



Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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The Interior Department today published the 1979 regulations for fishery conservation on parts of the Klamath and Trinity Rivers in Northern California. The plan includes a ban on Indian commercial fishing on the Hoopa Valley Indian Reservation, effective April 1, 1979. Non-Indian sale of fish taken from the Klamath River is already prohibited by State law.

The regulations allow for Indian subsistence and ceremonial fishing, while specifically disallowing commercial fishing. Biological data indicates that the 1979 plan will result in a significant harvest reduction, in comparison to the 1978 fishing seasons when commercial fishing was authorized.

Drift-net fishing below the Highway 101 Bridge is also disallowed because this method results in the greatest number of fish being caught by the smallest number of fishers. Subsistence fishing with set nets, as well as with drift nets above the Bridge, is authorized seven days per week, with the limitation that only two nets of a combined 100-foot length may be used. Hook-and-line and dip-net fishing are also allowed. Criminal penalties for violations of the regulations are also established, including the optional use of non-compensatory enhancement work on the Reservation. Prosecutions will occur in the Court of Indian Offenses for the Hoopa Valley Indian Reservation.

Under normal situations, Indian tribes regulate their own fishing on their reservations. 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 fishery management. The Hoopa and Yurok Indians of the Reservation are continuing their efforts with Department representatives to overcome this problem. The majority of the Indian people share the Federal and State concern for the current fish-run crisis. The Department has actively encouraged Indian attempts to organize so that the two Tribes can implement a Reservation-wide management system and assume responsibility for future fishing regulations.

In developing the 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. Two public hearings were held and many written comments were received on the regulations, which were proposed on February 14, 1979. Many of the new provisions were adopted on the recommendation of Indians participating in the meetings held cover the past three months.

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