To Whom It May Concern,

Jonathan Scordino and I are pleased to provide for your review for publication in PLOS ONE a research article on the population trends and entanglement rates of sea lions in northern Washington titled, “Entanglement rates and population trends of Steller (*Eumetopias jubatus*) and California (*Zalophus californianus*) sea lions on the north coast of Washington state.” This study presents population trends, entanglement rates, and entangling material proportions for two pinniped species in a region with no previous studies of entanglements. Entanglement rates are contextualized through comparison to trends in counts conducted at sea lion haulouts and through comparison to the stranding record to understand the impacts of entanglement on sea lion health and survival. Entanglement rates and material proportions are also compared to beach debris surveys conducted along the Washington coast to analyze patterns in material occurrence and entanglement susceptibility. We also situate our entanglement rates and material proportions in existing literature through a literature review of otariid entanglement rates globally. The entanglement rates observed in this study are the highest recorded rates for Steller sea lions and the second highest recorded rates for California sea lions globally. The work in this manuscript has not been submitted or published elsewhere and is the original work of the authors.

Appropriate Academic Editors to handle this manuscript in order of relevance would be Robert Schick, Songhai Li, or Andrew Hoskins.

Thank you for your consideration of this research article. We think it will make an important contribution to the current knowledge on pinniped entanglement and fishery interactions, as well as aid in the development of more targeted mitigation strategies. Furthermore, I am very excited to submit this manuscript as it is my first time submitting my work for peer-reviewed publication.

Respectfully,

Elizabeth Allyn