

The 2010-2021 Blackfeet – Yellowstone Bison Hunt regulations:

The Blackfeet Off-Reservation hunting area is described as those open and unclaimed lands found within the Lame Bull Treaty of 1855 (map attached). Some areas of the Blackfeet traditional hunting grounds are purposely excluded to help prevent Blackfeet hunters from harvesting animals from areas suspected of having Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD).

Tribal Members must obtain an Off-Reservation hunting license from the Blackfeet Fish & Wildlife Department via the online licensing system at www.blackfeetfishandwildlife.net. All Off-Reservation bison, elk, deer, and antelope tags must be picked up at the Blackfeet Fish & Wildlife Department after verification of Blackfeet Tribal enrollment.

Off-Reservation bison, elk, deer, and antelope permits must be obtained from the Blackfeet Fish and Wildlife Department prior to engaging in any off-reservation hunting activities. In addition, all tribal hunters must have a valid tribal enrollment identification card in their possession while hunting off-reservation.

Tribal members are eligible to harvest two (2) bison, two (2) elk, two (2) deer, and two (2) antelope off-reservation. Tribal hunters are prohibited from transferring their permit to another person or using a permit issued to another person.

A hunt tag. The tag must be notched for the day and date the bison was taken and must be so marked at the time of the kill. Permitted hunters must accompany harvested big game during transportation unless otherwise authorized by BFWD. The tag must be attached to the animal once the animal is taken and must remain attached until processing of the animal has taken place.

Any elk or deer harvested must be sampled for CWD by the hunter or the head and upper four inches of the neck provided to a Blackfeet Fish and Wildlife Department game warden. CWD sampling kits and instructions on how to remove the lymph nodes must be picked up at the Blackfeet Fish and Wildlife Department (BFWD) by any Blackfeet tribal hunters planning on hunting elk or deer while in the YNP area. Tribal hunters harvesting deer and elk are required to leave the head and carcass (spinal column) in the field if using the gutless/boning out method; otherwise, the carcass (spinal column) and head must be disposed of in an approved landfill. Tribal hunters can only bring home the meat and hide of any harvested elk or deer. Tribal hunters are advised to store the meat in a cooler, freezer, or other secure location until they receive the results of the CWD test. The CDC recommends that hunters not consume any deer or elk until they have received notification that the animal is CWD-free. ** Bison and antelope do not require any CWD sampling.*

The only means of taking a bison allowed is with a center-fire rifle with a 150 grain or larger bullet

Only an enrolled Blackfeet tribal member with an Off-Reservation big game tag can be hunting. Tribal hunters are allowed to have 4 or 5 helpers to assist with retrieval, gutting, and butchering of bison, elk, deer, and antelope. These helpers are not allowed to carry weapons or be involved in shooting of bison, elk, deer, or antelope.

A harvest report card supplied by the BFW department that must be completed within 7 days of the kill or if unsuccessful no later than 7 days after the season close. These harvest reports can be completed at the BFW office, online, or by mail. Failure to submit your harvest report may result in suspension of future off-reservation hunts.

Hunters are encouraged to read the information and recommendations provided on the Blackfeet Fish and Wildlife Department website. All tribal hunters and their helpers must recognize that treaty rights hunting must occur upon open and unclaimed public lands, which does not include State lands. They must also be aware that Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service lands often have special regulations and restrictions that must be complied with while hunting on these public lands.

In addition, it is important for tribal hunters to carefully read and understand the information provided regarding brucellosis because both bison and elk are known to carry this disease in the Yellowstone area. In addition, tribal hunters should be familiar with Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) and avoid harvesting any big game animals that appear sickly or are not acting normal. CWD exists in Montana and tribal hunters are restricted from hunting in these areas and must never harvest big game animals from these areas (see attached map).

As a further precaution, tribal members must ensure all harvested elk or deer are sampled for CWD and that the carcass (spinal column) and head are left in the field where harvested or disposed of in an approved landfill. All Blackfeet tribal hunters will be required to sign a form indicating they are familiar with these regulations, that they will comply with CWD sampling and carcass disposal regulations, and that they will follow special COVID-19 hunting regulations.

All tribal hunters participating in the 2020-2021 Yellowstone Bison Hunt must sign a Yellowstone Bison Hunting regulations acknowledgement agreeing to comply with Blackfeet tribal regulations, reading and understanding materials provided pertaining to CWD & brucellosis, and completing a harvest report as required.