



## Press Release

다시, 대한민국!  
새로운 국민의 나라

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### **Five environmental bills, including the Act on the Management of Zoos and Aquariums, were passed by the National Assembly**

- The Ministry of Environment expects environmental bills will contribute to laying a foundation for carrying out environmental policies beneficial to citizens –

☐ **(Act on the Management of Zoos and Aquariums) Change from the current registration to a permit system for zoos and aquariums and enhance the welfare of the animals.**

☐ **(Wildlife Protection and Management Act) Prohibiting the exhibition of wild animals in places other than zoos and aquariums; newly institute the definition of "designated wild animals subject to management," reinforcing import and distribution regulations through whitelisting.**

☐ **(Three laws on report reception) An administrative push that requires the administrative agency to review a filed report and notify the reporting person of the reception within a given period.**

**Sejong, December 15** – The Ministry of Environment (Minister Han Wha-jin) announced that five environmental bills, including the Act on the Management of Zoos and Aquariums (hereinafter the "Zoo and Aquarium Act") and the Wildlife Protection and Management Act (hereinafter the "Wildlife Act"), have passed the National Assembly on November 24. These bills will be transferred from the National Assembly to the government for cabinet resolutions and implemented immediately or up to three years after their proclamation.

Currently, zoos and aquariums are operated under the current registration system. Zoos and aquariums could be established as long as the size required for registration is satisfied. Accordingly,

there has been a lack of management to respond to safety accidents and prevent diseases. There was also criticism that the poor habitat environment of the exhibited animals was not improved.

### **<Changing to a Permit System>**

Zoos and aquariums were changed to a permit system where operators are required to submit the following for permission from the mayor or governor. Current laws dictate that already registered zoos must meet all the requirements established by the new laws and obtain the permit within six years of the proclamation (by December 2028). A new inspector system was also put in place to enable more competent inspections. The Minister of Environment and the Minister of Oceans and Fisheries will appoint inspectors and Fisheries from a pool of civilian experts engaged in the animal ecosystem and welfare fields.

### **<Enhancing Animal Welfare>**

So far, animal experience programs have played positive roles by providing visitors with an opportunity to learn about wild animals through behavioral enrichment and positive reinforcement training; in some cases, however, the animals were maltreated by excessive feeding and other inappropriate activities. Thus, a new legal basis was implemented to prevent such animal cruelty. Subordinate statutes will be put in place to regulate certain activities involving animals. Moreover, zoos and aquariums will be prohibited from newly retaining animals with a high probability of diseases or death caused by exhibitions. These new statutes will ban retaining any cetaceans, making the current 21 cetaceans (as of November 2022) in domestic aquariums the last cetaceans to be exhibited in Korea.

The "Wildlife Act" △ prohibits the exhibition of wild animals in facilities other than lawfully established zoos and aquariums and △ strengthens the wild animal management system.

### **<Prohibition of Exhibition of Wild Animals in Places other than Zoos and Aquariums>**

Exhibiting live animals in facilities other than zoos and aquariums will be banned. However, species that are not dangerous or those with a slight chance of anthroozoonosis will be exceptionally displayed. Exhibiting live animals in public interest facilities will also be exceptionally allowed. Businesses that exhibited wild animals without registration as a zoo or an aquarium are given a five-year grace period until December 2027.

### **<Strengthened the Wild Animals Management System>**

The government organized a systematic foundation for strengthening control over the entire process of wildlife import, export, and smuggling, which had been in the blind spot of the current laws and regulations. Only now, much wildlife is not included in the categories of legally managed

wild animals, such as endangered species, species with concerns of inflow, and invasive alien species. There caused a lack of management for the inflow of anthroozoonosis and individuals smuggling dangerous animals like hyenas. Of the known 32,880 wild animals (mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians), 13,210 wild animals have the current legal management system, and 19,670 species are not included in the management list. Wild animals that are not listed in the current management system have been newly defined as "designated management wild animals."

Of those, species proven safe for import and distribution were whitelisted to prevent animal-related diseases and accidents in advance. Moreover, the government will mandate the reporting of an event during distribution (ownership transfer, storage, or death) to the mayor or head of the competent administrative district. It will enhance its supervision capabilities on imported wild animals by adopting a wild animal sales permit system as well as business requirements, thus ensuring the safety of the citizens and ecosystems in a society free of abandoning wild animals.

The Act on the Promotion and Support of Water Reuse, the Soil Environment Conservation Act, and the Natural Parks Act passed the National Assembly with a new provision of obligatory "acceptance of reports" to encourage positive administration and enhance the convenience of citizens. The amended Act on the Promotion and Support of Water Reuse stipulates that if the head of the competent local government failed to notify the repair or extension within a given period upon receiving a report on the installation of a rainwater reuse facility or wastewater reclamation system, the report would be deemed accepted. Suppose the head of the relevant government office fails to submit an opinion on the request for approval for the installation of a wastewater recycling facility. In that case, the request will be considered approved. Under the amended Soil Environment Conservation Act, if a report on installing the specified facilities subject to the control of soil contamination, such as gas stations, is issued, the relevant person must notify the applicant of the acceptance of the report within a given period. If the person fails to inform the report status, such as acceptance or extension of the processing period, the report will be deemed submitted. The amended Natural Parks Act stipulates that any submitted reports related to parks shall be reviewed and verified for compliance with the law before they are finally accepted. Moreover, a new provision states that where a park requests approval for receiving entrance fees, such requests will be answered within a given period. Only requests that are answered on time will be deemed approved the day after the given period.

The Ministry of Environment plans to do its best to complete the subordinate statutes for the five bills passed by the National Assembly, including the Act on the Management of Zoos and Aquariums, for its timely implementation to benefit the citizens.