

American bison ... at home on the range!

ASSOCIATION
OF ZOOS &
AQUARIUMS
WILD CATTLE AND
CAMELID TAG



MEASUREMENTS

Length: 7-12 feet
Height: to 6.5 feet
at shoulder
Weight: 1,000-
2,000 lbs



Prairies



North America

IUCN
NEAR
THREATENED

~15,000 in
the wild

Why exhibit American bison?

- Display one of the most emblematic and recognizable North American animals. As our largest native species of land mammal, they provide instant impact, especially in a herd.
- Expand the population of genetically pure bison: many bison in zoos are domestic cattle hybrids. Current holders are encouraged to test their herds and avoid breeding animals with cattle genes.
- Instill a conservation ethic in your visitors: the seemingly endless bison herds of the 1800s almost disappeared due to human greed. Our resource choices today have an impact tomorrow!
- Enhance cultural programming by showing the close link between bison and native Americans.
- **TAG recommendation:** Zoos not tied to bison for zoogeographic reasons – especially those in warm climates – are urged to work with other more endangered wild cattle (gaur, banteng).

Stewardship Opportunities

In situ initiatives involving this species are currently being identified and reviewed by the TAG.

Care and Husbandry

Candidate Program: 93.186.10 (289) in 49 AZA institutions (2019)

Species coordinator: Mollye Nardi, Great Plains Zoo

mnardi@gpzoo.org ; (605) 367-8313 x130

Social nature: Very social. Females can be maintained in large herds, usually with one male. Males can be housed together, but aggression may be an issue, especially in the presence of females.

Mixed species: Frequently mixed with pronghorn, deer, and elk, and ground birds such as wild turkeys and cranes; sufficient space is needed. Have also been housed with prairie dogs.

Housing: Needs large open pasture type exhibits. Extremely cold and heat tolerant; shelter from wind, sun, and rain is sufficient.

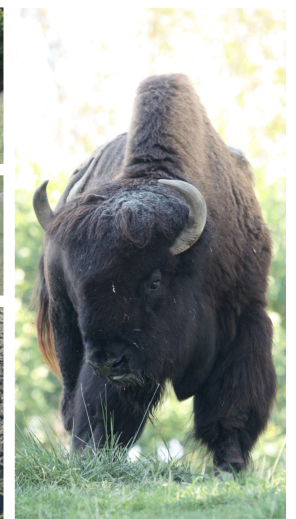
Medical notes: A generally healthy, hardy species. Mechanized restraint devices or chemical immobilization recommended for handling.

Special requirements: Dust bathing areas and mud wallows are encouraged. Deadfall, large boulders, and other areas for rubbing on are also great to include in an exhibit

Keeper resources: Cleaning is simple due to large feces. Close contact with keepers should be in modified or protected contact situations.

Please contact the TAG for full husbandry guidelines.

<http://www.azaungulates.org/>



Photos by B. Huffman. Published June 2019.