



## AMERICAN BISON

Kingdom: *Animalia* Phylum: *Chordata* Class: *Mammalia* Order: *Artiodactyla*  
*Bison bison*

**Status:** Few wild herds of the plains bison remain (1,500-2,000 animals live in Yellowstone National Park). The woodland bison, another subspecies of the North American bison, is endangered.

**Habitat:** prairies and open woodlands

**Range:** North America

**Diet in the wild:** grasses and herbs

**Size:** Weight - 950-2000 lbs. Height - 5-6 ft. at the shoulder

**Other facts:**

- More than 75 million bison once roamed North America from the western mountain grasslands to as far east as Georgia.
- When Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock, bison were found throughout North America from Canada to northern Mexico. At that time there were 4 subspecies: plains, wood, Oregon, and eastern. Today, only the plains and wood bison survive.
- The bison were massacred in the late 1800s for their hides and in an effort to subdue Native Americans of the plains.
- By 1889 only an estimated 541 bison remained.
- Today, bison are found only in parks, refuges, and private collections.
- American bison are often called buffalo. However only the African Cape buffalo and Asian water buffalo are true buffalo.
- Bison are ruminants (cud chewers) and belong to the same family as cattle, sheep, and goats.
- Both females and males have horns with a bony core that are retained from year to year.
- Bison calves are typically born in the spring and weaned at about seven months of age.

