

September 6, 2018

## Recovery Strategy for Wood Bison Released

*The final recovery strategy was posted on the Species at Risk Public Registry on August 28, 2018*

Wood bison (*Bison bison athabasca*) are listed as “Special Concern” under the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA), an improvement from when they were first designated as “Endangered” in 1978. A species of “Special Concern” is defined as one that may become threatened or endangered because of a combination of biological characteristics and identified threats.

Populations of wood bison were estimated to be 168,000 animals in the early 1800s and declined to a few hundred by the end of the century. Since their designation under SARA and the implementation of active recovery programs, wood bison populations have increased, and estimates show approximately 8,587 free-ranging wood bison in Canada between 2010-2015. Although the wood bison have been down listed over the past several decades from Endangered to Threatened, approximately half of the free-ranging animals reside in populations that are affected by bovine tuberculosis and brucellosis – the greatest threat to their recovery.

The newly published strategy sets a direction to address the recovery of the species and will be followed by one or more action plans to be completed by 2022. This approach will provide information on recovery measures to be taken by Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) and Parks Canada Agency (PCA). To view the strategy, click [here](#).

For more information on the wood bison species, click [here](#).

### RMA Advocacy

At the 2017 RMA Spring Convention, resolution **7-17S** was passed, which calls for the eradication of bovine tuberculosis and brucellosis in bison within and surrounding Wood Buffalo National Park (WBNP). The resolution called for the RMA to support the depopulation of diseased bison as the only effective tool to successfully eradicate the threat of bovine tuberculosis and brucellosis in and around WBNP, and to urge Alberta Agriculture and Forestry and Parks Canada to develop an effective measurable plan to successfully eradicate all diseased bison from within and surrounding WBNP in order to prevent further disease outbreaks province-wide; that would inevitably have adverse effects for the national, provincial and local domestic cattle and beef industries. To view the resolution and government response, click [here](#).

RMA will be analyzing the strategy more closely and will share information with members as needed.

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