

Toward Recovery: First NWT Progress Report on Wood Bison

YELLOWKNIFE (April 29, 2025) – A new report highlights actions taken over the last five years to support the recovery of wood bison in the Northwest Territories (NWT).

The [Progress Report on the Recovery of Wood Bison in the Northwest Territories \(2020-2024\)](#) was released today by the [Conference of Management Authorities](#) in coordination with the Mackenzie, Nahanni and Slave River Lowlands bison working groups.

The report details key actions taken across the NWT to implement the [Recovery Strategy for Wood Bison \(*Bison bison athabasca*\) in the Northwest Territories](#), including regular population surveys, ongoing harvest management, anthrax surveillance and response, maintenance of a Bison Control Area to prevent the spread of disease, and efforts to reduce the number of road collisions with bison.

Wood bison are currently listed as a **Threatened species** in both the NWT and Canada. Wood bison in the NWT are scheduled for reassessment by the [Species at Risk Committee](#) in 2026.

Progress reporting is required every five years for species listed under the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*. This is the first progress report for wood bison in the Northwest Territories.

The full progress report and additional information on [wood bison](#) and other NWT species at risk are available at: www.nwt-species-at-risk.ca.

For more information contact:

Jody Pellissey, Chairperson
Conference of Management Authorities
c/o NWT Species at Risk Secretariat
Phone: (867) 767-9237 ext. 53215
Email: SARA@gov.nt.ca

BACKGROUND:

- There are [three free-ranging wood bison populations in the NWT](#): the Mackenzie population, the Nahanni population and the Greater Wood Buffalo metapopulation (which includes bison in the Slave River Lowlands). Both the Mackenzie and Nahanni bison populations were introduced to the NWT as part of efforts to re-establish wood bison on their historic range.
- Wood bison were listed as Threatened under the federal [Species at Risk Act](#) in 2003 and under the [Species at Risk \(NWT\) Act](#) in 2017. In the NWT, the relatively small population size and declines were factors in the assessment and listing decision.
- The [Recovery Strategy for Wood Bison in the Northwest Territories](#) was completed in 2019 to guide the overall conservation and recovery of wood bison in the NWT.
- The [Conference of Management Authorities](#) (CMA) is the group of wildlife co-management boards and governments that share management responsibility for the conservation and recovery of species at risk in the NWT.
- Three working groups established to develop population-specific management plans for Mackenzie, Nahanni and Slave River Lowlands bison play a crucial role in implementing management actions, as well as bringing their organizations' perspectives into decision-making about wood bison.
- The 2020-2024 progress report includes nearly 60 actions and approaches taken over five years to support the recovery of NWT wood bison.
- Wood bison are one of twelve species identified as “at risk” of disappearing from the NWT and legally listed under the *Species at Risk (NWT) Act*. The [NWT List of Species at Risk](#) includes one **Endangered** species, seven **Threatened** species, and four species identified as **Special Concern**.

LINKS:

- [Progress Report on the Recovery of Wood Bison in the Northwest Territories \(2020-2024\)](#)
- [Recovery Strategy for Wood Bison \(*Bison bison athabasca*\) in the Northwest Territories](#)
- [Wood bison](#) (webpage - NWT Species at Risk)
- [Wood bison](#) (webpage - GNWT)

CONFERENCE OF MANAGEMENT AUTHORITIES

PO Box 1320 Yellowknife, NT X1A 2L9

Toll Free: 1-855-783-4301 • Fax: 1-867-873-0221 • Email: SARA@gov.nt.ca

WWW.NWTSPECIESATRISK.CA