

# Eyes Wild Open



Rescued Moon bear in Laos



Sadly, this primate was rescued in Vietnam, only to be put in a small dilapidated cage with no enrichment for the rest of her life

Changing attitudes to animals through poignant photography

WORDS & PHOTOS BY JO-ANNE MCARTHUR



We Animals is an ambitious project that documents animals in the human environment through photography. It began in 1998 when I was becoming increasingly aware of the abuses that animals suffer at the hands of humans. The premise of the project is that we are as much animal as the sentient beings we use for food, clothing, research, experimentation, work, entertainment, slavery and companionship. The goal is to break down the barriers humans have built that try to justify the way we treat non-human animals as objects.

Although I began photographing subject matter that was close to home – companion animals, zoos, meat markets etc – the project has now grown significantly in scope, to the point that much of it is now being photographed abroad. The ‘human environment’, after all, has grown to reach all corners of the globe. People not only claim these spaces as their own, but they also claim the creatures that inhabit them. My objective is to photograph our interactions with animals in such a way that the viewer finds new significance in these ordinary, often unnoticed, situations of use, abuse and sharing of spaces.

Since the conception of the project, stories and photographs for We Animals have been shot in more than 40 countries and the photos have contributed to dozens of worldwide campaigns to end the suffering of animals. I work with both local grassroots and international organisations, donating my time and the photographs to help improve the lives of animals.

cont:-



A rooster rescued from a collapsed factory farm after Hurricane Katrina hit the USA in 2005



An orphaned wallaby in Australia



Fish for sale in Vietnam



A turtle being rehabilitated at the Loggerhead Marinelife Center in Florida



*Young calves being raised for veal or milk production*



*A racing greyhound wearing a wire muzzle in Geelong, Australia*



*One of many dead fish after the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010*



*A fallen matador at the bullfights in Spain in 2009*

In recent years, the We Animals project has garnered much international attention. I've spent the last few years abroad – working on varied projects from saving whales in the Antarctic with the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, to photo shoots in animal sanctuaries in Africa, Australia, Asia and the USA. Soon, I'll also be involved with a new documentary called *The Ghosts in Our Machine*, which looks at the animals used in our highly mechanised urban world and features me as the central human protagonist.

I'm also heading back to South East Asia in November to continue my work on stopping bear bile farming and poaching. In the meantime, I'm hosting exhibitions here at home in Toronto to get the message out about our relationships with animals. Between August and October, We Animals will also exhibit work in conjunction with the Animals Asia Foundation and the Jane Goodall Institute. While at home, I will continue my outreach about the massive problems caused by factory farming, one of the most polluting industries on our planet.

As I see it, my role on this planet is to use my skills to make this place the best it can be, and to change hearts and minds through the We Animals project. 🐾

*For more information, visit [www.weanimals.org](http://www.weanimals.org)*

*Canadian Jo-Anne McArthur is an award-winning photojournalist and the founder of We Animals. She was nominated as one of Canada's Top 50 Champions of Change for her volunteer work through this project.*