



20 Years of Asiatic Black Bear Restoration... Envisioning a Future of Coexistence with Humans

- Ministry of Environment and Korea National Park Service hold policy discussion to commemorate the 20th anniversary of Asiatic black bear restoration

The Ministry of Environment (Minister Kim Wansup) and the Korea National Park Service (Director Song Hyung-kun) announced that they will hold a policy discussion to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the restoration of the Asiatic black bear on September 26 in the afternoon at Central Place, located in Jung-gu, Seoul.

This discussion is being held to mark the 20th anniversary* of the restoration project that was actively initiated in 2004 to prevent the extinction of the Asiatic black bear, which is classified as Class I endangered wildlife. The meeting aims to review the achievements of the restoration efforts so far and to discuss sustainable restoration policies for future coexistence between humans and wildlife.

* The year 2024 marks the 20th anniversary since the first release of three pairs of Asiatic black bears in Jirisan Mountain in 2004.

During the meeting, the Korea National Park Service will present on the following topics: 1) the achievements of the Asiatic black bear restoration project, 2) measures to enhance safety management for human-bear coexistence, and 3) habitat management strategies that consider genetic diversity. This will be followed by a discussion with related experts*.

* Professor Park Yeong-cheol from Kangwon National University, Professor Jang I-gwon

from Ewha Womans University, Professor Jeong Dong-hyeok from Chungbuk National University, Director Han Seong-yong from the Korea Otter Research Center, Director Myeong Ho from the Eco Horizon Institute, and photographer Park Jun-su, among others

The Asiatic black bear restoration project began in 2004 with the release of six bears from the Primorye region of Russia, which are genetically identical to the bears that once inhabited the Korean Peninsula, into the Jirisan area. Over the course of the 20-year project, the population exceeded 50 individuals capable of surviving in the wild by 2018, and as of August 2024, the number has grown to over 80 bears. In addition, their habitat has expanded beyond the Jirisan region to include areas around Deogyusan Mountain.

Kim Tae-oh, the Director-General of Natural Conservation Bureau at the Ministry of Environment, stated, “While the Asiatic black bear restoration project has achieved the tangible success of securing a population of over 50 individuals over the past 20 years, there are still challenges ahead, such as expanding stable habitats and ensuring safe coexistence with humans.” He added, “We will listen to various opinions and promote policies to enable the Asiatic black bear to live alongside us.”

- (Protecting and Restoring Habitats) Improving Biodiversity Environments in Jirisan National Park (485 km²)**
 - Habitat management to promote stable settlement in the Jirisan region through the designation and management of a special protection area for Asiatic black bears (192.4 km², or 40% of Jirisan)
 - Strengthening regulations on visitor access to side trails and implementing designated entry times to establish a culture of natural distancing from wildlife
 - Creating ecological corridors (in five locations) to reduce habitat fragmentation and enhance ecosystem connectivity within the activity areas of the Asiatic black bear

- (Raising Awareness) Building a Consensus on Coexistence and Fostering Positive Public Perception of Restoration Efforts**
 - Establishing and operating the Asiatic Black Bear Coexistence Council (since 2018) to create a collaborative model for coexistence between species and humans through joint participation from both the public and private sectors
 - Increasing awareness of natural conservation and biodiversity through promotion and education on species restoration projects, resulting in a positive recognition rate of 50.1% in 2013 and 89.5% in 2022

- (Population Size) Achieving Fourth-Generation Births in the**

Wild and Reaching a Minimum Viable Population

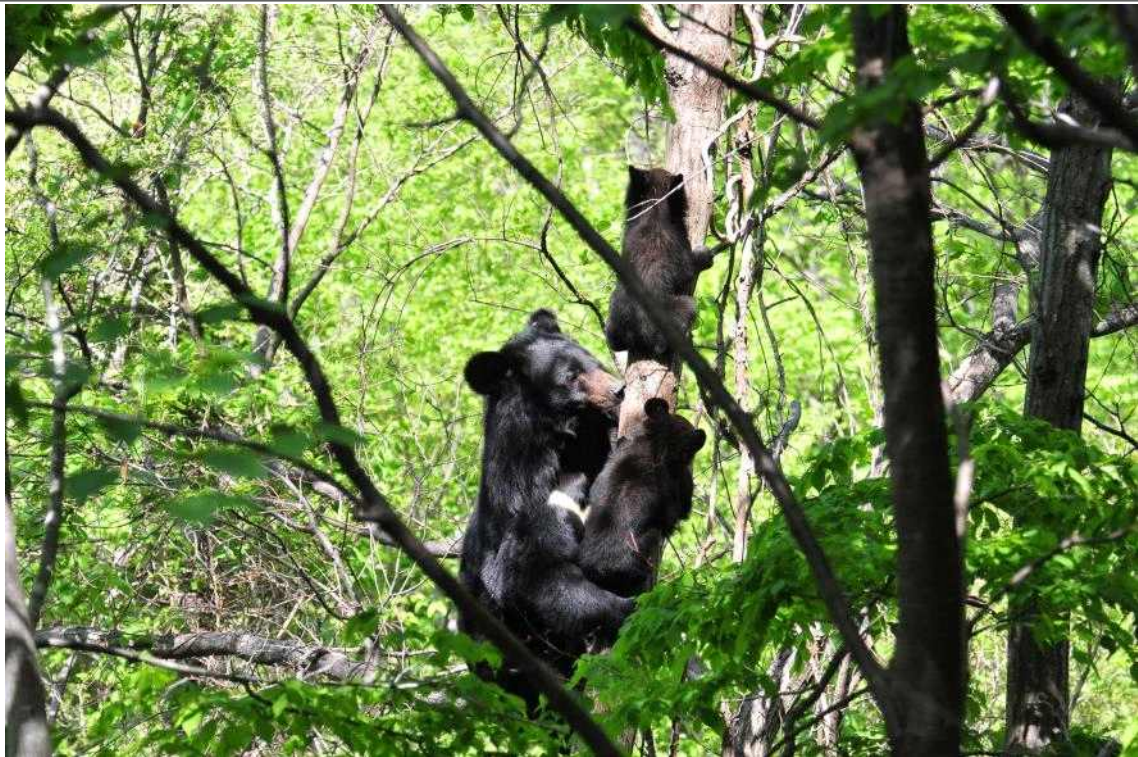
- Since 2009, the population has steadily increased due to the annual births of cubs in the wild, and now four generations have emerged (from 6 individuals in 2004 to currently over 80 individuals).
- Establishing a stable population that exceeds the size of a minimum viable population (more than 50 individuals) capable of long-term survival

□ (Achieving Technological Capability) Securing Fundamental Technology Related to Habitat Conservation and Restoration

- The world's first artificial insemination of Asiatic black bears resulting in cub births (in 2018 and 2019)
- Building a pedigree of Asiatic black bears (131 individuals) using genetic analysis technology
- Securing intellectual property rights (18 in total), including patents (4) and copyrights (5) related to tracking, capturing, and research fields



(2006.10.) 전남 구례 생태학습장 활동사진



(2013.08.) 전남 구례 자연적응훈련장 어미와 새끼 2마리 활동사진



(2016.05.) 전남 구례 생태학습장 활동사진



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