

보도시점

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A Lifelong Sanctuary for Captive Bears Opens in Gurye

- First public bear protection facility opens in Korea, providing care for ten bears purchased by civic organizations

The Ministry of Environment (Minister Kim Sunghwan) announced that the public bear protection facility, jointly established with Gurye County in Masan-myeon, Gurye-gun, Jeollanam-do, will open on September 30 and begin caring for ten captive bears purchased by civic organizations from related farms.

The opening ceremony, to be held in the afternoon, will be attended by Vice Minister of Environment Kum Hanseung, National Assembly Deputy Speaker Lee Hack-young, Gurye County Governor Kim Sun-ho, Korea National Park Service Director Joo Dae-young, and Korean Animal Welfare Association Director Cho Hee-kyung.

The “Gurye Bear Protection Facility” was established near Jirisan National Park in Masan-myeon, Gurye County, on a site covering a total area of 25,744 square meters after Gurye County was selected in February 2021 for a national subsidy project. The facility consists of three outdoor enclosures, two breeding buildings, and one quarantine building, and is designed to accommodate and protect up to 49 bears.

Gurye County, which manages the facility, has established a consignment operation system with the Korea National Park Service, an organization with

expertise in managing wild animals such as bears, and has completed preparations to protect the captive bears.

Meanwhile, the ten bears transferred to the facility were purchased by civic organizations from a farm in Yeoncheon County, Gyeonggi Province, in accordance with the “Agreement on Ending Bear Farming,” signed in January 2022 between the Ministry of Environment, local governments, bear farmers, and civic groups such as Korean Animal Welfare Association and Green Korea.

However, some of these bears have sustained injuries, such as missing limbs or damage to their teeth or eyesight. These individuals are expected to recover their health through further examinations and treatment by veterinarians and other specialists.

At the opening ceremony, Vice Minister Kum Hanseung will exchange views with officials from Gurye County, the Korea National Park Service, and civic organizations on the current status and future direction of ending bear farming, and will discuss ways to cooperate with stakeholders to ensure the stable operation of the protection facility.

Vice Minister of Environment Kum Hanseung stated, “The opening of the Gurye Bear Protection Facility is a result of cooperation achieved through the joint efforts of the government, the National Assembly, and civil society.” He added, “The Ministry of Environment will continue to work tirelessly to end bear farming by promoting support projects to protect the remaining captive bears.”