

Beardsley Zoo wolf released in Tennessee

BRIDGEPORT (AP) — A rare red wolf that had been housed at the Beardsley Zoo has been released into the wilderness of Tennessee as part of a federal program to reintroduce endangered species to the wild.

The wolf was one of two released Monday into the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, said James M. Ridenour, director of the U.S. National Park Service. Two more will be released later.

The last known red wolf in the wild was shot in North Carolina in 1905.

"The park service is required, when feasible, to re-establish species that are lost due to human intervention," Ridenour said.

The Beardsley Zoo wolf,

named Atlas, fathered two pups at the zoo last May.

There are only about 135 red wolves in existence, said Gregg Dancho, director of the Beardsley Zoo.

The wolves released into the Great Smoky Mountains will be tracked through surgically implanted radio transmitters. They are expected to take six months to get used to the wilderness and may begin breeding by May 1992.

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