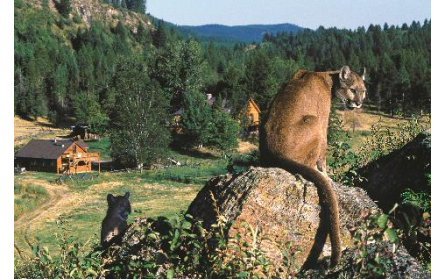




PREPARED BY
CHUCK BARTLEBAUGH, Director
BE BEAR AWARE CAMPAIGN

Subject: **CAN BEAR SPRAY BE USED ON OTHER WILD ANIMALS?**

We have received numerous emails and phone calls asking if bear spray can be used on other animals. The answer is clearly **YES**. If you are being threatened by a wild animal other than a bear, your bear spray is an excellent tool to use to protect you and your family and friends.



As part of Be Bear Aware Campaign's study of human encounters with wildlife, we go beyond just bears and look at incidents where actual bear spray was successfully used to deter animals such as cougars, moose, deer, elk, wolves, coyotes, mountain goats, and bighorn sheep. Most information is anecdotal and comes from individual hikers and campers, but in some cases actual biologists and wildlife management specialists have used their bear spray successfully against a variety of aggressive wild animals.

In one case, a wildlife biologist was unexpectedly charged by a moose grazing in a pond. He thought he was far enough away from the moose to not upset her. What he did not know was that the mother moose had hidden her calf in the field he was walking through. The charge was fast; he had nowhere to go, and he had to respond spontaneously. Luckily, he was trained in the use of bear spray and knew that to remove the safety clip you must put your thumb in front of the curled lip and then pull back. He did this swiftly since he's practiced unholstering his bear spray and removing the safety clip many times. All that was left to do is hold the bear spray can firmly and spray towards the front of the charging moose until it stops. After that, it was up to the powerful, expanding, cone-shaped cloud to engulf the moose's head with its irritating and inflammatory active ingredients, Capsaicin and Related Capsaicinoids, and disable its charge. He was then able to move away to a place of safety.

The reason a quality bear spray will have an effect not only on bears but also other wild animals is because it primarily disables a mammal's respiratory system and inhibits its ability to inhale and exhale deeply – depriving the animal of oxygen which is much needed to power the muscles and brain during a charge. Bear spray will also affect the animal's eyes, nose, mouth, throat, and ears, virtually disabling all of the senses needed in a fight situation. For me, a high-quality bear spray contains 2% Capsaicin and Related Capsaicinoids as the active ingredients; will spray for a minimum of 8 seconds; and have a spray distance of at least 40 feet. Most importantly, the chemicals will be pre-mixed before entering the can. This makes it so the active ingredients are dispersed from the first second to the last second of spray, providing a continuous cloud of irritating and inflammatory active ingredients for the animal to charge through. Not all bear sprays perform the same way. Some do not provide a full, consistent

spray cloud of active ingredients. For these reasons, the Be Bear Aware Campaign recognizes Counter Assault bear spray as a high-quality bear spray and a leader in protecting people from aggressive and charging wild animals.

Counter Assault was the first to research and develop bear spray and the first to become registered with the Environmental Protection Agency as a bear deterrent. It has a proven record of success in deterring aggressive, charging, and attacking bears when properly deployed. It was Bill Pounds, Founder of Counter Assault, and Carrie Hunt, an undergraduate at the University of Montana, working on her wildlife biology thesis on how to deter a charging bear, that created bear spray. Together they came up with the right active ingredient, the right formulation, and the right nozzle disbursement system. It took time and lots of feedback from all kinds of wildlife professionals and chemical and nozzle industry folks. They performed extensive research, some of which I monitored; and thoroughly field tested their product with wildlife biologists and management specialists before Counter Assault bear spray came to market. Their testing included both captive grizzly bears and bears in the wild. Carrie Hunt went on to become a renowned wildlife biologist and Bill Pounds carried forward the testing and research of bear spray to market. Counter Assault is a leader in concept, actual research and testing, and results. Safety for People and Safety for Bears is a shared motto we have.

When it comes to marketing bear spray for use on other wild animals, manufacturers are limited by the EPA to just bears. This is because Carrie Hunt and Bill Pound's original research focused solely on bears and bear reactions to bear spray. This research and testing was not done on other animals. Therefore, manufacturers of bear spray are currently restricted from selling it as an all-wildlife spray. However, consumers that are threatened by a charging wild animal can choose to use bear spray to defend themselves and their family and friends. As more successful reports of bear spray protecting people from other kinds of wildlife are reported, the Environmental Protection Agency may consider officially giving manufacturers the opportunity to change how it is referenced for use.

Please remember bear spray is not a tool to get close to a wild animal. No matter how passively you think you are trying to approach an animal, it is not appropriate. The animal will feel threatened by your actions and may or may not show any warning signs. It may also respond in a spontaneous charge to its perceived threat. Wild animals should never be approached, followed, interacted with, or fed. Please leave them wild and free.

If you should have an encounter with a wild animal please email us with information regarding the incident. What happened? Did you have bear spray? Send to: bebearaware@cfwi.org



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For our quick link documents, including bear spray, bear safety, wildlife stewardship, bear identification, and more, please go to: <https://bebearaware.org/quick-links>

Forty years of bear country experience working with bear management, wildlife biologists, and bear research specialists across North America including black bears, grizzly bears, brown bears, and polar bears. Specializing in inappropriate human activities around all wildlife, but especially bears.