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# Two Bulls Are Dead After Migrating into Idaho



Things aren't always quiet in the field during the summer. While the majority of the buffalo can be found within Yellowstone in and around the Lamar and Hayden Valleys, occasionally some bulls make their way into the Hebgen Basin, near West Yellowstone, or even into Idaho.



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## ABOUT US

BFC's goal is to stop the slaughter and harassment of Yellowstone's wild buffalo herds, protect the natural habitat of wild free-roaming buffalo and native wildlife, and to work with people of all Nations to honor the sacredness of wild buffalo.

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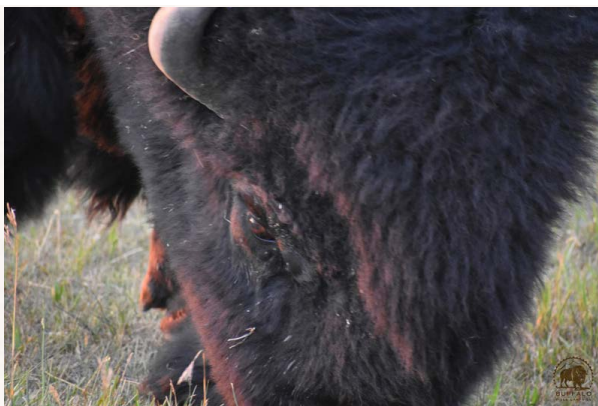
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## CONNECT WITH US





On August 1st, we received a call first thing in the morning that a bull had been spotted along highway 20, near Henrys Lake Flats in Idaho. The Idaho border is about 15 miles from West Yellowstone, and very close to the South Fork / Denny Creek area we frequently report about. Pat and I got our gear together and hit the road to search for this bull. Idaho does not welcome any wild buffalo from Yellowstone, and in fact, has **a law designating wild buffalo as outlaws**. Every summer, it seems, a bull slips through unseen, ends up in Idaho, and winds up dead. After pulling the trigger, Idaho's typical response is, "we don't have wild bison in Idaho."

When we got to Idaho to the bull's last known location, we were frustrated, as trying to locate a single bull on that vast landscape is like trying to find a needle in a haystack. As we pulled over, looked around, and wondered what to do, the local Montana Department of Livestock (DOL) stock inspector, Bridger, drove by, saw us, and pulled over across the road. We headed over to learn what he knew, and he said that no one had been able to find the bull. Idaho Department of Fish & Game knew he was around, but not exactly where. During our conversation, we discussed another bull, who had tried to make it to West Yellowstone, and he let us know of two additional buffalo who had moved through the Madison Arm Road to the South Fork / Denny Creek area. One of these bulls got in with some cows belonging to Pat Povah, a local hobby rancher who is staunchly anti-buffalo. That has always been a death sentence for bulls. But not this time. Bridger said he had moved the one bull out of Povah's cows and then hazed both of them to habitat where they are safe. We were shocked that the bull hadn't been killed. Just like when a bull makes it to Idaho, every time a bull gets to Povah's in the summer, they are shot. We thanked Bridger. He let us know that the DOL is "trying not to use lethal methods as much as possible" which was also pleasantly shocking to hear. Bridger said he would also let us know if he heard anything about the bull now in Idaho. Our heads spinning in disbelief that we'd just had that conversation, we parted ways.

We continued to look for the bull, but had no luck. Bridger mostly kept to his word, and for a few days, let us know that no one had found him yet. Then, on Saturday, it was reported in a local paper that a family on vacation had found



a bull buffalo... with their vehicle. He was struck and killed on Friday night. The sad part is that striking the bull was buried in the article, which was written with a focus on the family's two-legged dog who had been lost after the collision, but later found, unharmed. When we contacted Bridger about this incident, he informed us that this was yet another bull, because the day before, on Thursday, he had found the guy we'd been looking for, and said he "took care of him." When we asked him if he shot him, he fell silent. We can only assume that this is what happened. But the odd thing is, why would a Montana livestock official, out of his jurisdiction in another state, shoot the bull when he was in Idaho? Questions remain, but the sad reality is that two wild, migratory buffalo who attempted to restore themselves to their native habitat, are dead. Wild buffalo have been extirpated from Idaho for more than a century. That they would not gain immediate protection, or at the very least be celebrated for making a return, is a sad testament to what this nation holds — and doesn't hold — sacred.



Earlier in the week, Pat and I went to town to run some errands. On the way back, just a few hundred yards from town, we spotted a young bull buffalo who appeared to be making a bee-line for town, which was bustling with visitors to Yellowstone. We were worried for him not only because there were so many people and cars around, but also because he was out of the government's "tolerance" zone and vulnerable to being harassed or killed. And, while the town of West Yellowstone likes to celebrate the image of the buffalo and make their money off of the people who come to see them, town officials don't particularly care for the living, breathing version walking down the streets. We pulled to the side of the road with our hazards on to warn traffic as the bull made his way. He stopped at the Gallatin National Forest office to scratch some itches on a pine tree and graze a little of the green grass in their yard, then, after leaving a present, continued on his way. Right then the cops showed up. First a West Yellowstone town police car, then a buffalo-friendly Gallatin County sheriff. They followed the bull, and we followed them. They attempted to escort him in the direction of the park and away from the busy town. But, as BFC's familiar saying goes: "I'm a Buffalo. I Do What I Want." While he generally moved where they wanted him to, he made them work hard for it. Without too much trouble, the bull eventually made his way into Yellowstone, and out of their jurisdictions. We felt bad for

the buffalo, who was simply walking down the road headed into a town that exists because he and his kind do. All the people there, the visitors, the businesses, heck, even the park itself — they are there because of the buffalo.

Not even our national mammal is safe in the United States. This is why buffalo need to be [protected under the Endangered Species Act](#), which would protect them wherever they may roam.

Wild is the Way ~ Roam Free!

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