

### ***A puzzling entanglement—Bob Armstrong***

Whenever I have been watching harbor seals and a Steller sea lion approaches, the seals usually panic and appear obviously afraid of the sea lion. There have been several observations in Southeast of sea lions attacking and killing seals, especially in Glacier Bay, so their fear may be well justified.

One of my most interesting observations involved a sea otter. While on a whale-watching cruise in the Juneau area the captain suddenly announced there was a sea otter. Since sea otters are rarely seen around Juneau she decided to move closer. Binoculars revealed the sea otter was holding a seal on its belly and swimming rapidly away from a sea lion. The sea lion had its mouth open and was pursuing the pair.

I took several photos of the event. In one photo the seal appeared to have a rope around its neck. Perhaps it had gotten tangled in a gill net. It appeared that the sea otter was protecting the injured seal from the sea lion. We watched until the sea lion eventually gave up its chase and swam away.

It is great to observe interactions like this in nature and wonder.



**Above:** Steller sea lion lunges after sea otter and harbor seal. **Below:** Otter holding seal. Rope around seal's neck.