# Bison bison

# Stratigraphy ROCK **ROCK UNIT** COLUMN QUATERNARY Oahe Coleharboi Unnamed Arikaree Oligocene Brule 38-Chadron Camels Butte TERTIARY Sentinel Butte Bullion Slope Cannonball Ludlow Hell Creek Fox Hills CRETACEOUS Pierre Niobrara Carlile Sand & Grave

North Dakota

Locations where fossils have been found

## **Common Name:**

American bison

## **Classification:**

Class: Mammalia
Order: Artiodactyla
Family: Bovidae

## **Description:**

Bison bison, the American bison, lives in North Dakota today but was much more abundant in the past. Two hundred years ago, Lewis and Clark recorded huge herds of bison in North Dakota. Bison are large animals, the males are up to about 10 feet long and weight as much as 1800 pounds. Bison live in herds and mostly eat grass. They have a keen sense of smell and have excellent eyesight. Bison bison date back to about 5,000 years ago. The species has likely lived in North Dakota that long. Bison fossils, skulls and skeletal bones, are abundant in North Dakota and have been found throughout the state.



*Bison* herd along the Missouri River north of Bismarck with the Lewis and Clark expedition in boats on the river in 1804. Painting by, and courtesy of, Vern Erickson.