



Artwork by Nancy Blauers

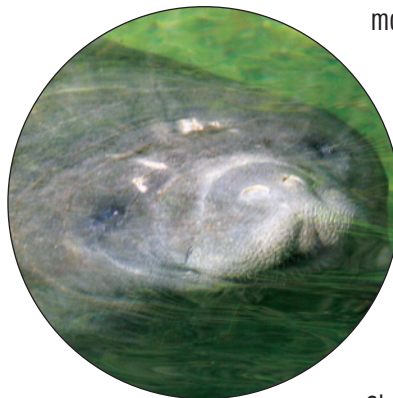
Official Biography: SQUEAKY

First Identified: 2001 **Mother:** Amber **Sex:** Female

On June 13, 2011, a manatee named Amber gave birth to a calf around noon at Blue Spring State Park. This manatee calf was Squeaky, and she is currently the youngest manatee in Save the Manatee Club's adoption program. At present, Squeaky is too little to have much of a biography, but she does have an interesting family history.

Squeaky is the "grandcalf" of a young manatee female named Ann, who was first identified at Blue Spring in November 1996. Ann may have been a Blue Spring animal since birth, but researchers do not know for sure. What they do know is that Ann continued to visit the park in the winter, and in March 2001, she appeared with twin calves who were named Amber and Amanda. This was exciting news as twins are rare for manatees. On average, a female will give birth to one calf every two to five years.

One week later, however, young Amber was discovered all alone. She was searching the run for her mom and trying to nurse from another female. By the next afternoon, Ann and Amanda had still not appeared, and it was decided that Amber needed to be rescued. Amber was taken to SeaWorld of Florida where she nursed from a female manatee named Destiny, who was also there for rehabilitation. Ann and Amanda have since returned to Blue Spring, and Amber was released at the park in February of 2009 with another female named Rita.



After her release, Amber returned to winter at Blue Spring for the next season, and she was also found to be pregnant. Everyone was pleased with her progress, but in February of 2010, Amber had a stillbirth at the springhead. Amber visited Blue Spring again the following season, but she was not observed to be pregnant. Then, in June 2011 – a time when manatees are typically sparse at the park – Amber surprised everyone by giving birth to Squeaky in the Blue Spring run.

Because of Amber's past history, park staff watched her closely, and observers thought she might not be nursing normally. However, manatee researchers soon reported that the nursing issue had been solved. After a couple of weeks, Amber took Squeaky in tow and went out into the St. Johns River. Researchers later spotted them in the Dead Rivers, which are west of DeLand, Florida.

Amber and Squeaky returned to Blue Spring for the 2011–2012 season, but not until December 22nd, so everyone was glad to see them arrive. Since Squeaky had known the spring run since birth, she ignored her mom and was soon frolicking everywhere. She was even discovered upside down, scratching her belly on the bottom of the research canoe! This made it easy for Wayne Hartley, SMC's Manatee Specialist, to discover her gender.

If you happen to visit Blue Spring State Park in the winter, you may see Squeaky and Amber. The spring's water naturally maintains a year-round temperature of 72°F and is an attractive winter refuge for manatees.



Look for updates on Squeaky in the **Save the Manatee® Club** quarterly newsletter and visit www.savethemanatee.org for more information.

Photo courtesy U.S. Geological Survey, Sirenia Project.