[Template:About](/wiki/Template:About" \o "Template:About) [Template:No footnotes](/wiki/Template:No_footnotes) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Jambo_by_john_catterall_-s_-c.jpg) **Jambo** (April 17, 1961 – September 16, 1992) was a celebrated [gorilla](/wiki/Gorilla) housed at [Durrell Wildlife Park](/wiki/Durrell_Wildlife_Park) in [Jersey, Channel Islands](/wiki/Jersey). He is well known for protecting a young boy named Levan Merritt who fell into the gorilla enclosure in 1986.

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## Early life[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

*Jambo* means "[hello](/wiki/Jambo!)" in [Swahili](/wiki/Swahili_language). The gorilla was born on April 17, 1961, in [Zoo Basel](/wiki/Zoo_Basel), [Basel](/wiki/Basel), [Switzerland](/wiki/Switzerland), to mother *Achilla* and father *Stephi*. Stephi was acquired from the [Columbus (Ohio) Zoo](/wiki/Columbus_Zoo_and_Aquarium). Stephi was captured in 1950 by Columbus resident and gorilla hunter Bill Said, with two other baby gorillas, in French Equatorial Africa. The three were sold to the Columbus Zoo for $10,000. The two which the Columbus Zoo kept, Baron Macombo and Millie Christina, became the parents of Colo, the first gorilla born in a zoo, in Columbus on December 22, 1956. She was the first gorilla born in captivity as well as the first gorilla in captivity to be raised by her own mother.

Jambo's older sister Goma, born on September 23, 1959 in Basel, was the first gorilla born in Europe and still lives in the Zoo Basel. Before Jambo was transferred to Jersey Zoo, Jambo and Goma had a son named Tamtam, who was born at Zoo Basel on May 2, 1971, and died at Wuppertal Zoo on July 23, 2009. Jambo also fathered a daughter while still at Zoo Basel by an unrelated female. Jambo had 7 siblings and 20 offspring by 5 different mates, including three stillbirths.

Jambo was moved to [Jersey Zoo](/wiki/Durrell_Wildlife_Park), founded by [Gerald Durrell](/wiki/Gerald_Durrell) on April 27, 1972.

## Rescue of Levan Merritt[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

Jambo shot to international news stardom overnight on August 31, 1986, when five-year-old Levan Merritt fell into the gorilla enclosure and lost consciousness. Jambo stood guard over the boy when he was unconscious, placing himself between the boy and other gorillas in what [ethologists](/wiki/Ethologist) analyze as a protective gesture. He later stroked the unconscious boy's back. When the boy regained consciousness and started to cry, Jambo and the other gorillas retreated in panic, and the silverback led them into the little house. A paramedic and two keepers rescued the boy. Most of the drama was shot on home video by Brian Le Lion,[[1]](#cite_note-1) and extensively photographed by zoo visitors. The publicity on major news channels and newspapers helped ease public fears about the potentially violent nature of gorillas.

A similar incident occurred in 1996 at [Brookfield Zoo](/wiki/Brookfield_Zoo) in [Brookfield, Illinois](/wiki/Brookfield,_Illinois), when the gorilla [Binti Jua](/wiki/Binti_Jua) protected a three-year-old boy who had fallen into the gorilla enclosure.

## Death and legacy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

[thumb|Statue of Jambo by](/wiki/File:La_Mênag'gie_d'Jèrri_siez_Durrell_2013_196.jpg) [Ralph Brown](/wiki/Ralph_Brown_(sculptor)) at Durrell Wildlife Park Jambo was found dead by his [keeper](/wiki/Zookeeper) Richard Johnstone-Scott in the gorilla enclosure on September 16, 1992. The cause of death was a spontaneous rupture of the major artery, resulting in a massive hemorrhage in his chest. A biography of Jambo, written and illustrated by his keeper, was published following his death. A documentary has also been released primarily based on the home video footage of the Levan Merritt incident.

Jersey Zoo has erected a bronze statue of Jambo inside the zoo grounds as a tribute to the gorilla who helped change public perception about the species.

## See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

* [Binti Jua](/wiki/Binti_Jua)
* [Harambe](/wiki/Death_of_Harambe)
* [Killing of Cecil the lion](/wiki/Killing_of_Cecil_the_lion)

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## Footnotes[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

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## External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

* [Homepage of the home videographer of the Levan Merritt incident](http://lelion.co.uk/)
* [Official homepage of the Jersey Zoo](http://www.durrell.org/)

[Category:Individual gorillas](/wiki/Category:Individual_gorillas) [Category:1961 animal births](/wiki/Category:1961_animal_births) [Category:1992 animal deaths](/wiki/Category:1992_animal_deaths) [Category:Animal monuments](/wiki/Category:Animal_monuments)