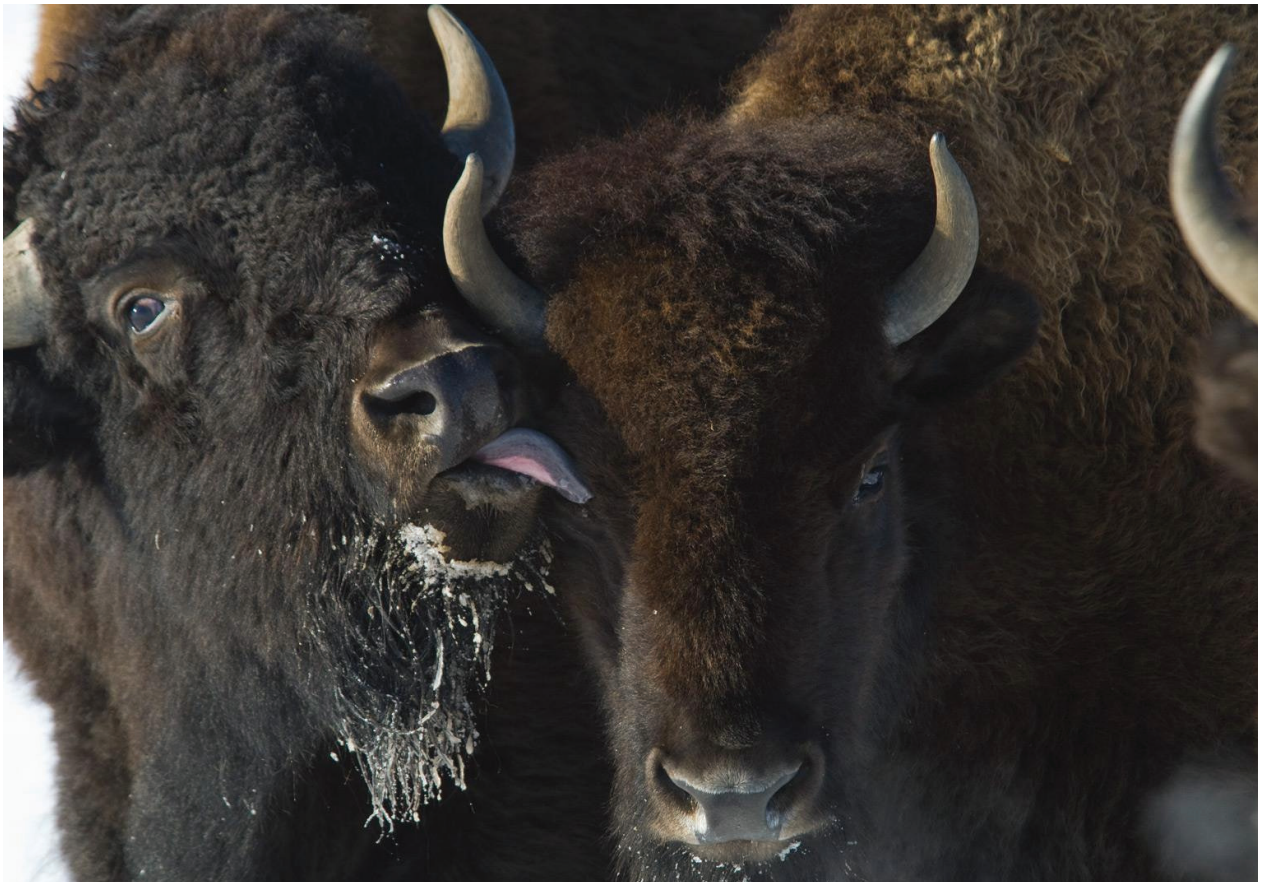
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Bison

National Wildlife Refuge System

- Bison stand more than six feet tall and can weigh up to 2,000 pounds, with a massive head and large, humped shoulders. They can run up to 35 - 40 miles an hour for short distances.
- Large herds used to migrate as much as 200 miles in the spring or fall. There used to be 30 - 70 million bison in North America. By 1900, there were only about 1,000 after many were killed for food, skins and sport.
- Bison feed on grass, wallowing in dust or mud to relieve itching and protect themselves from insects. The large wallows they make collect water when it rains, creating habitat for amphibians and aquatic insects. In winter, bison dig through deep snow with their large heads to reach grass and vegetation.
- Bison do not see very well but their senses of smell and hearing are very sharp. Bison live 18 - 22 years in the wild.



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