

New habitat for world's smallest deer species at New Bedford's Buttonwood Park Zoo

The Buttonwood Park Zoo has opened another brand new outdoor exhibit on its seven acre campus – this time, a home for the world's smallest species of deer.

The new outdoor habitat, filled with lush green grass and a cool watering hole, was created for BPZ00's two Chilean pudu, Kelly, age 8 and Chewy, age 4. Native to Chile and Argentina, they have been living behind the scenes at BPZ00 for more than a year – and are now adjusting to their new space.

“Although very small in stature, Chilean pudu make up for their diminutive size with a large personality,” said Buttonwood Park Zoo Director, Keith Lovett. “The new expansive pudu habitat allows the Zoo to not only provide an enriching environment for the animals, but it also creates the opportunity for the Zoo to raise conservation awareness for this unique species which is experiencing population declines in the wild.”



8 year old female Chilean pudu, Kelly under some greenery in BPZOO's newly opened habitat. Buttonwood Park Zoo photo.

Chilean pudu (*Pudu puda*), also referred to as southern pudu, live in the temperate forests of southern Chile and southwestern Argentina. They are listed as a Near Threatened species according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Their population is declining as a result of forest loss and degradation, predation by domestic dogs, vehicular accidents, poaching as well as potential impacts from other species (such as wild boar, invasive deer, and cattle).

An adult pudu's body length is less than three feet long, with its shoulder height ranging from 1 to 1.5 feet tall. The pudu has a short, reddish-brown coat and a short tail. Fawns are born with white spots. Males have simple spike antlers about 3 inches in length.

The Buttonwood Park Zoo participates in the Association of Zoos and Aquariums Species Survival Plan (SSP) for Chilean pudu. The goal of the SSP is to cooperatively manage animal populations within AZA accredited zoos to ensure the

sustainability of a healthy and genetically diverse population while enhancing the conservation of this species in the wild.

There are only 42 Chilean pudu at 13 AZA accredited facilities.