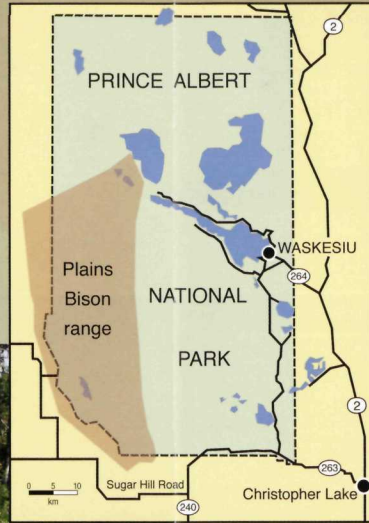


Once there were millions...

Try to imagine the grasslands as 30 million bison wallowed and grazed along the great migratory routes across the prairies. Wolves hunted the bison. First Nations and Métis people followed the herds relying on them for food, clothing, shelter and tools.

After nearly becoming extinct in the late 1800's, small populations of plains and wood bison were re-established in a few of Canada's national parks. The return of the bison renewed age-old cycles and relationships with the land, animals and people, enriching our global community.



Choosing their 'Homeplace'

In 1969, 50 plains bison were released by the provincial government 60 km north of Prince Albert National Park to re-establish a wild herd. Approximately 10 to 20 bison headed south, choosing to live in the vast, protected wilderness on the West Side of Prince Albert National Park.

Today the Sturgeon River Plains Bison roam both in Prince Albert National Park and on neighbouring lands. They are the only wild population of plains bison on their historic range in Canada.

Bison are always on the move. Some bison stay in their southern range the entire year, while others head north towards Kingsmere Lake in winter.

Fiery connections

Bison, grasslands and fire share a close relationship. Wildfires help to invigorate grasslands stimulating them to produce diverse new growth such as lush sedges and grasses which in turn attract the bison.



Bison regularly take a dust bath in wallows. The dust coating acts as an insect repellent and raincoat.



Collaborating to Protect the Bison

The Sturgeon River Plains Bison Stewards are a group of concerned ranchers and farmers working with Prince Albert National Park and the Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment to protect the bison population. As bison roam freely in the Park and on adjacent private lands, the Stewards create an environment where the bison herd can co-exist with local landowners. Current research is exploring bison habitat use and movement patterns as well as how wolf predation influences the bison population.

Explore the Wild West Side

Hike, bike, or ride horseback in bison country on the West Side of Prince Albert National Park.



For more information, contact the Visitor Centre: 306.663.4522.

In case of emergency: Dial 911



parkscanada.gc.ca

Prince Albert National Park

BISON COUNTRY

Sturgeon River Plains Bison: 'unfenced, unexpected, unforgettable'



Également offert en français



Parks Canada

Parcs Canada

Canada

Safety in Plains Bison Country

Bison are wild animals and should be respected. These safety tips will help you enjoy your time on the West Side of Prince Albert National Park.

- **Watch for fresh bison tracks and droppings.**



- **Never approach bison.** Keep at least 100 metres (10 bus lengths) away from bison.
- **Be aware** that during calving period (May-October) and the rut (mid-July to mid-August), bison might be more protective or territorial.
- **Make bison aware of your presence** by talking and whistling. Startled bison can respond aggressively. If you see one bison, look around for others because they tend to travel in groups.



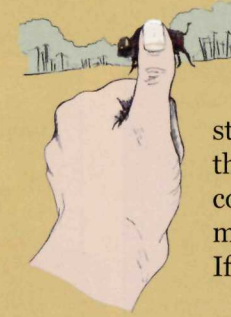
"This lens is amazing! It's like I'm standing right next to him..."

- **If you encounter bison on the trail,** take a detour or leave the area. Always leave bison an escape route.
- **Watch for displays of aggression** which include: bison standing sideways displaying 'how large it is', raising its tail, swinging its head back and forth while staring at you, pawing the ground, snorting, hooking the ground with horns, and/or a short bluff charge toward you. If bison display any of these behaviours, you are too close. Retreat.
- **Hide behind trees or other objects** if you suspect the bison might charge. Do not run.
- **Remember to keep dogs on leash** and under control at all times. Dogs could be interpreted as predators by bison and may provoke a defensive attack.
- **Cyclists:** Your speed and quietness put you at risk for sudden encounters. Make noise, stay alert and slow down.



Protective moms will defend their calves

Keeping your distance. How far is 100 metres?



Hold your fist straight in front of you. Cover the bison (who is standing sideways) with your thumb. If the bison is totally covered, you are about 100 metres away, a safe distance. If not, back off, promptly.



Grey wolf

Back on the Menu

Before the bison's near extinction 125 years ago, wolves hunted them. With the reintroduction of the bison to the Park, once again they are on the wolves' 'menu'. This is one of the few places where such a predator-prey relationship exists in North America.

Bison are agile, athletic, and can turn on a dime. Bison can move as fast through trees as they can through meadows. They are also good swimmers.

