

Bison Life Cycle

Descriptions (cut into one pile)

Calves are born usually in the late spring. They are usually reddish in color and weigh between 30 and 40 pounds. Because they must survive on the open prairie, newborn bison calves are also precocial, meaning that they can stand and walk within minutes.

Calves nurse with their mothers for the first 6 months of life before they are weaned onto a diet of grass. Male calves can become completely independent of their mothers at this point, and females usually do a few months later.

Young bison may remain with their mother's herd or venture out to find another. During this time, they learn social behaviors and establish themselves in the social order of the herd.

Females become reproductively mature at about 2 years old, males at about 5 years old.

The breeding season, also known as the rut, begins in late summer and can run until September. Males will “tend” a chosen female by staying near to her and fighting other males that attempt to challenge.

Adult bison are the largest land mammals in North America. Males can weigh up to 2,200 pounds and females up to 1,200 pounds.

In the wild, the American bison lives around 12-15 years. In captivity, they can live to be almost 30.

Pictures (cut into another pile)

