



# Riverbanks Zoo and Garden: Forty Wild Years

*Palmer "Satch" Krantz, Monique Blanchette Jacobs*

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Recognized today as one of America's best zoos, Riverbanks Zoo and Garden has become one of Columbia, South Carolina's most popular tourist destinations and one of the most visited zoos in the southeastern United States. Riverbanks celebrates its fortieth anniversary on April 25, 2014. Over the last four decades both the zoo and the garden have been honored with many regional and national awards for excellence.

Among its many accolades, Riverbanks has received five prestigious Edward H. Bean Awards from the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, most recently in 2011 for the long-term breeding and conservation of the endangered Bali mynah. Riverbanks also has been honored with three Travel Attraction of the Year Awards by the Southeast Tourism Society and two Governor's Cup Awards by the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism as the state's Most Outstanding Attraction. Riverbanks Botanical Garden has received praise by Horticulture magazine as one of ten gardens that inspire and by HGTV as one of twenty great public gardens in the United States.

What began in the mid-1960s as a modest dream of a few business leaders to create a small children's petting zoo has evolved into today's nationally ranked Riverbanks Zoo and Garden, visited by more than one million guests annually and supported by a membership base of more than thirty-three thousand households. Riverbanks is home to more than two thousand animals, which reside in natural habitat exhibits with barriers that are designed to create an environment almost totally free of bars and cages.

Much like the zoo itself, this book features extraordinary animals, dynamic natural habitats, and significant historic landmarks. Riverbanks's rich history is captured here through anecdotal stories and nearly two hundred brilliant photographs and illustrations, making it easy to see why Riverbanks is recognized as one of the nation's great zoological parks and botanical gardens.

Readers will discover some of the world's most magnificent and fascinating plants and animals that call Riverbanks home, while gaining a deeper understanding of how a midsized zoo gained world-class status as it pursued its mission: to foster an appreciation and concern for all living things.

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