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Media Contact: Nedra Darling, OPA-IA Phone: 202-219-4152
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With the salmon spawning run on the Klamath River in California nearly over, the Department of the Interior announced today that it is opening portions of the river to Indian subsistence fishing.

The action, which is effective at 12:01 A.M., October 11, 1978, follows earlier closure of the entire river to commercial fishing and portions of the river to subsistence fishing by the Yurok and Hoopa Indian tribes. The earlier closure order was based on surveys by biologists of the Department's Fish and Wildlife Service and State of California which indicated that the number of fish entering the river was very low compared to previous years.

With the 1978 run almost complete, interior officials indicated that reopening of the Indian subsistence fishing, under the rules promulgated early in July, will not substantially harm the fishery.

Secretary of the Interior Cecil D. Andrus said today that the Department's aim from the outset has been to take all necessary actions to save the salmon resource. "While I regret it was necessary to curtail Indian and other fishing on the river, I am delighted that present indications are that we have succeeded and that the fishery resource, with proper management, can be preserved," he said.

Biologists now believe that the 1978 Chinook run will approximate 125,000 fish, or about 90% of expected numbers. Although the size of the returning population is reduced, they said, the closure instituted by in-season adjustments resulted in about 100,000 of the returning fish reaching the spawning area.

With proper management of future off-shore and river fishing efforts, this population will perpetuate the run, they said. Indiscriminate fishing pressure will further reduce the population, they warned, unless sound management practices such as the restricting of fishing effort, both offshore and in the river, are implemented in the future.

Fishery biologists will continue to monitor the fishery and use data collected in formulating future management plans and operations.