

BISON FACT SHEET

Myth— Large numbers of bison always inhabited Yellowstone Park.

Fact— Between 1835 and 1876, 20 different explorers spent 765 days in the Yellowstone Ecosystem on foot or horseback, yet they only saw bison three times, none of which were within the present confines of Yellowstone Park.

Myth— Bison are following traditional migration routes as they attempt to leave Yellowstone Park today.

Fact— In 1973, the Park Service published a figure that depicted historical bison movement patterns in the park, but failed to include any movement out of the park at West Yellowstone or Gardiner, where bison now commonly leave the park.

Myth— Giving the bison additional range will solve Yellowstone's bison problem.

Fact— Giving the bison more land will never solve the bison problem because under "natural regulation," the herd will only increase until the animals are again forced by starvation to cross whatever boundary is established.

Myth— Bison are not leaving the park because there is a shortage of food and the range is not overgrazed.

Fact— The Park Service has admitted that Yellowstone's bison are at ecological carrying capacity. By definition this means the animals are short of food and that grazing has altered the park's vegetation.

Myth— Yellowstone's bison have continued to increase because the park's snow-machine groomed roads provide easy bison travel corridors.

Fact— While bison do use the park's snow-packed roads, the Park Service's own population data do not show any upward trend that can be associated with the advent of winter recreation in the park.

Myth— Yellowstone's bison population will self-regulate without overgrazing the range.

Fact— No ungulate population anywhere in the world has been shown to self-regulate without first having caused serious resource damage.

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