

1 WHEREAS, the Wildlife Rehabilitation Permit Basic Skills Course is only offered
2 annually; and

3 WHEREAS, offering the course online will make it more readily available to the
4 general public who may wish to obtain a wildlife rehabilitation permit; and

5 WHEREAS, requiring verification of access to veterinary services can be overly
6 burdensome on a person interested in the rehabilitation of wildlife; and

7 WHEREAS, allowing for inspections of housing facilities can be overly intrusive on
8 a person interested in the rehabilitation of wildlife; and

9 WHEREAS, the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries is a self-funded department
10 and the requirement of a fee for licensure offsets the cost for the rehabilitation program.

11 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Legislature of Louisiana that LAC
12 76:V.131(E)(4)and (6) are hereby amended and LAC 76:V.131(D)(3) is hereby enacted to
13 read as follows:

14 §131. Wildlife Rehabilitation Program

15 * * *

16 D. Exemptions

17 * * *

18 3. Individuals may possess in captivity any sick, injured, or orphaned
19 wildlife if they have satisfied the course requirements of this Section and a licensed
20 veterinarian has determined that the animal is medically non-releasable or exhibits
21 signs of adjusted life in captivity and poses minimum zoonotic potential. Wildlife
22 included under this exemption shall be limited to the following species: (1) squirrel,
23 (2) skunk, (3) opossum, (4) raccoon, (5) rabbit, or (6) chipmunk, with such
24 possession limited to one animal per individual. Individuals in possession of one of
25 these animals shall be held strictly liable for any damages for injuries to persons or
26 property caused by the animal.

27 E. Permit Requirements

28 * * *

1 4. Prior to licensure or renewal, all applicants must show proof of completion
2 of a LDWF-approved wildlife rehabilitation course and must be currently certified
3 under the approved organization's guidelines. There shall be at least one approved
4 course readily available online, which may require successful completion of an
5 interactive test. The department shall post approved courses on its website by
6 January 1, 2025. Failure to provide proof of successful completion of the course and
7 subsequent continuing education requirements will result in non-licensure or
8 revocation of the WRP. Any wildlife rehabilitation course developed or administered
9 by LDWF shall be subject to a fee of fifty dollars.

* * *

11 ~~6. All facilities where animals will be housed or maintained will be inspected~~
12 ~~by LDWF prior to receiving a WRP.~~ All applicants shall have a suitable habitat for
13 any animals housed and shall report the specifications of the habitat to the
14 department. Permitted facilities may be subject to inspection by LDWF upon
15 sufficient notice to the WRP applicant.

* * *

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the
18 office of the state register.

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the office of the state register is hereby directed
20 to have the amendments to LAC 76:V.131(E)(4) and (6) and the enactment of LAC
21 76:V.131(D)(3) printed and incorporated into the Louisiana Administrative Code.

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)]

HCR 6 Engrossed

2024 Regular Session

Ventrella

Present law (LAC 76:V.131) provides for the Wildlife Rehabilitation Program permitting and operations. Present law (LAC 76:V.131(E)(4)) provides for permit requirements for the Wildlife Rehabilitation Program, and requires completion of a course certified by the La. Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF). Proposed law requires that department approved courses be readily available online, with completion subject to an interactive test. Proposed law provides that any wildlife rehabilitation course developed or administered by LDWF shall be subject to a fee of fifty dollars.

Present law (LAC 76:V.131(E)(6)) allows for inspection of an applicant's animal housing facilities by the LDWF. Proposed law provides that an applicant must have a suitable housing for the animal and must report the habitat specifications to the department, and that permitted facilities may be subject to inspection by the LDWF upon sufficient notice to the WRP applicant.

Proposed law provides that individuals may possess in captivity any sick, injured, or orphaned wildlife if they have satisfied the course requirements of present law and a licensed veterinarian has determined that the animal is medically non-releasable or exhibits signs of adjusted life in captivity and poses minimum zoonotic potential. Specifies that wildlife included under this exemption will be limited to the following species: (1) squirrel, (2) skunk, (3) opossum, (4) raccoon, (5) rabbit, or (6) chipmunk, with such possession limited to one animal per individual. Proposed law provides that individuals in possession of one of these animals will be held strictly liable for any damages for injuries to persons or property caused by the animal.

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

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on Natural Resources and Environment to the original bill:

1. Establish an exemption to the Wildlife Rehabilitation Program Permit, in which an individual may possess in captivity sick, injured, or orphaned wildlife if they have satisfied the course requirements of the program and have a licensed veterinarian certify that the animal is medically non-releasable. Further specifies that these animals are limited to squirrel, skunk, opossum, raccoon, rabbit, or chipmunk, with possession limited to one animal per individual. Individuals will also be strictly liable for any damages to persons or property caused by the animal.
2. Require at least one department approved course readily available online, which may require completion of an interactive test. Further require the department post approved courses on its website by January 1, 2025. Additionally provide that any wildlife rehabilitation courses developed or administered by the LDWF are subject to a fee of \$50.
3. Restore provisions related to submission of a Statement of Veterinary Support.
4. Provide that permitted facilities may be subject to inspection by the LDWF upon sufficient notice to the WRP applicant.
5. Restore provisions related to submission of a written request for extension of possession of an animal after 120 days.
6. Make technical changes.