



# ASSESSMENT OF THE WHITE-TAILED DEER MANAGEMENT PLAN

NEW MEASURES FOR HUNTERS

STARTING IN 2026

Votre  
gouvernement

Québec 



### **Coordination and drafting**

This publication was developed by the Direction de la gestion des espèces et des habitats terrestres of the Ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs (MELCCFP). It was produced by the Direction des communications of the MELCCFP.

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## Context

The White-Tailed Deer Management Plan, implemented in 2020, takes into account new elements such as the decline in the number of hunters and, in some regions, the increase in deer numbers and the consequences associated with their presence. Its objectives include expanding opportunities for hunters and newcomers and offering a more attractive hunting experience, while respecting harvest potential. The plan also aims to optimize the conservation and development of deer and their habitat, prevent the spread of diseases that could seriously harm deer populations, and facilitate coexistence between deer and residents in urban, peri-urban, agricultural and forest environments.

In 2024, an assessment of the White-Tailed Deer Management Plan was carried out in collaboration with the wildlife partners of the Ministère de l'Environnement, de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, de la Faune et des Parcs and Indigenous communities. The purpose of this exercise was to assess the actions undertaken under the plan four years after its implementation (2020–2023) and to determine whether adjustments were required to support the achievement of its objectives.

## Summary of findings

The summary confirmed that deer populations are doing well and that the management plan is generally achieving its objectives. Implementation of the 42 actions provided for under the plan is progressing well, with more than 90% completed or underway. Data collected during the four years of applying the new management measures demonstrated that they did not place undue pressure on deer populations. The analysis even concluded that relaxation or expansion of certain measures would be desirable to optimize achievement of the plan's objectives.

### Brief overview of the current situation

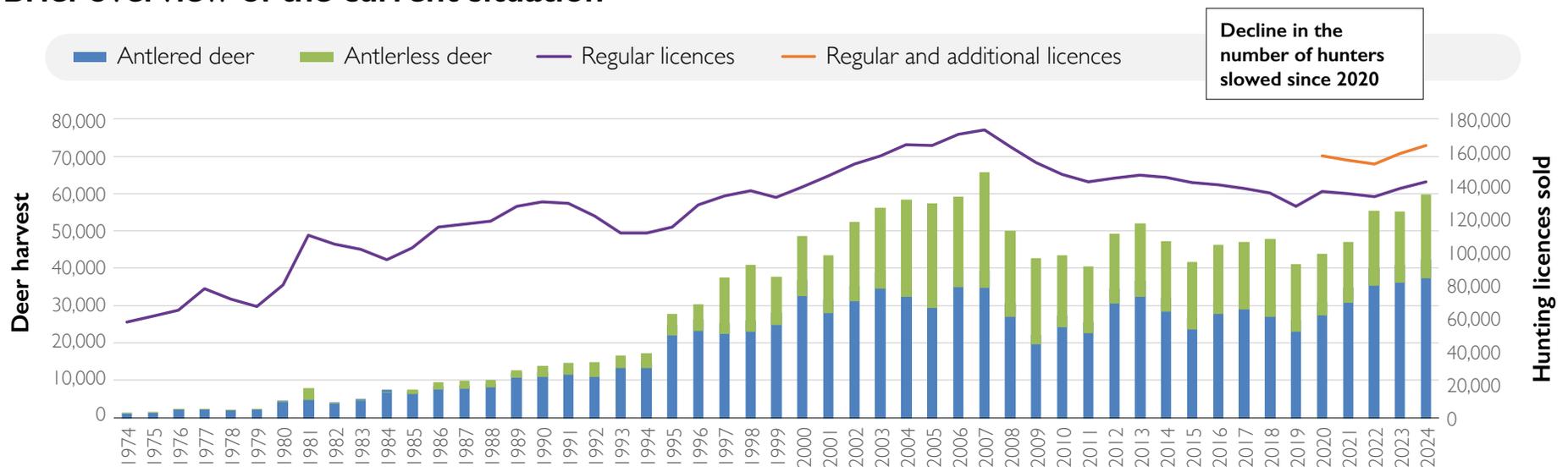


Figure 1. Trends in white-tailed deer harvest by sport hunting and in licence sales from 1974 to 2024 (excluding Île d'Anticosti).

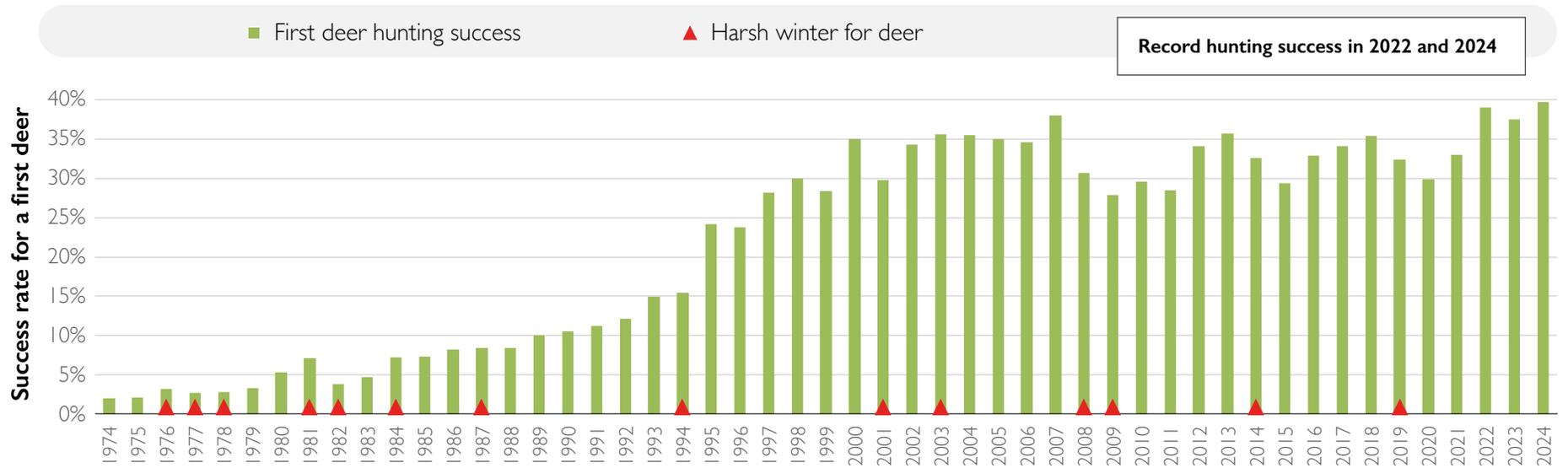


Figure 2. Trends in hunting success for a first deer and occurrence of harsh winters for the species from 1974 to 2024 (excluding Île d'Anticosti).

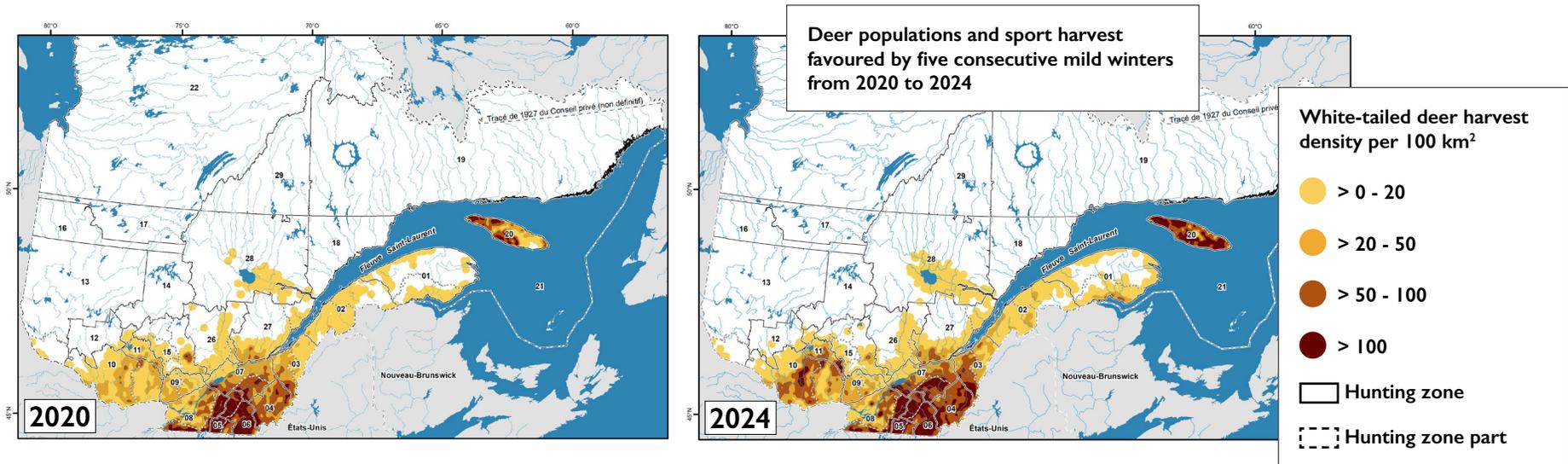


Figure 3. Trends in total white-tailed deer harvest by sport hunting per 100 km<sup>2</sup> between 2020 and 2024.

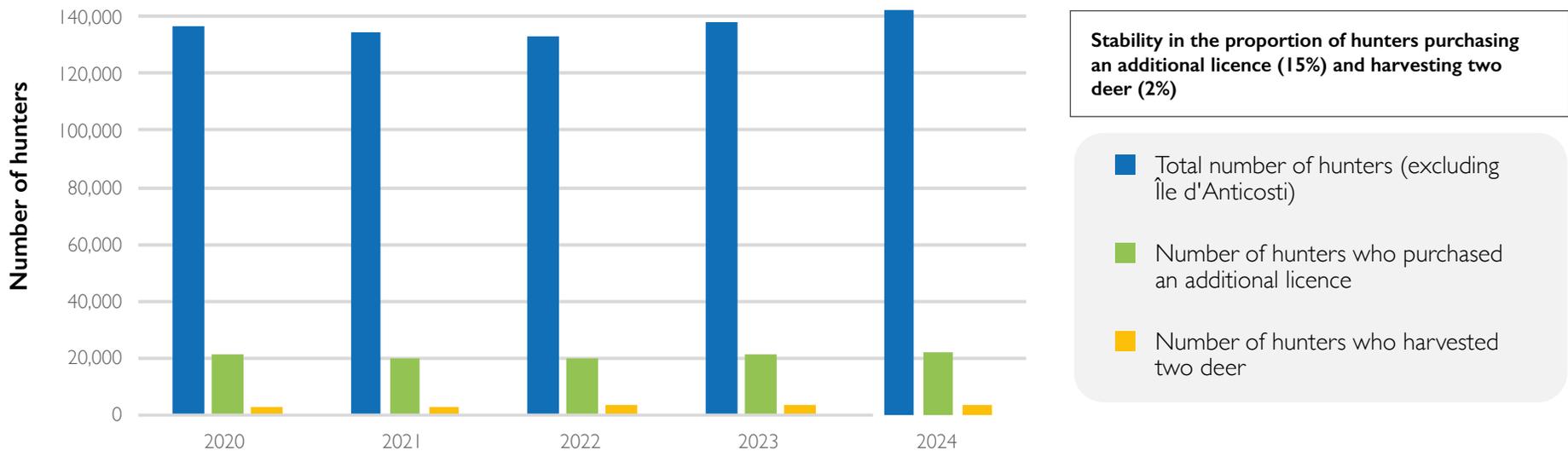


Figure 4. Trends in the number of hunters who purchased an additional licence and harvested two deer (excluding Île d'Anticosti).

# New hunting rules in effect in 2026

To offer new harvesting opportunities in two hunting zones in the Capitale-Nationale and Côte-Nord regions, and to better regulate abundant deer populations in southern Québec, new hunting rules will come into effect in the fall of 2026.

## Opening of deer hunting in zone 18

Although very rare on the Côte-Nord in the early 2000s, deer are now sufficiently present in zone 18 to allow hunting under the rules applicable to marginal zones: six days of archery-crossbow hunting and three days of muzzleloader-firearm hunting (see calendar).

## Less restrictive hunting rules in zone 27 west

Deer populations in zone 27 west, located in the Capitale-Nationale region, have been increasing for several years and are no longer considered marginal. Consequently, rules applicable to low-density deer zones are being implemented in this zone: a 14-day archery-crossbow hunting season and a nine-day firearm hunting season (see calendar).

## Possibility of harvesting two deer in the same zone expanded to zones 4, 5 east, 5 west, 6 north, 6 south, 7 south, 8 east, 8 north and 8 south — conditional on harvesting only one adult male

The status of deer populations in the nine zones considered high-density zones in southern Québec allows the possibility for a hunter to harvest two deer in the same zone to be extended to all of them. A one-adult-male limit also applies in these nine zones to encourage the harvest of antlerless deer.

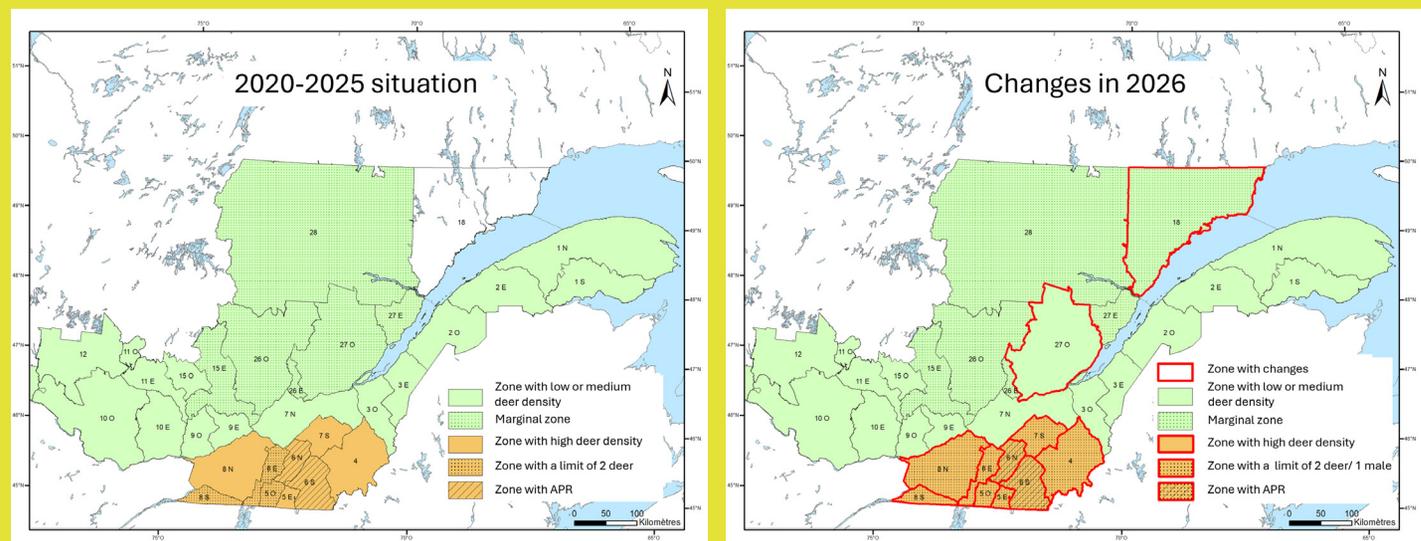
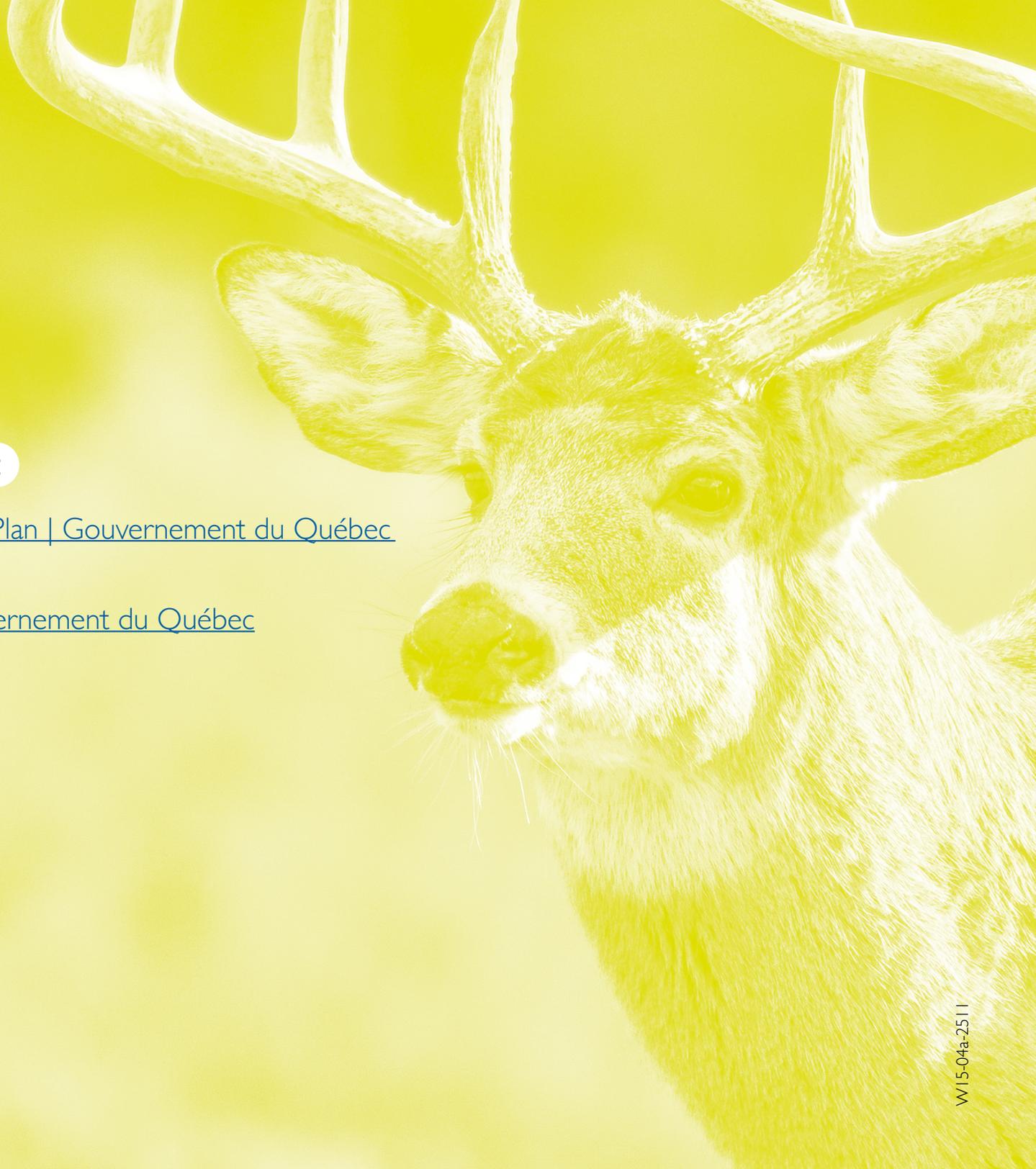


Figure 5. Summary of the changes that will be in effect in 2026.





## Additional Information:

[White-Tailed Deer Management Plan | Gouvernement du Québec  
\(in French\)](#)

[White-tailed deer hunting | Gouvernement du Québec](#)

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