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WEEK WITH OUR NEWSPAPERS
IN EDUCATION PAGE!



The Mini Page

Next Week:
September 11th

Founded by Betty Debnam

The Great American Bison



photo by AditiStargazer

Have you ever seen real bison? Perhaps you call them buffalo. Most people do. Early settlers called bison "buffalo," and the name stuck. But North America's largest land animal is not a member of the Asian or African buffalo family. Bison have bigger heads than buffaloes, and they also have large humps by their shoulders.

The Mini Page takes a closer look at bison this week.

American bison

The American bison is the national mammal of the United States and is a close relative of cattle. There are herds at some national parks and refuges in places like Wyoming, Idaho, Montana and South Dakota. Many Native American reservations and ranches also have herds.

Bison can eat tough grasses and can forage, or search, for grass under snow with their large heads. They also eat flowering plants, lichens and woody leaves.

Bison subspecies

There are two subspecies of bison: the plains bison and the wood bison. The wood bison is generally larger.



photo by U.S. Department of Energy

Mini Fact:

Bison are social animals who live in herds. They have dark brown fur, with a beard and longer hair on their heads.

Male bison, or **bulls**, weigh up to a ton (2,000 pounds) and may be 6 feet tall. Bison **cows**, or adult female bison, weigh around 1,100 pounds and are 4 to 5 feet tall.

Baby bison are sometimes called "red dogs" because their fur is reddish in color when they're born. When they're a few months old, their fur starts to turn dark brown and the typical bison hump begins to grow.

Bison herds

Experts say there were about 60 million bison in America when the Europeans first arrived. By the 1880s, the settlers had killed all but about 500. Bison were nearly extinct. However, today there are about 500,000 bison raised as livestock and another 30,000 that live in conservation herds. They are no longer endangered.

Native Americans and Bison

Native Americans thought the bison were sacred animals. They hunted the large animals for food, clothing, shelter and fuel. The Plains Native Americans needed the bison to survive. For example, people built tipis and used bison skins to cover the poles. They ate the animals' meat and used the fat for fuel.

National Bison Day

In the United States, the first Saturday in November is celebrated as National Bison Day.

Observing bison

The biggest wild free-roaming herd of bison in the world is at Yellowstone National Park. There are almost 5,000 in the Yellowstone herd. About 100 years ago, in the early 1900s, the park had only about 23 of them.

People love to view these majestic animals. However, like all wild animals, bison are unpredictable. Although they appear gentle, bison can get upset fast if people get too close. If the animal is moving away from you, watching you carefully or reacting in any way to your presence, you are too close.

Bison can run up to 30 mph. A 2,000-pound charging bison is very dangerous.



photo by Matthew Paulson

The National Park Service recommends staying at least 100 feet (or two bus lengths) away from them. If you see a bison 100 feet from the road, they suggest observing the bison from the safety of your vehicle.

Bison, especially the mothers, are protective of their red dogs, so experts recommend staying at least 100 yards (the length of a football field) away from them.

Resources



On the Web:

- bit.ly/4eHR65u

At the library:

- "Buddy Bison's Yellowstone Adventure" by Ilona E. Holland

Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of bison are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:

BISON, BROWN,
BULL, COW, FORAGE,
FUR, GRASS, HERD,
LICHENS, MAMMAL,
PARKS, PLAINS, POUNDS,
PROTECT, RED DOG,
REFUGE, SPECIES, TALL,
TON, WOOD.

O P U W S D N U O P S T A M P
N O T O O O T E H L E A G U B
S V L F S C O F E A I L O E K
K Q T I E M E F R I C L D V L
R I B T C L D U D N E J D Q F
A D O O W H B A W S P Q E L B
P R E G U F E R W F S D R D M
P L A M M A M N O F O R A G E
L L U B I Z P Q S W K Y U G W
E E G R A S S V Z K N G P F R



Cook's Corner

Microwave Cheesy Potato and Squash Casserole

You'll need:

- 2 baking potatoes, peeled and sliced
- 1 small onion, sliced
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 2 yellow squash, sliced
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese



What to do:

1. In an 8-by-8-inch baking dish, layer potatoes and onion slices.
2. Dot with butter and sprinkle with salt and pepper.
3. Cover and cook in a microwave oven on high for 8 minutes.
4. Remove and layer squash on top.
5. Cover and cook in microwave on high for 5 minutes.
6. Remove and sprinkle with cheese.
7. Cook, uncovered, in microwave on high for 3 more minutes. Serves 6.

* You'll need an adult's help with this recipe.

1. To eat or feed on growing grass; touch lightly (5-letter verb)

□ □ □ □ □

2. Bony growths on the head of many hoofed animals (5-letter plural noun)

□ □ □ □ □

3. Large areas of level or rolling grasslands (8-letter plural noun)

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

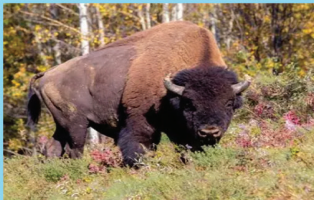
4. Involving harm or death; able to injure or badly hurt (9-letter adjective)

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

1. Bison _____ almost all day, eating grass, twigs and leaves.
2. Bison have _____, a hump on their backs and thick fur.
3. Bison live in huge _____ in South Dakota, Nebraska, Montana, Colorado and Oklahoma.
4. To avoid _____ wolves, bison will group in herds.

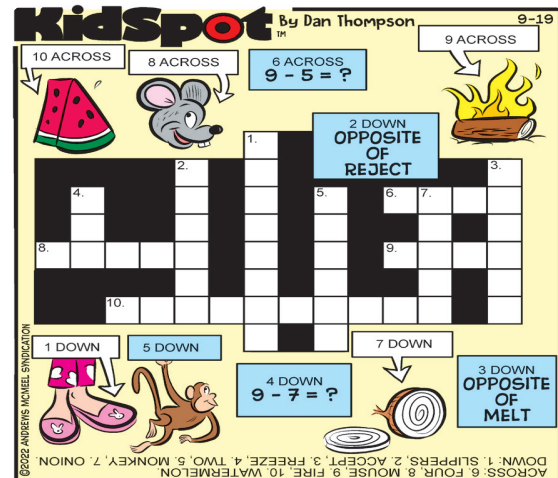
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ROOTONYM®
by Jan & Carey Orr Cook



Study the definition, when you know the missing word, fill in the letter boxes and the sentence blanks.

Answers: Graze, Horns, Prairies, Dangerous.



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