

# Bison Population Status – 2019

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[http://ibmp.info/Library/OpsPlans/2019\\_StatusYellowstoneBisonPopulation\\_Oct2019.pdf](http://ibmp.info/Library/OpsPlans/2019_StatusYellowstoneBisonPopulation_Oct2019.pdf)

# Bison Population Status – 2019

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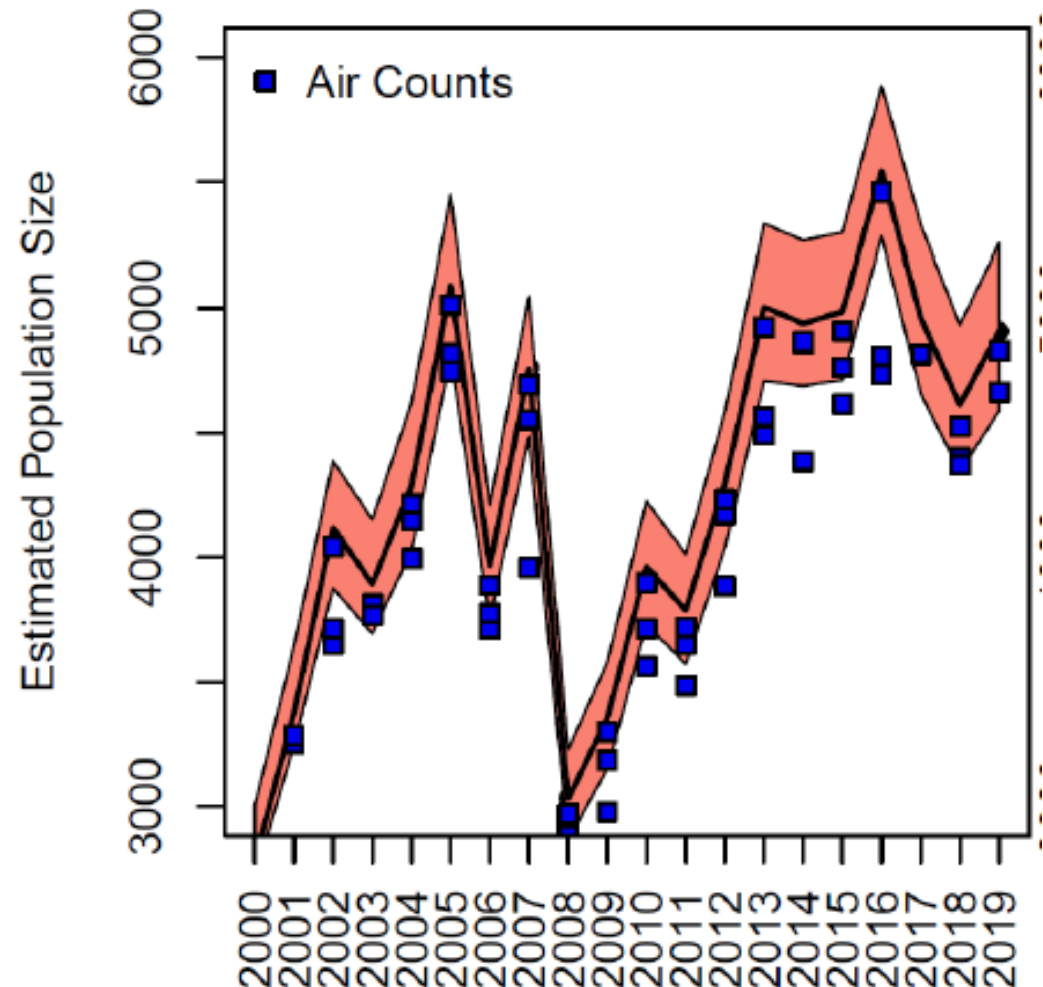
## LAST YEAR

- **About 4,600 bison after calving (maximum count 4,527) in 2018**
- **460 bison removed during winter 2018-19**
- **End-of-winter population near 4,100**
- **Population Range 2018-19 Operations Year: 4,100 - 4,600**

# Bison Population Status – 2019

## Current Status

- **About 4,900 after calving**
  - Maximum Count of 4,829 (June 12, 2019)
  - Increased by about 300 animals since summer 2018
  - Stable population since 2013

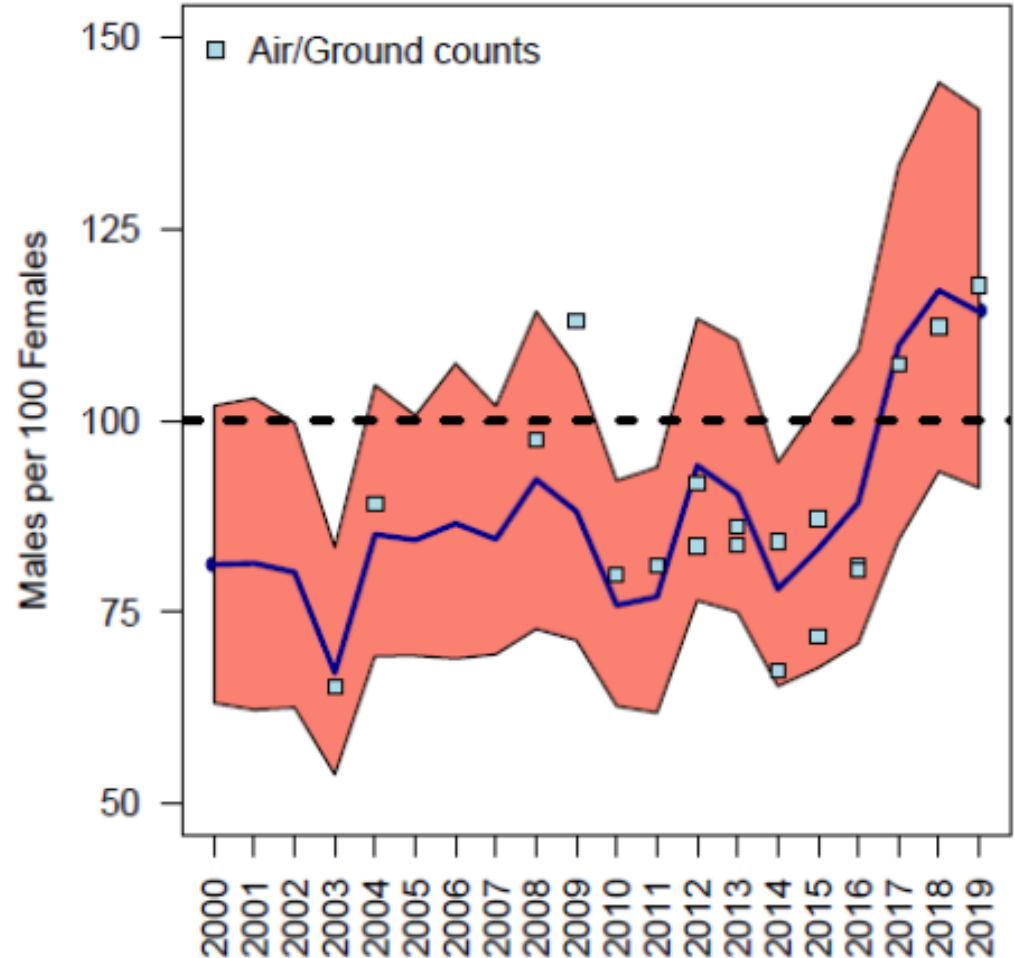


# Bison Population Status – 2019

## Current Status

### ➤ Sex Ratio

- **STATUS:** 114 males per 100 females (53% male, 47% female)
- **TREND:** Increasing numbers of males since 2013
- **Conservation Goal:** 100 male per 100 female

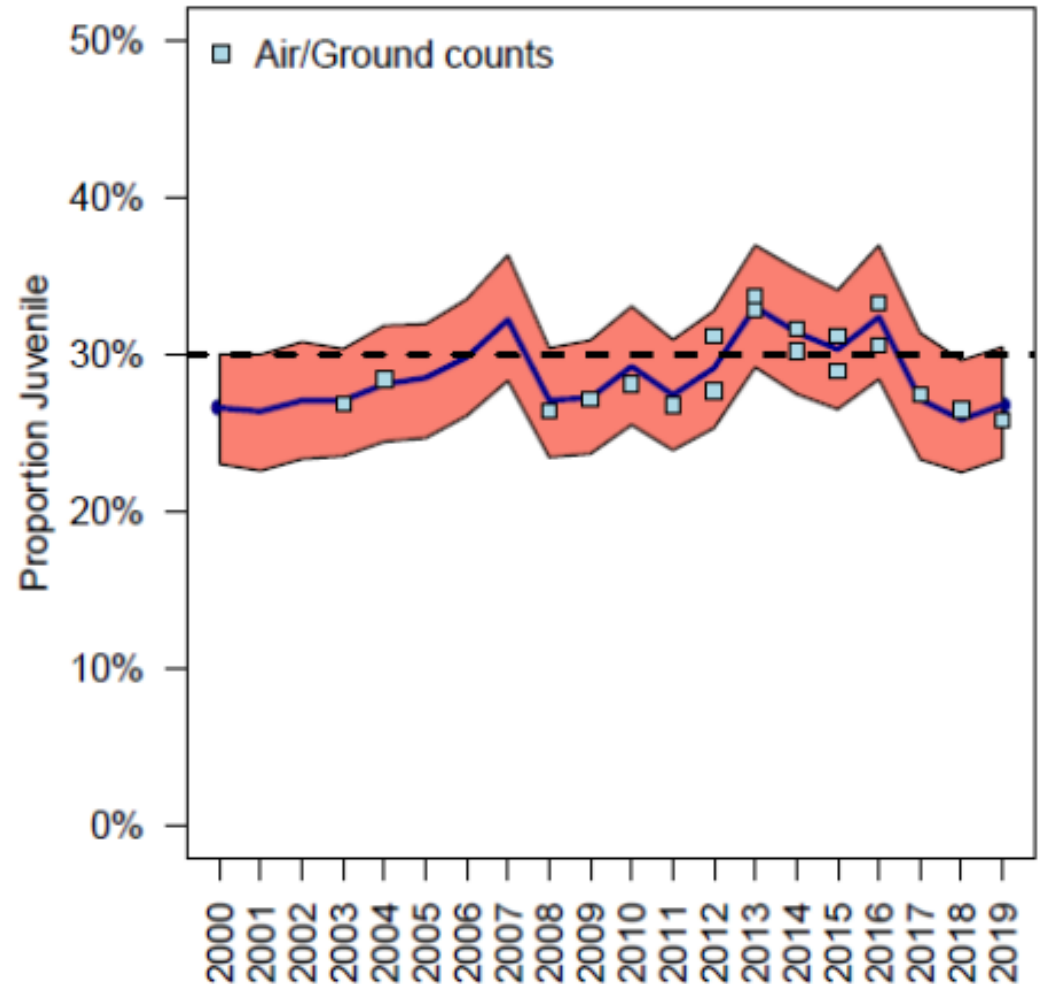


# Bison Population Status – 2019

## Current Status

### ➤ Age Structure

- **STATUS:** 27% juvenile  
73% adult (2+)
- **TREND:** Decreasing number of juveniles
- **Conservation Goal:**  
30% juvenile, 70% adult



# Bison Population Status – 2019

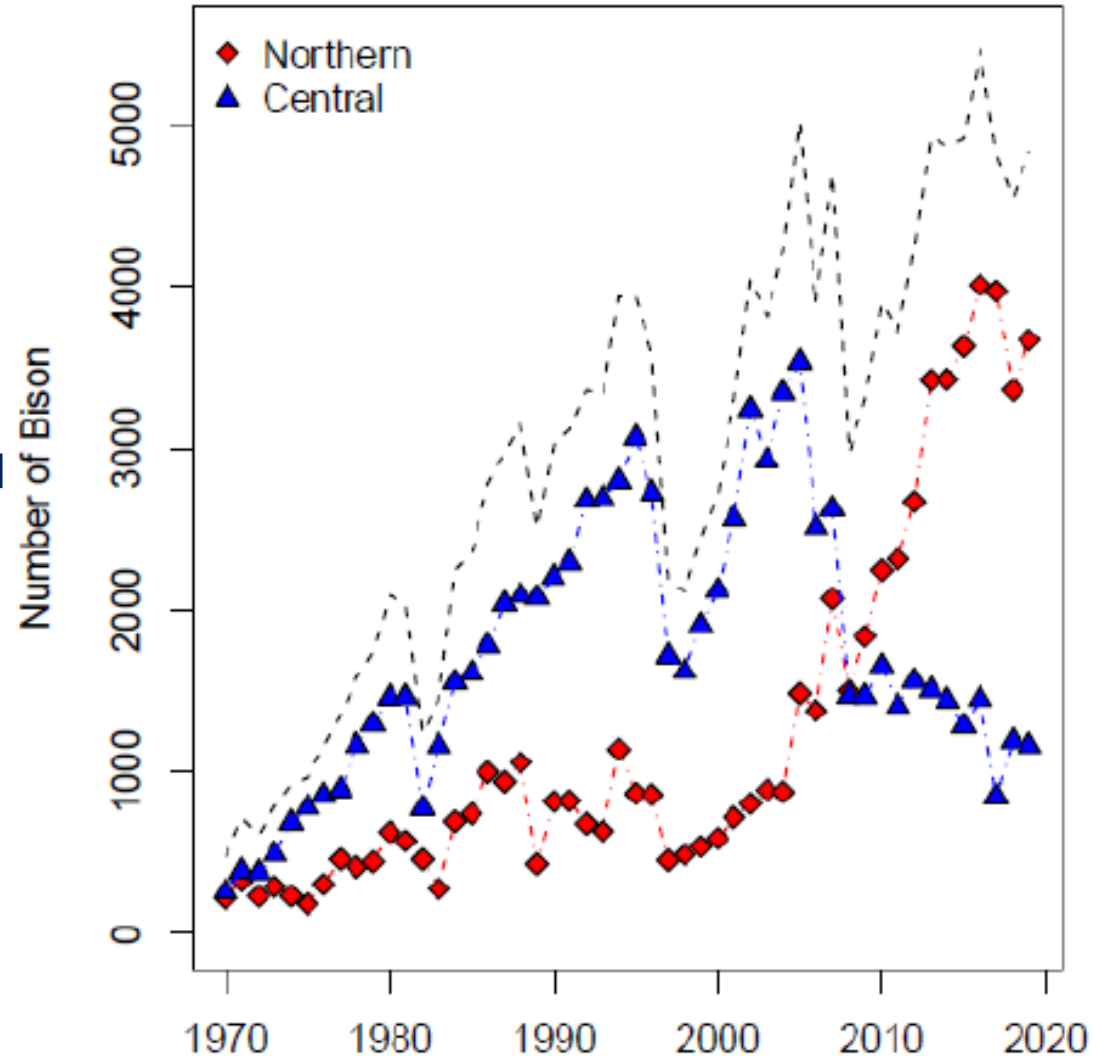
## Current Status

### ➤ CENTRAL

- 1,162 max count
- 300-350 adult female
- 64% male, 46% female
- 20% juvenile, 80% adult
- 2 (of 10) radio-collars moved to North
- Counts during winter 2018-19 steady 1,000-1,100

### ➤ NORTHERN

- 3,667 max count
- 51% male, 49% female
- 27% juvenile, 73% adult
- 5 (of 36) radio-collars removed North



# Summary 2018-2019 Operations

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## RECAP Winter Operations 2018-19

- **Manage for a slightly decreasing bison population**
  - Remove 600-900 bison focusing on the northern herd
  
- **North Migration was LATER than AVERAGE**
  - Lasted 3-4 weeks (similar to most winters)
  - >200 N. of Mammoth 3/7 – 4/7 with >400 N. of Mammoth 3/7 – 3/22
  - Limited Conflict (1 MVA, 1 Hazing Event)
  
- **West Migration**
  - Limited Conflict (About 3 hazing events Madison Arm)
  - Maximum of about 300 animals in Hebgen Basin

# Summary 2018-2019 Operations

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## RECAP Winter Operations 2018-19

- **Hunter Harvest = 112**
  - North (109), West (3)
- **Capture/Slaughter (i.e., culling) = 348**
  - Slaughter (347), Trap mortality (1)
- **Quarantine = 0**
  - 0 new animals
  - 60 bulls transferred to FPT



# Summary 2018-2019 Operations

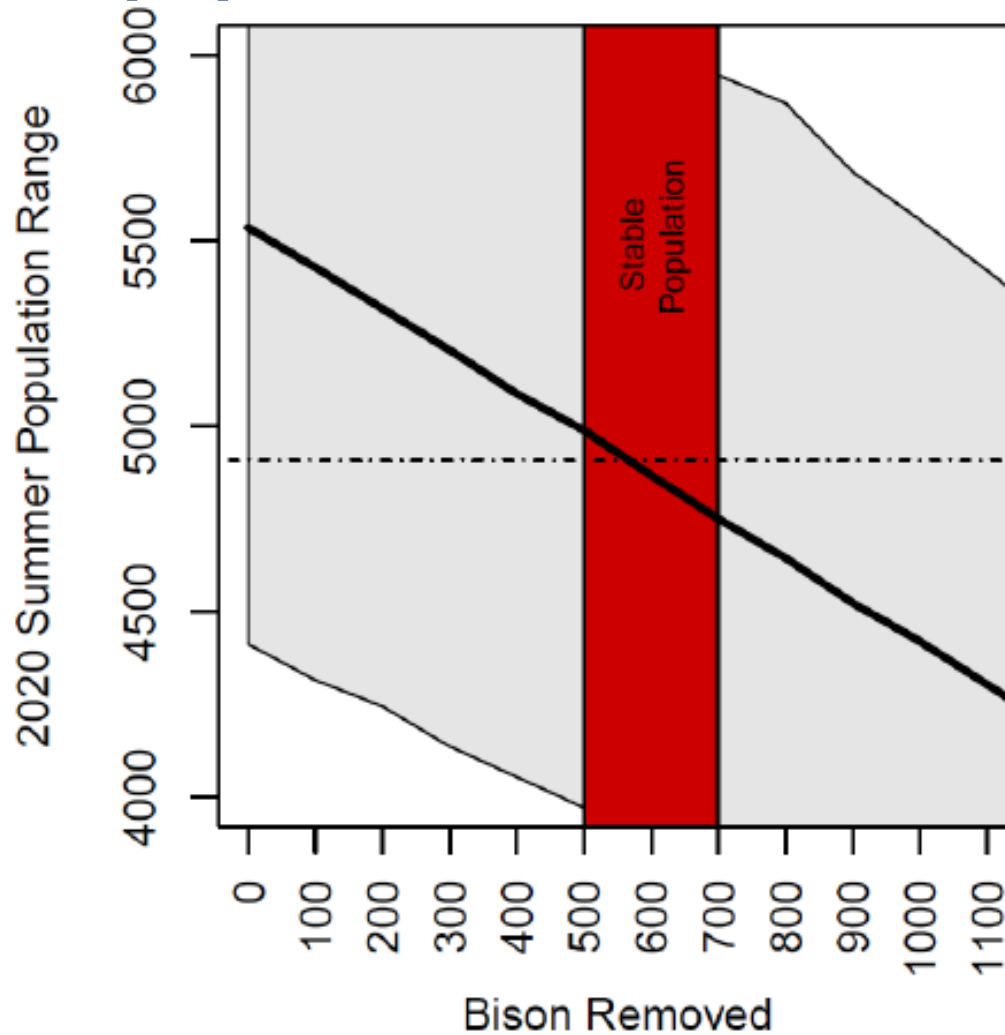
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## Selectively Removing Females and Calves

- **Removals since 2013-14 included at least:**
  - 1,233 calves (26%)
  - 800 adolescents (17%)
  - 1,733 adult females (36%)
  - 1,005 adult males (21%)
  
- **Population 2019 approximately**
  - 735 calves (15%)
  - 580 adolescents (12%)
  - 1,667 adult females (34%)
  - 1,925 adult males (39%)
  
- **Concern for skewing population older and towards males**

# Recommendation Winter 2019-20

**THIS WINTER Remove 600-900 animals to slightly decrease the population**



# Recommendation Winter 2019-20

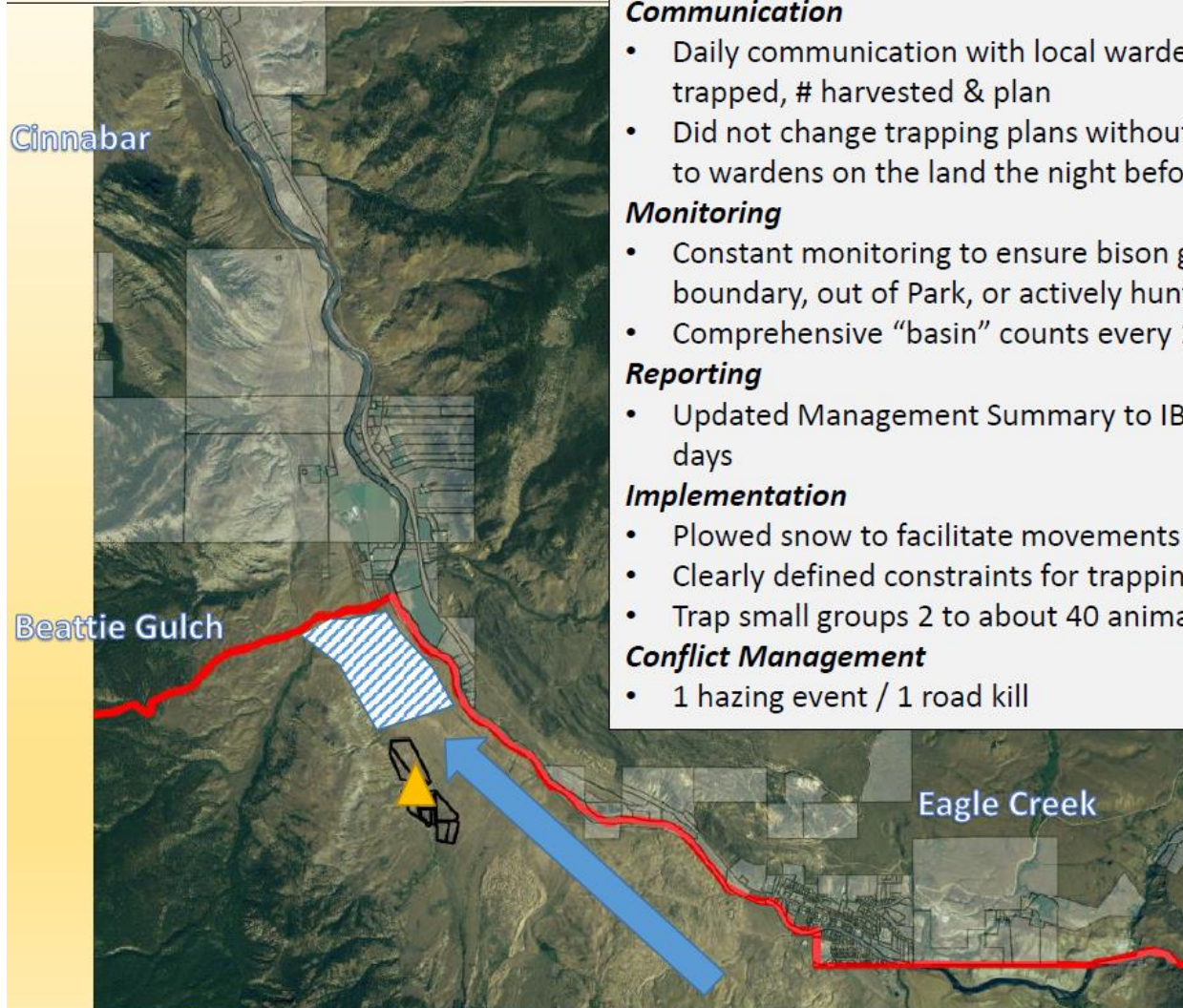
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## RECOMMENDATION

- **Remove 600-900 bison (i.e., slightly decreasing population)**
  - **Focus on Northern Herd**
  - **Removal age/sex composition resembling current demographics and if possible slightly bias towards males**
    - **Could include immediately releasing some captured bison back into the Park**
- **Approach 3,800 - 4,100 bison at end-of-winter**
- **Quarantine intake**
  - **Up to 110, which could include 50 9-10 mo females, 25 21-22 mo females, and 35 21-22 mo males**
- **Balance hunting and culling**

# Recommendation Winter 2019-20

## BALANCING HUNTING AND CULLING → What worked last year



### **Communication**

- Daily communication with local wardens to update # trapped, # harvested & plan
- Did not change trapping plans without communicating to wardens on the land the night before

### **Monitoring**

- Constant monitoring to ensure bison groups near boundary, out of Park, or actively hunted
- Comprehensive “basin” counts every 1-3 days

### **Reporting**

- Updated Management Summary to IBMP.info every 7 days

### **Implementation**

- Plowed snow to facilitate movements
- Clearly defined constraints for trapping
- Trap small groups 2 to about 40 animals

### **Conflict Management**

- 1 hazing event / 1 road kill

# Recommendation Winter 2019-20

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## BALANCING HUNTING AND CULLING

- **Capture 400-600 bison through the winter**
  - Maintain at least 200 bison north of Mammoth
  - Capture small groups (could be before they exit Park)
  - Minimize conflicts out of the park by capturing more bison as numbers north of Mammoth >600
  - Minimize time animals held at Stephens Creek
- **Monitoring**
  - Ground counts of basin distribution
  - Daily tracking of hunting parties and success
- **Communication**
  - Inform prior to changing management practices
  - Weekly hunt calls
  - Daily communication among wardens

# Recommendation Winter 2019-20

## BALANCING COMMON GOALS

