

보도시점 2026. 8. 19.(수) 12:00 (목요일 조간) 배포 2026. 8. 18.(화)

Lost ‘Black Stork’ Set to Return to Korean Skies

National Institute of Ecology Joins Forces with Mongolia to Ramp Up Restoration Efforts

- MOU signed with Wildlife Science and Conservation Center of Mongolia
... Wild population to be introduced following field surveys
- ‘Non-detriment finding’ conducted in compliance with international conventions...
Building cooperation to conserve biodiversity in Northeast Asia

The National Institute of Ecology (NIE, Director Lee Chang Seok), under the Ministry of Climate, Energy and Environment (MCEE), announced that it is stepping up international cooperation with Wildlife Science and Conservation Center (WSCC) of Mongolia to introduce wild individuals into Korea as part of efforts to restore the endangered black stork, designated as Class I Endangered Wildlife.

The black stork, a wintering and passage migrant bird, has been known to winter in very small numbers, fewer than 20 individuals, in areas such as the lower reaches of the Nakdonggang River, Cheonsuman Bay, and Jeju Island. A large bird measuring 90 cm-100 cm in length, it has predominantly black plumage with a green and purple sheen, a red bill, legs and skin around the eyes, and a white chest and belly. Although breeding was recorded in 1965 in Gasong Village, Andong, Gyeongsangbuk-do, there have been no records of breeding in Korea since 1968, following the disappearance of the breeding pairs.

The two organizations signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, on June 8, 2026, to facilitate the introduction of wild

black storks into Korea. They also agreed to conduct joint research over the next five years on the conservation, restoration, and reintroduction of endangered wildlife, including the black stork.

The MOU includes provisions for 1) jointly implementing the black stork restoration project, 2) surveying the distribution and breeding status of wild populations, 3) cooperating on administrative procedures for non-detriment findings(NDF)* and securing individuals in compliance with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), 4) cooperating on genetic diversity management and propagation technologies, and 5) promoting academic exchanges and disseminating research findings.

* Non-detriment finding (NDF): A scientific assessment to determine whether the capture or international trade of wild individuals would have a negative impact on the survival of natural populations. It is a mandatory process under the CITES.

Following the signing of the MOU, the two organizations have been conducting surveys of black stork breeding conditions and NDF in Khentii Province, Mongolia, from late June through late July.

The field survey identified a total of seven black stork nests, with 10 fledglings (juvenile birds) found across four of the nests, confirming stable breeding with in Mongolia's black stork population.

The NIE plans to complete the NDF by the second half of this year and proceed step by step with domestic quarantine and international permitting procedures. Based on the results of the scientific assessment, it plans to establish the groundwork for breeding trials in Korea, including the introduction of black storks, during the first half of 2027.

Director Lee Chang Seok said, "The restoration of the black stork is more than simply bringing back a single species; it is a meaningful process of restoring the Northeast Asian ecosystem based on scientific evidence and international cooperation." He added, "Through close cooperation with Mongolia, we will make every effort to ensure that the black stork, which disappeared from Korea, can once again take to our skies."

**Attach-
ment**

**Black Stork habitat, breeding nests, and survey
photographs in Khentii Province, Mongolia**



Wetland feeding habitat of the Black Stork in Mongolia



Black Stork breeding habitat in the forests of Mongolia



Black Stork chicks in a nest, June 2026



Black Stork chicks in a nest, July 2026



Joint survey by the National Institute of Ecology of Korea and the Mongolian Wildlife Science and Conservation Center (left: field survey; right: drone survey)