Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

**Media Contact:** Knuffke (202) 343-4186
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The Department of the Interior an the State of California have agreed on a cooperative interim management plan for Klamath River salmon and steel fishery during the 1978 fall run, which has already begun, and the 1979 spring and summer run.

In a joint announcement today. Leo M. Krulitz, Interior Solicitor and A Secretary, ad Huey D. Johnson, California Secretary for Resource, said the agreement will allow the careful management of the fishery now while long-range studies continue.

Famed fish runs on the Klamath River and on the Trinity River, a tributary, have declined seriously in recent years due in large part to the dams and water diversions, logging and other land uses and management and drought. Both rivers flow through the Hoops Indian Reservation where, Interior officials concede, efforts to regulate fishing have been largely ineffective.

After a long series of discussion with the State officials failed to produce agreement on a joint plan, the Interior Department in July implemented an interim plan to regulate Indian fishing but continued discussions with the State toward regulation of all users of the resource.

The key provision of the cooperative management agreement, which is effective immediately, would:

--Allow a total harvest by all fishermen of 35,000 adult fall-run salmon: 30,000 to Indians at a rate of 5,000 per five-day weekly period; 5,000 for sports anglers with a two-fish-per-day limit during a fishing of five days per week.

The responsibility of managing the Indian fishery will remain with the Indian tribes and with the Department. Prohibit sales of steelhead or sturgeon:

--Allow for complete or partial closures

--except for Indian subsistence fishing which will be closely monitored to assure adequate escapement for spawning --during the spring and summer salmon run; --Allow closure when the total take reaches 35,000 fish or sooner if needed to allow escapement of 115,000 adult fish.

The total take could be further cut by an even earlier closure if the run is smaller than expected as it has been so far. The State and the Department will work out emergency closure provisions for all fisheries.

--Establish an advisory group and ensure strict and fair enforcement on all parties.

Krulitz said the advisory group would also help to develop a long-range management and enhancement plan which would consider the possibility of substantially increasing the runs by improved habitat and increased natural spawning in conjunction with new or expanded rearing facilities.

State and Interior official discussed the proposed agreement with various members of the Indian

community and found substantial agreement on many points, Krulitz said, especially on the provision to limit fishing to five days per week. That limit will help ensure adequate escapement for spawning and also help support fishing upstream from the mouth of the river.