



Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why bison?

We believe the bison is the nation's most culturally recognizable mammal, and as such, deserves recognition through designation and celebration. As an American icon, bison are profiled on coins, represented on two State flags, depicted on the Department of the Interior's seal, and featured on logos of sports teams, businesses, and academic institutions. The designation of bison as our National Mammal and the establishment of National Bison Day will raise the national profile of bison to the benefit of all stakeholders including producers, conservation organizations, and tribes, while also honoring our national heritage.

2. What is the precedent for a 'National Mammal' designation in other countries?

Dozens of countries have designated national mammals. Many of these countries have multiple animals designated, or have designated them based on taxonomical class (i.e. – national bird, national mammal, national reptile, etc.). For example, Finland has a national animal, a national bird, and a national fish. India has a national animal, bird, reptile, marine animal, and heritage animal. Mexico has a national bird, animal, arthropod, dog, mammal, marine mammal, and reptile. Canada has a national emblem (Beaver) and a national horse (Canadian horse).

3. What animals are currently designated in the U.S.?

The bald eagle was designated as the 'National Emblem of the U.S.' on June 20, 1782, at the Second Continental Congress. States have dozens of specific designations including the following potential categories: animal, fish, insect, beverage, dance, flower, song, rock, tree, etc. The American bison is recognized as the state mammal of Wyoming and the state animal of Oklahoma and Kansas.

4. How are bison doing in the U.S.?

Bison were rescued from the brink of extinction in the early 20th Century. Bison are found in national parks, wildlife refuges, state parks and on tribal and private lands. Additionally, bison production is an important economic driver in many states. There are approximately 20,000 bison in U.S. public herds, 162,000 bison in private production herds, and 15,000 bison in tribal herds. Across North America, there are an estimated 500,000 bison. Canada is home to approximately 250,000 bison and Mexico is working to return bison to its lands.

5. Where are bison herds located?

Bison herds are located in all 50 states. Public bison herds are managed in several National Parks, State Parks and wildlife management areas, and National Refuges in Western and Midwestern states. Tribal bison herds are managed on over 1,000,000 acres of tribal lands mostly in the west. Private production herds are found in all 50 states.