

Name

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### My Trip to Yellowstone

Shimmering, crystal clear water. Lush emerald green grass. Never- ending rolling green hills. Massive brown shaggy bison. Know what I'm talking about? No? Well I'm talking about Yellowstone National park in Wyoming, U.S.A. This is my story about how Yellowstone changed my view on how important it is to take care of our wildlife before it's gone.

"Goodbye home; hello, Yellowstone," I thought as we were driving away in our brand new truck towing our not so brand new toy hauler. That's when the torture of driving for 6 hours started. I told my mum about half way through the drive, "Mum, I'm bored!"

"Read a book," she told me.

"I already did."

"Take a nap."

"I already did."

"Well, I don't know what to tell you."

So there I was stuck in a car with my parents and dog doing ab-so-lute-ly nothing. "Oh look a tree; oh look another tree," I thought sourly. Finally we entered Yellowstone. The only word to describe it was, "Woah." There were huge mountains. Tons of little creeks and streams. And bison. So many bison! They were everywhere! It could take an hour just to go 16 miles because there were bison in the road. Your probably thinking "why not just honk your horn to

get 'em to move?" Well when you have a 2,000 pound animal with horns, you usually don't want to startle it into charging. But that's just me so hey, if you're interested please go right ahead.

Every night at 9:00 they have a Ranger talk about a different topic that has to do with Yellowstone. The third night we were there my dad and I went to one of these "Ranger Rick Talks." That night it was "Bison in Yellowstone". Did you know that 200 years ago Yellowstone had **63 million bison**? Crazy huh? What's even crazier? When they started to build the railroads the bison were in the way. So they killed hundreds upon thousands of bison. Finally after the railroads were built and touring started there were only **23 bison**, not 23 million, but just **23 bison!** During the time-period of 6 years bison went from 63 million to 23. Think about it for a minute. 63,000,000 to 23 in 6 years. And to make matters worse they didn't even use the bison. They just left them there to rot. The Indians would hunt bison, but only for what they needed and then they used every little bit of the bison. They used the hide for clothes and blankets, the bones for weapons and the meat for food. The white man just killed them to get them out of the way of the railroad.

Now-a-days, bison numbers are up to 20,000. That's pretty good for going from 63 million to 23 back up to 20,000. We still have a lot of work to do though in getting those numbers back up. To me it's important to make sure that those bison numbers keep going up and not down. It's important to me because I want everyone that goes to Yellowstone to be able to see the famous bison. If there are no bison in Yellowstone than that would ruin the food chain of all the other animals such as the wolves.

Bison are an amazing and magnificent animal. To see them up close and personal is an awe-inspiring feeling. I hope that I can someday take my children and grandchildren to

Yellowstone and they will be able to have the same feeling I did . . . amazement at the beauty of the entire place. Because of everything that I saw and learned I now know that it is **extremely** important to take care of all of our wildlife so that we will have more than just the remaining few that are in captivity.