

# ACT No. 730

2026 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 1258 (Substitute for House Bill No. 662 by Representative Geymann)

BY REPRESENTATIVES GEYMANN AND VENTRELLA

1 AN ACT

2 To enact R.S. 56:126.1, relative to the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries; to provide for  
3 the disposition of sick, injured or orphaned wildlife species seized as a result of  
4 unlawful possession; to establish a preference for release, rehabilitation, and  
5 placement with licensed facilities; to provide for euthanasia only when no feasible  
6 alternatives exist and under specified circumstances; and to provide for related  
7 matters.

8 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

9 Section 1. R.S. 56:126.1 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

10 §126.1. Disposition of wildlife seized for unlawful possession; euthanasia

11 A. This Section shall be applicable to any wildlife held in violation of R.S.  
12 56:126 that is seized by the department for unlawful possession. For purposes of this  
13 Section, wildlife seized by the department shall be referred to as "contraband  
14 wildlife".

15 B. Contraband wildlife shall be evaluated by department field staff or by a  
16 veterinarian to determine the appropriate disposition.

17 C. The department shall dispose of contraband wildlife in accordance with  
18 the following order of preference:

19 (1) If the contraband wildlife is clinically healthy, past the age of  
20 independence, and release of the species into the wild is not prohibited by law or  
21 regulation, the department shall release the wildlife into a suitable habitat.

1           (2) If the contraband wildlife is sick, injured, or otherwise not immediately  
2           releasable, but is capable of being rehabilitated, the department shall place the  
3           wildlife with a wildlife rehabilitator permitted by the department who is authorized  
4           to possess the species and who is willing to accept the wildlife. Wildlife placed with  
5           a rehabilitator shall remain in the rehabilitator's possession until it can be released  
6           to the wild or until the rehabilitator, in consultation with the department, determines  
7           that further rehabilitation is not feasible. A rehabilitator shall notify the department  
8           prior to euthanizing any wildlife placed in his care pursuant to this Paragraph.

9           (3) If the contraband wildlife is medically nonreleasable or is determined to  
10          be nonreleasable due to habituation to life in captivity or rehabilitation would pose  
11          a risk to public health or be deemed inappropriate due to an animal's temperament  
12          and risk of injury to the animal or humans, the department shall make every  
13          reasonable effort to place the wildlife with a zoo, aquarium, sanctuary, educational  
14          institution as appropriate, or other facility that is licensed or otherwise authorized to  
15          possess the species under state or federal law.

16          (4) Euthanization of contraband wildlife shall only be performed as a last  
17          resort. The department may euthanize contraband wildlife only if one or more of the  
18          following applies:

19               (a) None of the preferred options provided in this Subsection is viable or  
20               available for the wildlife.

21               (b) The wildlife exhibits clinical signs of disease.

22               (c) The wildlife has sustained a life-threatening injury.

23               (d) Release or rehabilitation of the species is prohibited by law or regulation  
24               and no licensed facility described in Paragraph (C)(3) of this Section is willing,  
25               authorized, or appropriate to accept the wildlife.

26               (e) The state wildlife veterinarian, or Department of Wildlife and Fisheries  
27               departmental veterinarian has determined that euthanasia is in the best interest of the  
28               animal.

1                    D. Any euthanasia performed pursuant to this Section shall be conducted in  
2                    accordance with the most current edition of the American Veterinary Medical  
3                    Association: Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_