

## Career Connection: Researcher Bio



### ***Team Sea Lion Marine Scientist Samantha Rae, Oregon State University***

Hello! My name is Samantha Rae and I am the marine scientist on team sea lion! I am currently completing my Masters degree in Comparative Health Sciences at Oregon State University. My thesis project focuses on the health and immune status of both Steller and California sea lions (*Eumetopias jubatus*, *Zalophus californianus*) in the Columbia River Basin in Oregon. I am also looking at how coastal contaminants such as polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs) influence sea lion health. Our hopes are to gain a better understanding of sea lion health and to extrapolate the contaminant data to see how tribal and coastal communities with increased fish consumption may be impacted. This unique study will provide valuable insight into the bioaccumulation of coastal contaminants in sea lions. In turn, this will inform coastal communities of the status of ocean health and marine pollutants. For both traditional and new practices, this can work to protect human health and provide guidance for future management plans. I also have a Bachelor of Science in Fishery Resources from the University of Idaho. I am very passionate about fisheries and would ultimately like to pursue a career in fisheries management after I finish my schooling.