

Ranchlands is seeking a ranch or partnership with a ranch owner as a home for a herd of 1000+ buffalo. For details email info@ranchlands.com. We are also now accepting ranch management proposals/inquiries.



RANCHLANDS

ZAPATA RANCH

HOME

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Questions & Reservations

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Mosca, Colorado 81146

Sign-Up for Offers & More

History of the Plains Bison

Historically, bison roamed North America from coast to coast. The Plains Bison, which predominated the lands west of the Appalachian mountains and through the Rockies, once numbered over 50 million. Bison



remains found on the ranch have been dated at over 10,000 years old.

For centuries, bison were an important staple for numerous Plains Indian tribes, providing food, shelter, clothing, tools, and even holding important religious significance. Beginning in the mid-1800s, however, commercial hunting decimated the bison, bringing the species close to extinction.

Through the bold efforts of concerned citizens, the bison were protected on private and federal lands. Several small herds formed the genetic basis for the bison that exist and are thriving today. As a result of these efforts and careful management, Bison numbers have rebounded in recent times, and nearly 500,000 are in existence today.

Banner photo 1 by [Karen Myers](#)

Banner photo 2, 3, and left column photo by [Stephen Weaver](#)

The Zapata's 2,000 head bison herd is located on the north end of the ranch in a 50,000 acre pasture called the Medano (formerly the Medano Ranch). Plentiful meadows irrigated by artesian wells, lakes, snow run-off, and a seasonal creek known as Sand Creek create a home rich in forage for our resident herd.

The bison are managed as a conservation species, meaning that they run as a wild herd: no branding, supplemental feed or weaning. Bison organize themselves in family groups that are typically 30 to 100 animals in size, usually comprised of related females and their nursing young. The bull bison typically run in bachelor herds or alone. Occasionally throughout the summer the entire herd will suddenly materialize out of nowhere, having traveled from all corners of the pasture to arrive in a fresh meadow to graze, much as they would have before modern man appeared in the American West. In the colder months of the year and during the breeding season, groups congregate together in a large herd. In winter they are usually joined by large herds of elk acting in the same manner.

There are several sub-species of American bison; Plains Bison, like those on the ranch today, are typically smaller than their northern cousins, the Wood Bison. A full-grown bull Plains Bison can weigh up to 2,000 pounds and stand over six feet tall. Cow bison are much smaller, standing around four to five feet tall and weighing from 900 to 1,200 pounds. Bison typically live an average of 20 years, with females generally outliving males.

Our bison are gathered once a year, in November. They are tagged, vaccinated for brucellosis, sold for meat, or sold to other ranching operations.

Visit our [bison tours page](#) to learn more about seeing the conservation herd in their 50,000 acre pasture.

CONTACT US 719.378.2356 ✉ cowboy@zranch.org



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