

## GORILLA HUGGING MAN WHO SAVED HER LIFE PHOTO WINS WILDLIFE PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR AWARD

A sweet hug between a lowland gorilla and the man who saved her life was the people's choice for winner of the Wildlife Photographer of the Year People's Choice award.

Photographer Jo-Anne McArthur took the touching photo in Cameroon. Pikin, the rescued gorilla, was being moved between animal sanctuaries by her caretaker, Appolinaire Ndohoudou.

Pikin had been captured by poachers to be sold for bushmeat, but was saved last minute by Ape Action Africa.

Sadly, poaching for bushmeat is common practice in Cameroon and other areas of Africa and continues to threaten the critically endangered gorilla.

Baby apes are often left to die after their mothers are killed or sold as pets in the illegal wildlife trade.

In the photo McArthur caught, Pikin was being moved to a forest sanctuary and was waking up from her sedation. She woke up in Appolinaire's arms. The two share a strong bond. Appolinaire is a refugee like Pikin, after being forced to flee his home in Chad because of civil war.

McArthur's photo was picked the winner in the Natural History Museum's annual competition. It was picked from a shortlist of 24 photos from almost 50,000 entries! The Canadian photographer is grateful for the recognition and hopes it inspires more compassion towards animals.

McArthur says, "I'm so thankful that this image resonated with people and I hope it might inspire us all to care a little bit more about animals. No act of compassion towards them is ever too small. I regularly document the cruelties animals endure at our hands, but sometimes I bear witness to stories of rescue, hope and redemption."

