

2026 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 1248 (Substitute for House Bill No. 934 by Representative Ventrella)

BY REPRESENTATIVE VENTRELLA

WILDLIFE & FISHERIES: Permits the possession of white-tailed deer by wildlife rehabilitators

1 AN ACT

2 To enact R.S. 56:129, relative to possession of wildlife; to permit the possession of white-
3 tailed deer by wildlife rehabilitators; to provide for requirements and prohibitions;
4 and to provide for related matters.

5 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

6 Section 1. R.S. 56:129 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

7 §129. Possession of white-tailed deer; prohibitions

8 Wildlife rehabilitators permitted pursuant to LAC 76:V.131 may possess
9 white-tailed deer subject to the following provisions:

10 (1) Rehabilitation of white-tailed deer originating from outside of Louisiana
11 shall be strictly prohibited.

12 (2) The rehabilitation of injured or orphaned white-tailed deer originating
13 from within a Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Management Zone shall be
14 permitted; however, any such deer shall be rehabilitated and released only within the
15 boundaries of the same CWD Management Zone from which the animal originated.

16 (a) Any person or entity engaged in the rehabilitation of such deer shall be
17 strictly responsible for the monitoring of the animal's health during rehabilitation and
18 shall maintain a diligent watch for any neurological symptoms or other indicators
19 consistent with CWD.

1 (b) Failure to comply with the provisions of this Paragraph shall constitute
2 a violation subject to penalties as provided by law, and may result in the revocation
3 of any applicable rehabilitation permit.

4 (3) Any animal that displays abnormal neurological symptoms shall be
5 euthanized and a CWD sample shall be submitted to the department. Until a
6 negative CWD result is received, all deer within the facility shall remain
7 quarantined.

8 (4) If any deer from a rehabilitation facility receives a positive CWD result,
9 all live white-tailed deer shall be euthanized and CWD samples shall be collected.
10 That rehabilitation facility shall be prohibited from participating in deer
11 rehabilitation activities in the future.

12 (5) Any white-tailed deer that display open fractures, neurological
13 symptoms, or symptoms of epizootic hemorrhagic disease or bluetongue virus shall
14 be ineligible for rehabilitation.

15 (6) Any white-tailed deer that display signs of being habituated to humans
16 shall be ineligible for rehabilitation.

17 (7) The minimum enclosure size shall be fifteen feet by twenty feet by eight
18 feet for a single fawn. The pen shall be increased by fifty square feet for each
19 additional animal. The maximum number of fawns allowed per enclosure shall be
20 four, regardless of size. The enclosure shall be constructed of wood or wire with a
21 minimum thickness of twelve gauge with no greater than two-inch mesh or other
22 sturdy materials to prevent escape and to prevent domestic animals or predators from
23 gaining access to the pen. The enclosure shall be constructed in an area out of sight
24 of high traffic human and pet activity. If wire mesh fencing is used, a privacy or
25 shade cloth shall cover all sides.

26 (8) Once fawns are accustomed to drinking from a bottle, they shall be fed
27 only from a hanging rack.

28 (9) The wildlife rehabilitator shall notify the department permits coordinator
29 at least seventy-two hours in advance of a planned release. The predetermined

- 1 release location sites shall be specified by the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
- 2 prior to each release.
- 3 (10) No tags, collars, or other visual marks on white-tail deer to be released
- 4 shall be allowed.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

HB 1248 Original

2026 Regular Session

Ventrella

Abstract: Permits the possession of white-tailed deer by wildlife rehabilitators and provides for requirements and prohibitions.

Proposed law permits the possession of white-tailed deer by wildlife rehabilitators permitted pursuant to LAC 76:V.131.

Proposed law prohibits the rehabilitation of white-tailed deer originating outside of La.

Proposed law allows the rehabilitation of white-tailed deer from a Chronic Wasting Disease Management Zone provided the deer only be released in the same zone from which it originated and the rehabilitator monitor closely for symptoms of the disease subject to rehabilitation permit revocation.

Proposed law provides for the euthanization of any deer showing symptoms of CWD and for quarantine and testing for all deer at the facility.

Proposed law prohibits possession of deer showing symptoms of illness or displaying open fractures and deer that display signs of habituation to humans.

Proposed law provides specifications for enclosure sizes, location, and material for construction of enclosures.

Proposed law requires that fawns be fed from a hanging rack once accustomed to drinking from a bottle.

Proposed law requires notification of the dept. permits coordinator prior to a planned release, which must be in a predetermined location provided by the dept., and prohibits tags, collars, or visual marks on deer that are being released.

(Adds R.S. 56:129)