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Ministry of Environment Designates Cheongju Zoo as First Hub Zoo

- Hub zoos to play a role in animal welfare education and promotion, biodiversity conservation, etc.
- Expectations for hub zoos to lead in coexistence with wildlife and improvement of animal welfare

The Ministry of Environment (Minister Han Wha-jin) announced on May 10 that as of May 10, Cheongju Zoo (located in Myeongam-dong, Sangdang-gu, Cheongju, Chungcheongbuk-do) will be designated as the first hub zoo.

The introduction of the ‘Hub zoo’ designation system came alongside the amendment (enforced on December 14, 2023) of the Act on the Management of Zoos and Aquariums (hereinafter referred to as Zoos and Aquariums Act). Designated hub zoos can fulfill roles such as enhancing zoo capabilities through education and promotion, supporting animal disease and safety management, and managing breeding and conservation processes, while also receiving essential budgetary support from the government.

Cheongju Zoo, designated as the first hub zoo, was confirmed to meet all the facility and staffing requirements* specified in the Zoos and Aquarium Act, according to the on-site inspection conducted by the Ministry and wildlife experts on April 22. Considering the conservation efforts for biodiversity, experience in wildlife management, and willingness for future initiatives, the Ministry judged that Cheongju zoo has the capacity to serve as a hub zoo in the central region.

* Facility requirements (area of 10,000m² or more, animal hospital, educational facilities, research and training facilities, quarantine and veterinary equipment), Staffing

requirements (five or more operations and management staff members, eight or more care and welfare staff members, two or more facilities and landscaping staff members, and four or more veterinarians)

Given ongoing concerns about the welfare of exhibited animals and management shortcomings, hub zoos aim to exchange diverse experiences on animal care and welfare improvement with the animal exhibition industry. In addition, there is an expectation for the animal exhibition industry to boost its management capabilities and aid in discovering sustainable coexistence solutions with wildlife.

The Ministry plans to designate hub zoos sequentially to cover regions such as the metropolitan area, Honam region, and Yeongnam region, following the launch of Cheongju Zoo.

Kim Tae-oh, Director General of the Nature Conservation Bureau, stated, “We hope that the exemplary practices of Cheongju Zoo would spread to other zoos.” He added, “Through various support activities, we will advance the entire zoo industry and improve animal welfare.”