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Interactive comment on "Beachgoers' ability to identify rip currents at a beach in situ" *by* Sebastian J. Pitman et al.

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Overall this is a very useful study of beach hazard understanding by users. It highlights, rather worryingly, how poor people are at identifying rips on beaches, 78% is truly a worry. Also, the disjunct between ability to see rips in photographs used for education and what people see when they go to the beach is cause for concern. There are clearly important implications for beach safety, education and hazard mitigation that come from this work.

I have relatively little to suggest in the way of improvements, other than these minor points: Line 9 (abstract) unable – should be able. Title of section 2.2 – I found "Beach Survey design" a little confusing, since you are not surveying the beach (in the cross

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Discussion paper

shore profile sense), but beach user survey might be more accurate. I think a little more comment on the timing of the beach user survey would be useful, and which days of the week, was this Monday to Sunday – or Tuesday to Monday, Wednesday to Tuesday? Also what week in January was the survey undertaken? Given New Year and summer holidays in New Zealand, the cohort of people visiting the beach might different in the first week of January compared to those in the last week. I can imagine less experienced beach users being at the beach in early January, compared to late January. A comment on the representation of your surveyed users and how this might be different if you surveyed users in late February for example is worth considering. The frequency of beach visit data might look quite different in the later case. Given that the survey was run over 7 days – what were the wave and rip conditions? Did they change significantly over this period? Might it have been easier on some days to see a rip compared to others? You say the rip was prominent – but that is to an expert eye. Did changing wave conditions make the rip more or less prominent for participants? Given the sampling method, approaching people on the beach – this is not a true random sample, so I think some caution with regard to the statistical testing worth noting. Can you also report the number of refusals to participate? This helps to understand the randomness (or lack of) and size of sample. Chi square and T-tests are used are used with out reporting how it was decided to use parametric or non-parametric tests. I'd like to see better explanation and justification for the choice of tests. Replace photo with photograph throughout the manuscript. Replace didn't with did not. "spot" is often used with regard to participants ability to identify rip currents. I consider that rather informal, I suggest spot be changed to identify. Line 227 "This compares with.." How does it compare? Compares well? Compares poorly?

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