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Interior Secretary Cecil D. Andrus announced today that amended interim regulations governing off-reservation treaty fishing rights by Michigan tribes in the waters of Lake Michigan, Superior, Huron and connecting waters have been extended until May 11, 1981·

Secretary Andrus took the action after signing a memorandum of understanding with the involved tribes setting forth tribal-federal regulatory responsibilities for the 1981 and 1982 fishing seasons. The newly executed memorandum is substantially similar to a current memorandum of understanding which expires January 1, 1981.

"I am pleased that the tribes and the Department have agreed to continue their efforts towards conserving the fishery resources of the Great Lakes by agreeing to this memorandum of understanding," Andrus said.

The interim regulations, issued in April 1980 and due to expire on January 1, 1981, amend Interior Department regulations first published in November 1979 after a Federal District Court ruled that under terms of an 1836 treaty the State of Michigan lacked authority to regulate treaty fishing rights. Today’s extension makes no other changes in the amended interim rule.

Secretary Andrus said extension of the amended interim rule would continue federal regulation during the winter months when fishing activity is substantially reduced and until final regulations can be prepared. "It does not increase the total allowable catches provided for in the amended interim rule," he added.

"I want to stress that this extension of the Michigan fishing regulations is intended to maintain the current situation applicable to the regulation of the treaty fishery before the fishing season begins in April 1981. During this period I anticipate the concerned parties will want to assess the situation and attempt to reach a mutually acceptable solution. I hope that definitive action concerning Interior's regulation of the treaty fishery for the 1981 season can be taken by April 1981," the Secretary added.

The tribes participating in the memorandum of understanding and subject to the Departmental fishing regulations include the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, the Bay Mills Indian Community and the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians.