



2022 January 11

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Re: 2021 Mackenzie Bison Population Monitoring Report
Wildlife Research Permit WL500983

Bison monitoring under this Wildlife Research Permit includes annual anthrax surveillance, classification surveys and periodic surveys to estimate population abundance.

Unfortunately, we were unable to conduct a classification survey in the summer of 2021 due to the lack of an available helicopter. We did not attempt to use a Remotely Piloted Aerial System (RPAS, i.e., a drone) to monitor bison in 2021. The purpose of a classification survey is to estimate the proportions of cows, calves, yearlings and bulls in the population at the time. Classification surveys typically are conducted in early summer when calves still have their reddish coat and are easily distinguished from yearlings, however, they may also be done in late summer. Our ability to conduct these surveys is subject aircraft availability or other operational requirements, such as an anthrax outbreaks or fire suppression activities.

Four flights were completed over the Mackenzie bison range to monitor for anthrax and found no carcasses in 2021. Surveillance was made much more effective with greater confidence in the results by tracking some of the bison that were wearing telemetry collars deployed in March of 2021.

Surveys to estimate bison abundance are conducted every four years. The last survey of the Mackenzie population estimated approximately 1450 bison in late winter 2019. The next estimate is scheduled for late winter 2023.

These results were discussed by the Mackenzie Bison Working Group at its meeting in August, 2021.

If you have any questions about this information or wish to meet to discuss bison monitoring more fully please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

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Environment and Natural Resources
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Distribution List:

Deh Gáh Got'îê First Nation
Fort Providence Métis Council
Tłjchq Government
North Slave Métis Alliance
Yellowknives Dene First Nation
Wek'èezhì Renewable Resources Board

cc. **Heather Sayine-Crawford, Director, Wildlife and Fish Division, ENR**
Karin Clark, Manager, Wildlife Research and Monitoring, Wildlife and Fish Division, ENR
Tony Vermillion, Superintendent, South Slave Region, ENR
Bruno Croft, Superintendent, North Slave Region, ENR