



# Deer Hunter's Guide for Chronic Wasting Disease Management Zones



**NEW RULES EFFECTIVE JUNE 2, 2026**

## What changed and why it matters

Louisiana has updated the way it manages Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in deer. During the 2026 Regular Session, the Legislature passed Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 24 (SCR 24), which rewrote the state's CWD rule (LAC 76:V.137). On June 2, 2026, the Secretary of Wildlife and Fisheries signed an emergency rule putting the new map and rules in place, and the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission ratified it that same day.

The biggest change is simple: the old "CWD Control Area" – made up of an "Enhanced Mitigation Zone" and a larger "Buffer Zone" – is gone. It has been replaced by a single, smaller, easier-to-understand "CWD Management Zone." If you hunt in northeast or central Louisiana, this guide explains what you can and cannot do under the new rules.

## Old rules vs. new rules at a glance

BEFORE (old "Control Area")	NOW (new "Management Zone")
Two layers: a smaller Enhanced Mitigation Zone inside a much larger Buffer Zone.	One zone: the CWD Management Zone, built from a 15-mile zone around each detection.
Covered a very large footprint across many parishes.	Smaller overall footprint – the mitigation area has been reduced in size.
Baiting/feeding was flatly banned in the Enhanced Mitigation Zone (0-15 miles); allowed only by broadcast feeder in the Buffer Zone (15-25 miles).	Baiting is allowed Sept. 1 – March 31, unless testing goals are not met or the disease prevalence exceeds the established threshold for the zone.
More deer processors, sample drop-off sites, and travel routes fell inside the zone.	The smaller zone means some processors, CWD sample drop-off locations, and routes are no longer inside a zone.

## What is a CWD Management Zone?

A CWD Management Zone is an area LDWF establishes around a location where CWD has been confirmed. Increased CWD sampling is applied to the area in an effort to better understand the distribution of the disease and percentage of deer tested that are positive. Each CWD Management Zone consists of two parts:

- The CWD 5-mile zone: a circle reaching 5 miles out from the detection (this zone is only important if a positive case is found outside of the 5-mile zone), and
- The CWD 15-mile zone: a defined area fifteen miles or more from the detection of a CWD positive deer (all regulations and restrictions occur within this zone).

To make the lines easy to follow on the ground, LDWF draws the boundaries along public roads, parish lines, waterways, visible rights-of-way, and other natural or man-made landmarks, staying as close to the true 15-mile distances as practical. If a new CWD detection occurs within an existing 5-mile zone, the 15-mile zone will not be expanded. If CWD is found outside an existing 5-mile zone, that detection will alter the boundary of 15-mile zone, but the change will not take effect until the beginning of the next surveillance season.

### A FEW TERMS WORTH KNOWING

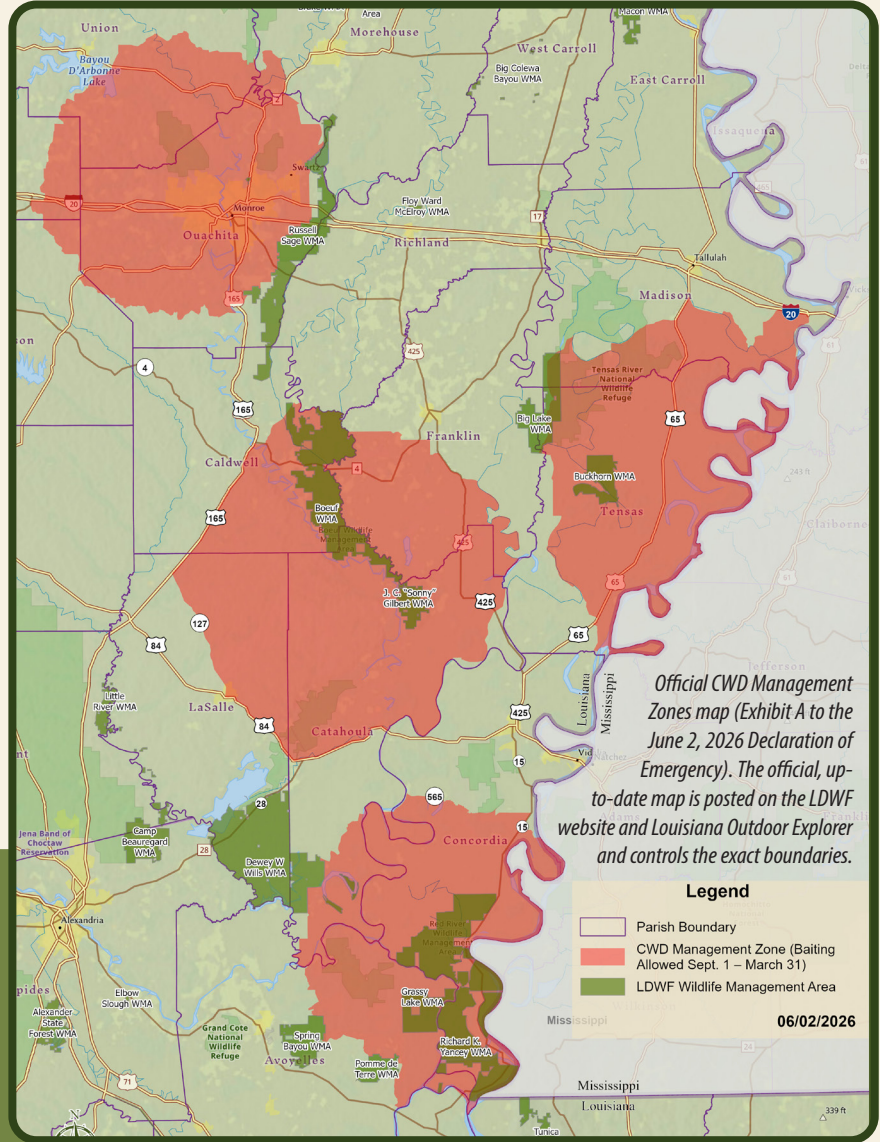
**Surveillance Season:** the testing year for CWD samples, running July 1 through June 30. Changes to a zone happen after the surveillance season ends.

**Surveillance Goal:** collecting enough samples to be statistically confident (95%) of detecting CWD if it is present at a 2.5% rate - up to a maximum of 300 samples in a zone.

**Apparent Prevalence:** the percentage of tested deer in a zone that are confirmed positive for CWD during a surveillance season.

Where are the zones? (Map effective June 2, 2026)

The map to the right shows the current CWD Management Zones, mostly in northeast and central Louisiana. The red shading is the management zone where baiting is allowed Sept. 1 – March 31; the green areas are LDWF Wildlife Management Area (Baiting is strictly prohibited on Wildlife Management Areas and USFWS Refuges)



Always check the official map before you hunt. Because zones can now be added or changed by emergency declaration when new detections occur, the LDWF website is the best place to confirm whether your hunting spot is inside a zone.

Baiting and feeding rules inside a zone

*This is the rule most hunters ask about.*

For the 2026-27 Hunting Season: all CWD management zones may use bait or feed for deer from Sept. 1 – March 31. Thereafter, whether you can bait within a management zone depends on how testing went the previous surveillance season:

- If testing goals were met and the disease remains below the threshold: you can continue to use bait or feed for deer in the zone from Sept. 1 through March 31.
- **No bait:** baiting and feeding are prohibited if the surveillance (testing) goal was not met – surveillance goals will never exceed 300 samples for any management zone.
- **No bait:** baiting is also prohibited if apparent prevalence (the positive rate) goes above 2.5%.
- **Bait allowed again:** if apparent prevalence climbs above 20%, baiting is allowed again.

**In short:** baiting allowances for the upcoming season are decided by what happened during the previous surveillance season. When baiting is allowed, the window is Sept. 1 – March 31.

**Unchanged:** Bait that deer do not normally eat may still be used for feral hog trapping, and by holders of bear harvest permits during the bear baiting period.

## Moving deer and carcasses out of a zone

The carcass transport rules did not change. You may not take a whole deer carcass (or certain parts) out of a zone, because the parts most likely to carry CWD – brain and spinal tissue – must stay behind. You CAN take these out of the zone:

- meat that is cut and wrapped
- meat that has been boned out
- quarters or other portions of meat with no part of the spinal column or head attached
- antlers, and clean skull plates with antlers
- cleaned skulls with no tissue attached
- capes (hides for mounting)
- tanned hides
- finished taxidermy mounts
- cleaned cervid (deer) teeth

**Tip:** bone out your deer or get it cut and wrapped before you leave the zone, and you will have no trouble taking your meat home.

**Taxidermy exception (unchanged):** An uncleaned deer head may be taken out of the zone and brought to a Louisiana taxidermy business for mounting, as long as you get the required electronic waiver from the LDWF website first.

## DMAP and replacement tags

- **DMAP:** Tier 1 DMAP (Deer Management Assistance Program) eligibility is unchanged.
- **Replacement tag:** If a deer you harvest and have tested comes back positive for CWD, you are eligible for a replacement tag so that deer does not count against your season tag allotment.

## How zones are added, changed, or removed

- **Added:** When CWD is confirmed in a new area, the Secretary can establish a new management zone right away through an emergency declaration, with the Commission confirming it at its next regular meeting.
- **Modified:** When CWD is confirmed within an existing management zone, outside of the 5-mile area drawn around previous positive cases, the Secretary will modify the existing zone through an emergency declaration, with the Commission confirming it at its next regular meeting. This change will only occur at the completion of the surveillance season.
- **Removed:** A management zone is removed once the testing goals are met for three surveillance seasons in a row with no new confirmed CWD detection.

## What this means for you this season

- Check the official CWD Management Zones map on the LDWF website before you hunt to see if your hunting spot is in a zone.
- Inside a zone, confirm the current baiting status before putting out any feed – it depends on last season's testing results.
- Have your deer tested for CWD when sampling is offered – it is how zones eventually get removed.
- Debone or cut-and-wrap your deer before leaving the zone, or follow the approved-parts list above.
- If you want a shoulder mount, get the electronic taxidermy waiver before transporting the head.

### Sources

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 24, 2026 Regular Session (amending LAC 76:V.137 under R.S. 49:969); Declaration of Emergency adopted by the LDWF Secretary under R.S. 49:962 and R.S. 56:6.1, effective June 2, 2026, and ratified by the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission; CWD Management Zones Map (Exhibit A), dated June 1, 2026. This guide is a plain-language summary for hunters and is not a substitute for the official rule or the official map. For questions, contact LDWF or visit the LDWF website.