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Public Zoo Consultative Body Launches to Raise Safety and Animal Welfare Standards

- Public zoo-centered cooperation system established to review compliance with licensing requirements
- Cooperation measures discussed to improve safety management and animal welfare

The Ministry of Climate, Energy and Environment (MCEE, Minister Kim Sungwhan) announced that it will hold the inaugural meeting of the nationwide public zoo consultative body on May 6 at the Korea Institute of Public Sector (located in Jung-gu, Seoul) to discuss measures for improving zoo safety management and animal welfare standards.

The nationwide public zoo consultative body was established in response to growing public interest in zoos following the recent wolf escape incident at Daejeon O-World, as well as increasing social demands for improvements in zoo facilities, staffing, and overall operations, and for public zoos to play a leading role in this field.

The consultative body will also jointly review the preparedness of public zoos ahead of the transition to a licensing system under the Act on the Management of Zoos and Aquariums (effective from December 2023, with a grace period until December 2028 for previously registered zoos), and examine support measures for areas found to be insufficient.

The inaugural meeting will be attended by Lee Chae-eun, Director General for Nature Conservation Bureau at the MCEE, as well as representatives from

river basin (regional) environmental offices, the National Institute of Ecology, the Korean Association of Zoos and Aquariums, and public zoos nationwide.

The MCEE plans to use the launch of this consultative body as an opportunity to establish a foundation for ongoing cooperation among public zoos and to jointly enhance implementation standards in key areas such as facilities, staffing, safety management, and animal welfare, thereby leading the stable settlement of the licensing system.

The MCEE also plans to actively support the successful implementation of the licensing system in the field by continuously improving relevant standards and support systems based on feedback from on-site personnel.

Lee Chae-eun, Director General for Nature Conservation Bureau at the MCEE, said, “We will focus our policy efforts on encouraging the transition to the zoo licensing system while refining related standards to improve zoo safety management and animal welfare levels.” He added, “In particular, we will continue to cooperate with relevant organizations so that public zoos can thoroughly meet the licensing requirements.”