratios. In September 2002, conducted radiotracking flight and observed 32 total bison. Conducted aerial calving survey in May 2003, observed 145 bison of which 15 were calves.

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

Worked with fire control agencies to monitor wildfires and promoted wildfire effects to increase habitat quality. No fires burned in this area during FY03.

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

Monitored bison harvest from permit hunts and analyzed harvest data. Eleven bison were harvested in the fall and 9 in the spring. Spring harvest was lower than usual due to unusually low snow depth, making travel difficult.

Delta Herd (Unit 20D)

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

Assessed range condition on Delta Junction Bison Range by analyzing forage quality on 7 different dates relating to bison movement patterns and coordinated with fire control agencies.

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

Monitored the harvest of 52 bison from permit hunt DI403 and 53 bison from permit hunt DI404 and analyzed harvest data.

Activity 3: Replace radiocollars used to locate bison during aerial and ground surveys that are no longer functional or about to go dead to maintain a sufficient sample to monitor the herd.

Replaced 8 radiocollars used in aerial surveys that were no longer functional or about to go dead.

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

Conducted ground and aerial surveys to assess population size resulting in an estimate of 476 bison and sex and age composition of 87 bulls:100 cows and 59 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 from the summer range to the Delta Junction Bison Range on 13 July and to the Delta Agricultural Project on 27 July.

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

No activities were conducted to improve bison viewing opportunities.

Other activities funded by federal aid on this project:

None.

Total Regional Segment Period Project Costs (in thousands): \$55.0

Submitted by: Roy A. Nowlin, Management Coordinator

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

Statewide Project Costs (in thousands):

State Share = \$14.63 Federal Share = \$43.88 Total Costs = \$58.5