



Pepper spray has a long history of being used for self defense against both humans and wild animals. It's an effective, non-lethal weapon that can keep people safe without having to resort to brute force. The active ingredient in pepper spray is oleoresin capsicum, which is a wax-like resin extracted from finely ground capsicum converted into an aerosol. The most common uses of pepper spray are against dogs and bears, which are known to attack humans and domestic animals. In Alaska, for instance, it's common to take a can of pepper spray with on walks and other outdoor excursions just in case. In Coyote Country in the Southwestern United States, residents rely on pepper spray to protect their children and pets from hungry critters.

Now, fishermen along the Tasmanian coast in the South Pacific are trying out pepper spray on aggressive bull seals. Dangerous seal encounters are a recent phenomenon; in the past decade, as competition for food lures the animals closer to shore, aggressive bull seals are becoming a very real risk.

"People have been bowled over, literally, by the seals trying to charge past them. Divers have been nipped, they've had their fins nipped, they've been dragged underwater," says Pheroze Jungalwalla from the Tasmanian Salmonoid Growers Association.

To counter-act the attacks, the state government is encouraging fishermen to carry pepper spray. Fishermen are first trained in the use of pepper spray to prevent accidental injury. There are doubts whether pepper spray will really work against a two-ton bull seal, but it's a possible alternative to shooting aggressive animals that are being driven into dangerous encounters by a lack of other food sources.

Source:

[ABC News: Peppered Seal the New Fish Farm Defense](#)