



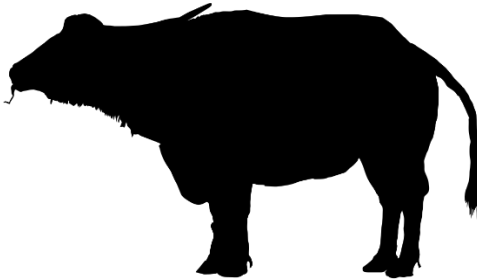
# Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie

## BISON FACTS

### Buffalo vs. Bison

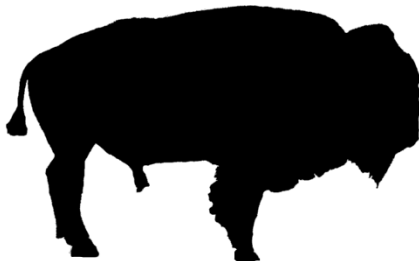
#### Buffalo

- Two main species found in Africa and Asia
- Huge sweeping arcs of horns
- Short, thin layer of hair



#### Bison

- Found in North America and Europe
- Small, cow-like horns
- Very thick coat of hair with a pronounced "beard" looping around ribcage
- Faster than buffalo
- Have a large shoulder hump and massive head



### What are Beefalo?

- Hybrid of domestic cattle (usually male) with bison (usually female)
- Physically resemble cattle
- Created to combine characteristics of both animals for beef production

### Eating

Bison are grazers. They feed in the morning and at night, eating grasses and sedges.

### How Do They Eat?

Bison wrap their tongue around a tuft of grass, pinch the grass off between their tongue and lower teeth, and swallow it practically whole.

### Horns

- Bison never shed or drop their horns
- Both cows and bulls have horns
- Horns are black & turn grey as bison age
- Horns are used as a weapon
- 22-26 inches long
- 2.5 ft. apart from tip to tip

### Herding Behavior

- Bison can be found alone or in a herd
- A herd's social structure is always changing

### Reproduction

Bison have a gestation period of nine months and a single calf is typically born in April or May.

Just minutes after birth, calves will stand up and run within a few hours.

Calves are born with their eyes open, weigh 25-40 lbs. and have an orange-red or cinnamon colored coat that turns brown as they age.

### Bison: The Basics

#### Male

2,000 lbs.  
5'6" at shoulder

#### Female

800-1,000 lbs.  
5' at shoulder

**Average life span**  
15-20 years

### Speed:

#### Bison

30-45 mph for up to 5 miles

#### Race Horse

40 mph for 1 mile

A bison would outrun a horse with a rider

### Visit Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie

Welcome Center  
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[www.fs.usda.gov/midewin](http://www.fs.usda.gov/midewin)

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Visitors are encouraged to stop at the Welcome Center for current information, maps and advisories.