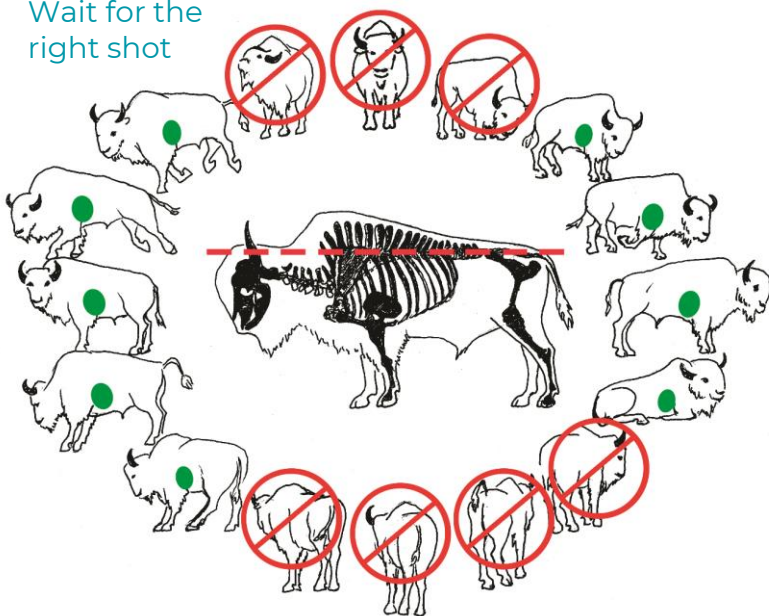


# Hunting wood bison

Follow these guidelines for a successful harvest.

1. **Be certain of your skill with your rifle and your ability to cleanly kill a bison.** If you can't hit the heart/lung area well, don't shoot. Avoid long distance shots and poor angle shots.
2. **Choose a bison that is separate from the herd and keep an eye on it after it has been shot.** Wounded animals may rejoin the herd and can be difficult to track. Do not shoot into a group of bison. You may accidentally wound or kill other animals.
3. **Remember that the kill zone on bison is much lower than on other species because of their hump.** Don't shoot too high. The vital organs are all below the base of the horns.
4. **Head shots made from a distance are not effective.** Shoot from as close a range as possible and aim for the heart/lung target area. An animal standing broadside will give you the best shot, and be prepared for follow up shots. Be cautious about deflections and ricochets off heavy bone.
5. **If you're not sure whether you hit a bison, check the area carefully for signs of a hit such as blood and hair.** You must make every effort to track down and kill a wounded bison.
6. **Monitor a downed bison carefully, from a reasonable distance, and make sure that it is dead and not only wounded.** Look for rib cage movement.
7. **Approach the downed bison from behind on the spine side.** Make sure the animal isn't moving. Be prepared to make a follow up shot in case the bison gets up – especially when you approach it.
8. **Use your rifle barrel or a stick to touch the eye.** If the animal blinks, it is still alive.

Wait for the right shot



## Don't shoot collared animals

Check whether the bison is wearing a collar before shooting. **If you mistakenly kill a collared bison, you must care for the meat and report it right away.** Bring the collar to a Department of Environment office so staff can check the capture dates and let you know if the meat is safe to eat, as drugs are used to capture and collar the bison.

If you observe illegal or suspicious activity, call Turn in Poachers & Polluters at **1-800-661-0525** or report it online at [Yukon.ca/TIPP](http://Yukon.ca/TIPP). All calls are anonymous. Cash rewards may be available if your information leads to a prosecution.



## Minimum firearm requirements

### Centrefire rifle

- **.30 calibre** or larger.
- **Minimum 180 grain bullets** (premium ammunition is highly recommended, designed for large or dangerous game and loaded with expanding copper, bonded, or partition-constructed bullets).
- **Minimum 2,800 ft/lbs energy** at the muzzle.

A .30-06 calibre rifle with 180 grain bullets meets the minimum legal requirements but is not recommended.

### Black powder rifle

- **.50 calibre** or larger;
- firing an elongated bullet with **minimum 90 grain charge**; and
- **minimum 2,800 ft/lbs energy** at the muzzle.

**Note:** Hunters using a black powder rifle must have a centrefire rifle (see above) accessible as back up.

## After the hunt

### All bison hunters must:

1. **Report the kill within 10 days** to any Department of Environment office.
2. **Submit the incisor bar (lower jawbone) with meat on it** to a Department of Environment office **no later than 15 days after the end of the month** in which the bison was killed. For more information on bison or bison hunting, contact the **Department of Environment** at **867-667-5652** or toll-free **1-800-661-0408**, ext. 5652.

## If you wound it, track it

Conservation officers have observed that some animals harvested were wounded previously. Wounded bison can suffer for years from bullet injuries and in many cases die a slow, painful death. You must make every effort to track down and kill a wounded bison.

**It's against the law to use bows to hunt bison.**

**Do not shoot at running bison.**

## A special opportunity

Wood bison are a threatened species found only in small populations and in small parts of their original range in western Canada and Alaska. During the 1980s and 1990s, a substantial effort went into reintroducing wood bison to the Yukon. This effort was part of a national initiative to restore wood bison to their native landscapes.

Hunting wood bison is a special opportunity that comes from the success of the recovery program in the Yukon. Few similar opportunities exist for hunting wood bison elsewhere in North America.

## Be respectful when hunting

- **Follow existing trails.** Do not create new trails.
- **Respect private residences and property,** and do not leave gut piles nearby.
- **Do not use marked trapper trails** – look for Active Trapping Area signs before following snowmobile tracks in winter. **Trapping season is October 1 to March 31.** Never interfere with trap sets. Unless you have permission, do not use or disturb trappers' cabins or any equipment you find there.
- **Be respectful** of other hunters and backcountry travelers, as well as how your activities may affect other wildlife.



## Permissions required

Hunters require **written permission** from First Nations if they intend to harvest bison on Category A or B Settlement Lands.

- **Champagne and Aishihik First Nations:** 867-634-4200
- **Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation:** 867-863-5576
- **Kwanlin Dün First Nation:** 867-633-7800
- **Ta'an Kwäch'än Council:** 867-668-3613
- **Kluane First Nation:** 867-841-4274

**All bison hunters require permission to hunt within one kilometre of any residence,** whether occupants are present or not. Be aware of the direction you are shooting, as bullets can travel farther than one kilometre.

## Field dressing

Even at -30°C, bison meat can spoil if not dealt with quickly and properly. The thick hide, fat and hair on bison are incredible insulators. The hide must be removed immediately followed by the guts. Quartering the animal as soon as possible will also help cool the meat.

The only parts that should be left behind in the field are the gut pile, the spine and perhaps the head and hide. Other bones can be left only if all the meat has been removed. No meat can be left in the field. If you cannot remove all edible meat, the hide and the head from the kill site on your first load, you must remove all edible meat first.



Left: A properly field dressed bison. All meat has been removed. Right: Parts left behind in the field. Photos by C. Faulkner.

Watch the video on how to field dress bison at [youtube.com/environmentyukon](https://www.youtube.com/environmentyukon).



## Bison seasons

### Fall season

- September 1 to October 31.

Includes:

- **Highway corridors**
  - **Alaska Highway Corridor:** a 3-km wide corridor along the north side of the Alaska Highway between Whitehorse and the Slims River bridge.
  - **North Klondike Corridor:** a 1-km wide corridor along the west side of the North Klondike Highway between Whitehorse and Braeburn.
- **Game Management Zones** 3, 4 (except 4-03 and 4-51), 7, 8, 9.
- **Game Management Subzones** 5-01, 5-04 to 5-07.

Hunting in the fall season helps keep bison within their core range. Hunting bison found near the highways is intended to reduce traffic incidents.

### Winter season

- November 1 to March 24.

Includes:

- **Game Management Zones** 3, 4 (except 4-03 and 4-51), 5, 7, 8, 9.

## Bison map recommended

Hunters are encouraged to purchase the **Yukon wood bison core range map**, which includes hunting subzones and both Category A and B Settlement Lands, from any Department of Environment office. It can also be viewed or downloaded for free from [Yukon.ca/hunting](https://www.yukon.ca/hunting).

The map insert in the *Yukon hunting regulations summary* only shows Category A Settlement Lands.

## Bison are large, be prepared

A cow typically weighs 360 to 630 kg (800 to 1,400 lbs). A mature bull could weigh over 1,000 kg (2,200 lbs). The head and hide of a mature bison weighs about 200 kg (450 lbs).

## It's against the law to waste meat

Every year charges are laid for meat wastage and, on conviction, Yukon courts have imposed significant penalties on offenders.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT:**  
[Yukon.ca/hunting](https://www.yukon.ca/hunting)