



Information Bulletin

Suspected Anthrax Outbreak in remote area of Wood Buffalo National Park

A possible anthrax outbreak is being investigated in a remote backcountry area of southern Wood Buffalo National Park. Visitor facilities and transportation corridors are unaffected and remain safe to visit and travel on.

- Each summer, Wood Buffalo National Park Resource Conservation staff conduct routine surveillance flights in the park. Late last week, staff received mortality signals from several collared bison in the southern area of the park and targeted that area on their flight.
- Three bison were observed deceased in the Sweetgrass area and two were field tested for anthrax. The samples are being sent to a lab to confirm the results.
- Since that flight, more bison have been found deceased and anthrax is suspected. The areas where the carcasses have been found include Lake One and the Trident Creek/Trident Meadows area (~40km from Garden River). Park staff will be conducting aerial and ground level monitoring to identify any new occurrences.
- So far, the deceased bison have been located in remote locations of the park and we don't foresee any threat to the public. However, as a precautionary measure, an area closure will be implemented for the Sweetgrass and Trident Creek/Meadows areas.
- Parks Canada team members work in cooperation with the Government of the Northwest Territories, Alberta Health Services, Health Canada, local communities and visitors to ensure the health and safety of the public and park staff are protected.
- Should any member of the public come across a dead animal in the park, do not touch it. Leave the area immediately and report the location to the Wood Buffalo National Park Duty Officer at (867) 872-0404.
- Further information will be shared as details become known.
- Please review the attached fact sheet for more information on anthrax.

For up-to-date information on the anthrax outbreak or any temporary closures in Wood Buffalo National Park please contact the Administration Office at 867-872-7960 or e-mail woodbuffaloinfo-infowoodbuffalo@pc.gc.ca.

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Public Notice

Anthrax in Wood Buffalo National Park

Anthrax has been suspected in deceased bison in the southern area Wood Buffalo National Park, including ten at Sweetgrass Station.

For public safety and awareness, please review the following information if you live near or are visiting Wood Buffalo National Park.

Anthrax Facts

- Anthrax is a disease caused by the bacteria Bacillus anthracis.
- Bison usually contract the disease by inhaling contaminated soil during vigorous wallowing in dust baths. Bison that have contracted anthrax usually die within 72 hours.
- Although extremely rare, humans can contract anthrax from direct contact with bison that have died of anthrax.
- Anthrax can cause skin, respiratory or intestinal infection in humans. Skin infections are the most commonly seen form in people causing dark pustules on the skin. Anthrax infections can be fatal but can be controlled if promptly treated with antibiotics. Anyone who may have been exposed to anthrax is advised to contact the local health centre immediately.

It is good to be aware of the signs of anthrax:

- Dead animals alone or in groups
- Blood oozing out of body openings
- Animal in a saw-horse position (on back, legs up)

If you see or find a dead animal:

- Do not approach it
- Record your exact location
- Notify Wood Buffalo National Park staff immediately at (867) 872-7900 or (780) 697-3662

Anthrax Can Infect People

- Never touch or approach a carcass
- Do not eat meat from an animal that died mysteriously
- Stay up-wind of a carcass