

## RÉSUMÉ DIGEST

**HCR 6**

**2024 Regular Session**

**Ventrella**

Existing law (LAC 76:V.131) provides for the Wildlife Rehabilitation Program (WRP) permitting and operations and provided definitions.

New law retains existing law and defines "Wildlife Rescuer" as a person who is allowed to possess certain wildlife in accordance with certain exemption requirements.

Existing law (LAC 76:V.131(E)(4)) provides for permit requirements for the WRP, and requires completion of a course certified by the La. Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF). New law requires that LDWF approved courses be readily available online, with completion of the course subject to an interactive test.

Prior law (LAC 76:V.131(E)(6)) allowed for inspection of an applicant's animal housing facilities by the LDWF. New law provides that an applicant must have suitable housing for the animal and must report the habitat specifications to the department, with permitted facilities subject to inspection by the LDWF upon 24 hours notice to the WRP applicant.

New law provides that a Wildlife Rescuer may continue to possess in captivity any sick, injured, or orphaned wildlife while providing care for up to 90 days under the following conditions:

- (1) For squirrel, opossum, rabbit or chipmunk, limit of one animal or litter per individual.
- (2) Single raccoon or skunk, upon notification of the LDWF and receipt of information on rabies vectors and a list of rehabilitators.
- (3) Possessors held strictly liable for damages to persons or property.

New law provides that a Wildlife Rescuer may possess sick, injured, or orphaned wildlife beyond 90 days under the following conditions:

- (1) The individual satisfies wildlife rescuer training requirements, which must be offered online and provide information on safety, husbandry, and diseases.
- (2) The individual applies for a Special Purpose and Possession permit.
- (3) A La. licensed veterinarian determines the animal is non-releasable or is adjusted to captivity.

New law requires the LDWF to issue the Special Purpose and Possession permit where all requirements are met, and the individual will be allowed to possess the animal for the remainder of its life. New law further requires that the animal be spayed or neutered, and rabies vector species be microchipped.

New law provides that a La. licensed veterinarian is not liable for injury, illness, death, loss, civil penalty, or damage in determining the animal is non-releasable or is adjusted to captivity, except in cases of gross negligence or willful misconduct.

New law prohibits use of any animal possessed under new law for exploitation, including promotion, commerce, or pet trade. New law further provides that any such use is grounds for seizure of the animal and revocation of the permit.

Directs the office of the state register to print the amendments to LAC 76:V.131(B), (E)(4), and (6) and the enactment of LAC 76:V.131(D)(3) in the La. Administrative Code.

(Amends LAC 76:V.131(B) and (E)(4) and (6); Adds LAC 76:V.131(D)(3))