



Artwork by Nancy Blauers

Official Biography: MERLIN

First Identified: 1970 **Mother:** Unknown **Sex:** Male

Merlin is a long-time regular at Blue Spring State Park, returning each year to spend the winter season in the warm spring water. Merlin is one of the two remaining from the original eleven seen by Jacques Cousteau in 1970 (the other is Brutus). He is about ten feet long, which is average for an adult manatee. He was named for the magician in the tale of Camelot, but does not seem to have led a "charmed" life. His body is covered with damaging scars from repeated boat hits, and his tail is so scarred it almost looks like a game of tic-tac-toe. However, maybe Merlin is lucky after all, since he has managed to survive all of these watercraft strikes.

Merlin is shy around people, although he is curious about the research canoe. Researchers go out in the canoe early each morning to count and identify manatees during "Manatee Season," which is generally from November through March. Over the years, Merlin has earned the reputation of being a "Tail-End Charlie" from former park ranger Wayne Hartley (now a Manatee Specialist for Save the Manatee Club). Wayne gave him this name because he usually arrives at Blue Spring late in the season and "Tail-End Charlie" was the nickname given to rear-gunners on British military aircraft during World War II. Even though Merlin can still worry Wayne with his late arrivals, sometimes not appearing until late January, he usually puts in a very respectable showing nearly every year. However,



one season, Merlin only visited for a four day period in January and during two other seasons, he only made a single visit. During the 2008–2009 season, Merlin arrived late and with a new boat strike on his head. Wayne thought he might have laid low for a while, trying to recover from his new injury, before making the trip to Blue Spring. The following season, Merlin actually arrived early at Blue Spring, but soon left and spent the rest of the season at Silver Glen Spring, another warm-water site along the Upper St. Johns River.

Merlin enjoys the company of other manatees, often traveling and playing with them. He has frequently been seen in the company of other Save the Manatee Club (SMC) adoptees such as Lily, Deep Dent, Doc, Lucille, Robin, Flash, Troy, and Lenny. Merlin likes to explore and can be found anywhere in the spring run playing with other manatees. Merlin also enjoys time on his own in the warm water sleeping, eating, playing and exploring.

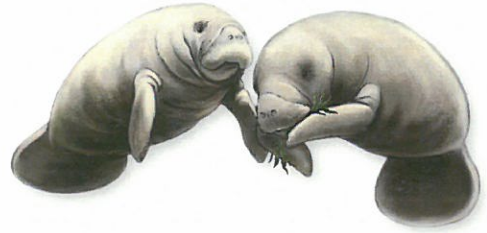
Blue Spring State Park is near Orange City, Florida, approximately 40 minutes northeast of Orlando. The spring's water naturally maintains a year-round temperature of 72°F and is an attractive winter refuge for manatees who seek this warm water when the surrounding waterway temperature becomes too cold for them to tolerate.



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

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

Certificate of Adoption



The bearer of this document is an Official Adoptive Parent of

MERLIN

an endangered West Indian manatee

at Blue Spring State Park



A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Jimmy Buffett".

Jimmy Buffett, Co-Chairman,
SMC Board of Directors

Save the Manatee® Club • www.savethemanatee.org

(Photo courtesy U.S. Geological Survey, Sirenia Project. Artwork by Nancy Blauers.)