



CONSERVATION OPTIMISM



BRINGING THE BISON BACK



There are two species of bison: the European bison and the American bison. Read on to find out more about them!

EUROPEAN BISON VS AMERICAN BISON

- **Increasing** population
- Over 2,500 mature individuals
- Found in Eastern Europe and recently reintroduced in the UK

- **Stable** population
- Over 11,000 mature individuals
- Found in Canada and in the USA
- **Two sub-species:** plains bison and wood bison



• Can weigh between **880 to 2,200** pounds (400-1,000kg)



• Can weigh **up to 2,400** pounds (1,100 kg), making it the **largest land mammal** in the entire Western hemisphere!



American conservationists have been working on reintroducing **wood bison** in **Alaska**. Individuals have been moved from **Elk Island National Park** in Canada (pink cross) to **Fairbanks, Alaska** in the USA (purple cross). The **first bison were released in 2015**.





REINTRODUCTION TOOLKIT FOR BISON



There are essential steps to follow in order for bison to be successfully reintroduced. Alaskan conservationist, Luke Rogers, shares them with us!

SURVEYING THE HABITAT

Scientists flew out in a helicopter to **assess the vegetation communities** in the area where they were planning on reintroducing bison to make sure that it was suitable for **the bison's diet**.



TALKING WITH THE LOCALS

Then they brought all the locals into a room to **check that people were happy** with the idea of bison coming back to Alaska. Luckily, in this case, people were quite excited to bring bison back after over **100 years of absence**.



TESTING THE HERD

Conservationists **tested** all the bison that were to be moved from Canada **to ensure they wouldn't bring any bad diseases** to Alaska. The bison were then quarantined for a few months in both Canada and Alaska.



MOVING THE BISON AROUND

The **yearlings*** (see next page) were moved from Elk Island National Park on the road using **big trailers**, via air using **military planes**, and via **shipping containers** down the Yukon River.



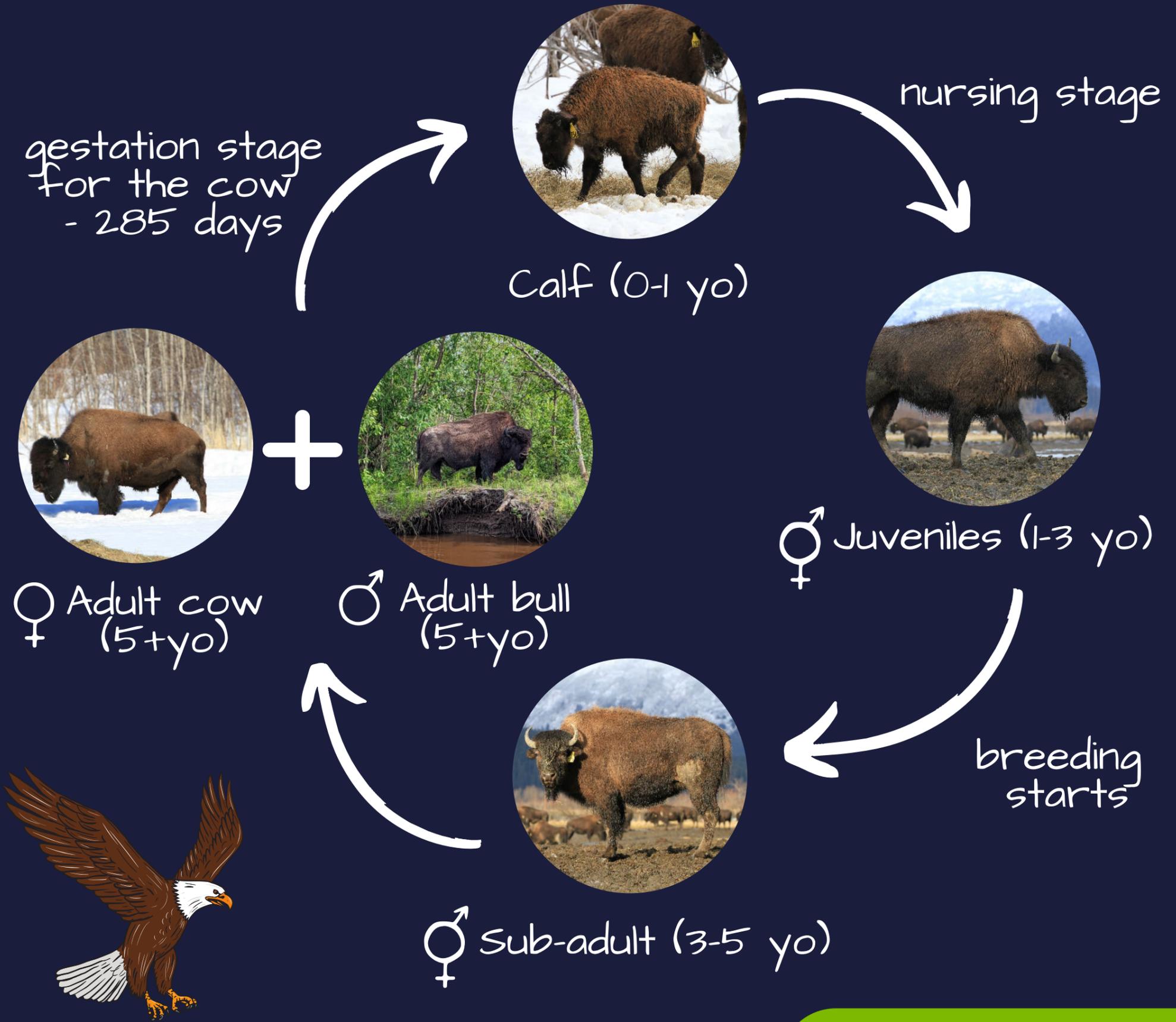
MONITORING

GPS collars are put on the bison once they are released so that scientists can keep track of where they go.



BISON LIFE CYCLE

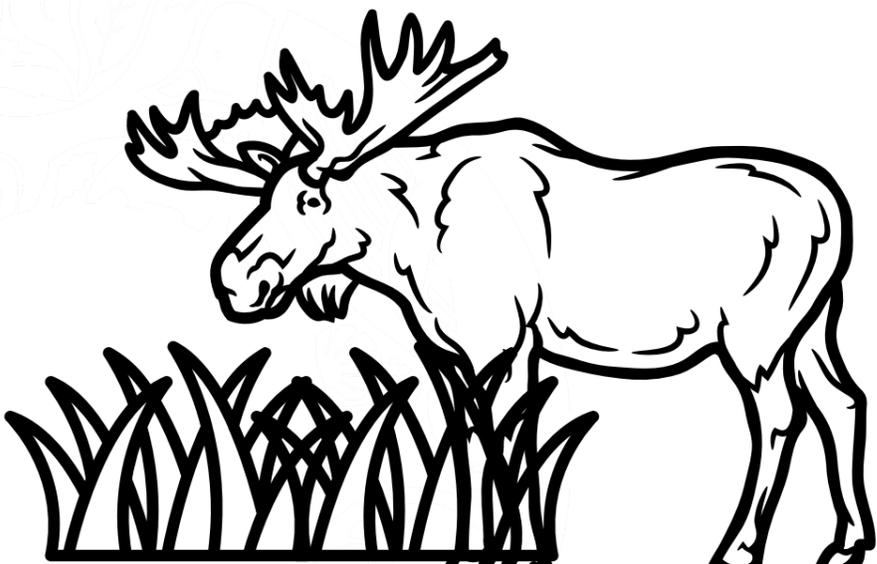
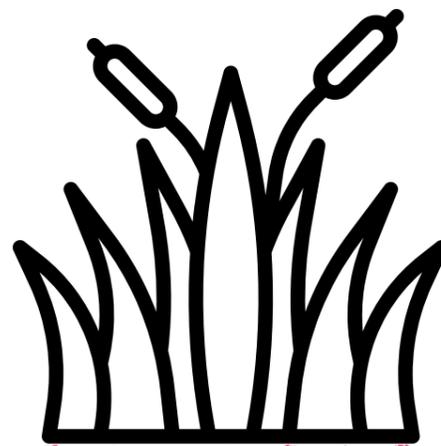
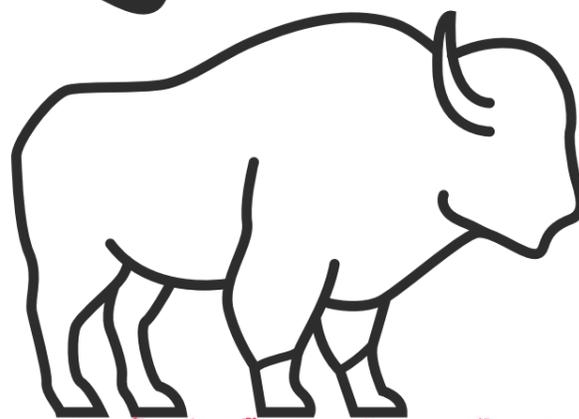
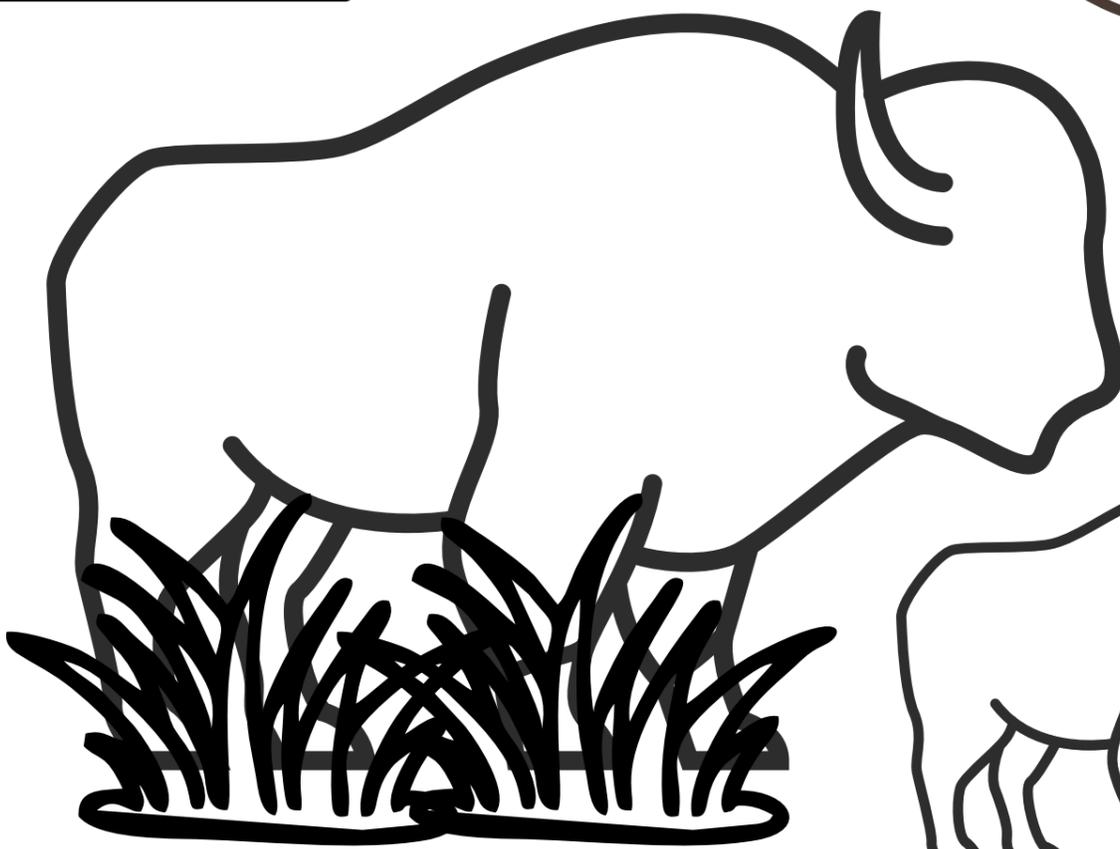
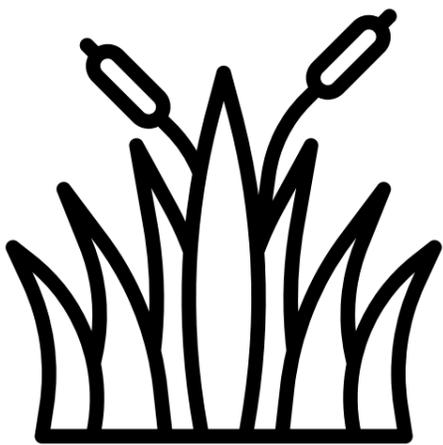
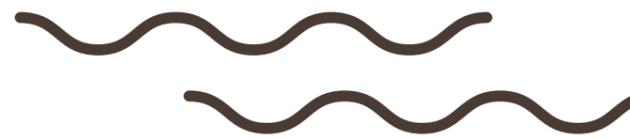
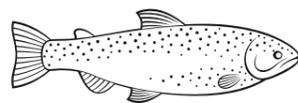
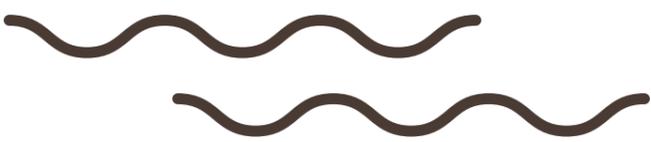
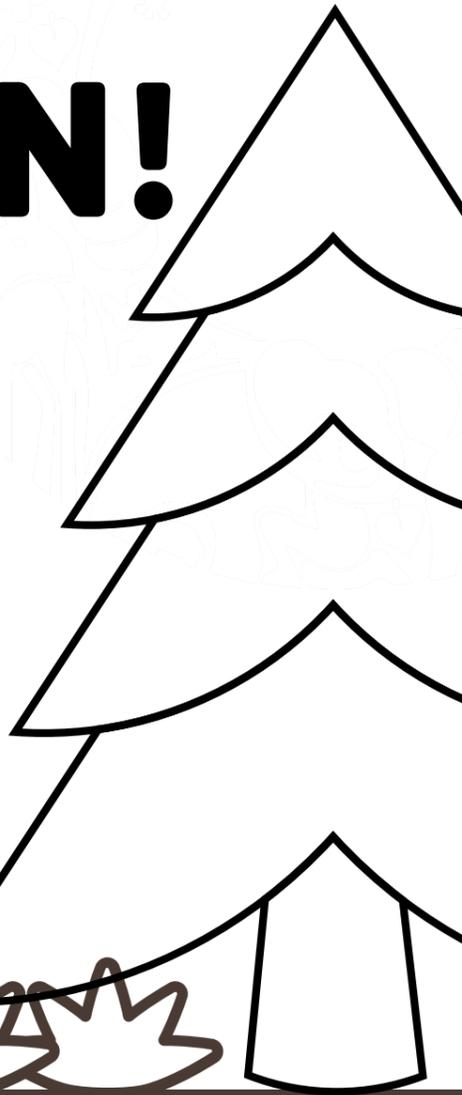
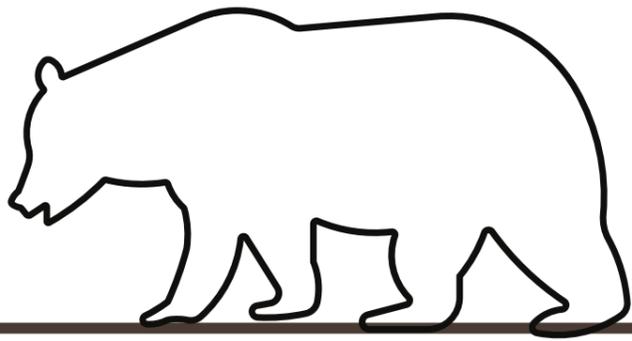
Bison go through different stages and have different names depending on their age and reproductive status.



The reintroduced yearlings are placed **in a pen** when they arrive in Alaska. This way they get to **interact with Alaskan bulls** through the fence for a few weeks before being fully released in the wild.



COLOUR ME IN!



Fun Fact

There were **tens of millions of bison** walking across the American plains in the 1800s. Explorers Lewis and Clark once said that it took them **a week to walk through the entire sea of bison** they had encountered!

QUIZ

Which sub-species of bison was reintroduced in Alaska?

What kind of GPS do scientists use to keep track of bison?

Bison are the ---- land mammal in the Western hemisphere

Where are reintroduced yearlings placed when they arrive in Alaska?

Who did scientists need to talk with before reintroducing bison?

What is an adult female bison called?

What did scientists use to check on the vegetation communities?

What is the population of European bison currently doing?

How many species of bison are there?

Once you have answered these questions try and find the answers in the wordsearch on the next page...

WORDSEARCH

Look for the answers to the quiz questions horizontally, vertically and diagonally in this word search below!

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

ANSWERS

Wordsearch:

