

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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PROPOSED REGULATORY PLAN FOR KLAMATH RIVER FISHERY CONSERVATION ANNOUNCED

The Interior Department today announced its proposed 1979 regulatory plan for fishery conservation on parts of the Klamath and Trinity Rivers in Northern California. The plan, published in the Federal Register today, proposes new Indian fishing regulations, including a ban on commercial fishing.

The proposed regulations allow for Indian subsistence and ceremonial fishing, which will result in a significant harvest reduction in comparison to the 1978 fishing seasons when commercial fishing was authorized. While Indian commercial fishing is prohibited under the Department's proposal, the existence of the Hoopa and Yurok Tribes' rights are specifically recognized and are not affected by the emergency moratorium.

The proposed regulations also forbid drift nets because their use results in the fewest fishers catching the most fish. Subsistence fishing with set nets would be allowed seven days per week, although Indians would be limited to the use of no more than one 100-foot net each. Hook-and-line and dip nets would also be allowed. Another provision would establish criminal penalties for violators, with prosecutions occurring in the Court of Indian Offenses, for the Hoopa Valley Indian Reservation.

Under normal situations, Indian tribes regulate their own fishing on a reservation. On the Hoopa Valley Indian Reservation, however, this has not been possible because the two Tribes have not completed the organization process which is prerequisite to successful self-regulation, resource protection and management. The recent meetings on fishing regulations have sparked the parallel effort to develop Reservation-wide agreement on fishing regulations.

In developing the proposed regulations, Department officials met with Indians of the Hoopa Valley Indian Reservation to address commercial fishing and other resource issues surrounding this year's fishing seasons. The 1979 salmon runs are expected to be dangerously low, due to the impact of the 1976 drought, which has adversely affected fish runs from California to Alaska.

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