

Name _____



Bison Predators and Threats

Bison are large, powerful animals that live in North America and Europe. Despite their size, bison face several natural predators and other dangers in the wild. One of the main predators of bison is the wolf. Wolves often hunt young, sick, or old bison because they are easier to catch. Cougars and bears can also prey on bison, though this is less common due to the bison's strength and size.

Aside from animal predators, bison face other dangers such as environmental changes. Harsh winters can make it difficult for bison to find food, leading to starvation. Droughts can also reduce the amount of grass available for bison to graze on. When food is scarce, bison herds may need to travel long distances to find enough to eat.

Human interference has been another significant threat to bison populations. In the past, bison were hunted in large numbers for their hides and meat, nearly causing their extinction. Today, habitat loss from farming and construction also threatens bison herds by reducing the space where they can roam freely.

Bison can also suffer from diseases and parasites. Bovine tuberculosis and brucellosis are two diseases that affect bison and can spread quickly among herds. These illnesses weaken bison, making them more vulnerable to predators and environmental challenges.

Despite these threats, bison have ways to stay healthy in the wild. They often form large herds, which helps protect them from predators. Staying together makes it harder for wolves and other predators to attack individual bison. Bison also graze in open grasslands where they can spot danger from far away.

Conservation efforts have helped protect bison populations in recent years. National parks and protected reserves give bison safe spaces to live without the risk of hunting or habitat loss. These efforts have helped bring bison populations back from the brink of extinction.