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## NEWS RELEASE

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

### **The Greatest Treasure of Texas**

*Padre Island National Seashore*

CORPUS CHRISTI, TX – For years, tales have been told of silver and gold left behind by Spanish galleons lost at sea and great sums of money and gems buried in the sand along the Texas Coast, but the greatest treasure of them all to be discovered is Padre Island National Seashore. Her shores of white sand and shell beaches stretch over 120 miles with picturesque windswept dunes, wild landscapes of grasslands and tidal flats teeming with shore life and warm offshore waters. The national seashore is the longest stretch of primitive, undeveloped ocean beach in the world.

Throughout this coastal gem visitors enjoy the riches of relaxation and recreation alike. The sun, sand and surf of Padre Island are ideal for swimming and sunbathing almost all year round. Bountiful fishing all year provides a variety to the sport with the shallow waters of the gulf or off-shore past Laguna Madre. For those who delight in the discovery of a seashell of exquisite design or a peculiar piece of driftwood, there are miles of shoreline for beachcombing. Campers can wake up to the sights and sounds of water and island birds such as gulls, herons and ducks that live by the water's edge. If it's adventure and a chance to get away from it all that visitors seek, hike or drive a 4-wheel-drive vehicle along almost all of the long roadless Gulf beach.

Take part in the history being made at the Padre Island National Seashore. Always be on the look out for Kemp's ridley sea turtle nests from April until July during your visit. For the fifth consecutive year, record numbers of nests have been found along the Texas coast. Among some 161 reported by the National Park Service this year, 87 of them were found on Padre Island National Seashore. Known as one of the smallest of the sea turtle species, the Kemp's ridley has been on the endangered species list since 1970. In 2007, over 10,000 sea turtle hatchlings were released on Texas beaches and most of them were watched by visitors and locals at Padre Island National Seashore.

Although the park has over a hundred staff members and volunteers patrolling the shores daily in search of nests, nearly half of the nests found at Padre Island National Seashore are reported by beach-goers which makes educating the public so vital. The Kemp's ridley sea turtle's primary nesting ground is at Playa de Rancho Nuevo, Tamaulipas, Mexico and can be found as far north as New England and Nova Scotia. But for the last three decades, Padre Island National Seashore has worked on re-establishing a second nesting beach through this special program in which nests are located and the eggs are collected until the hatchling release.

Not only can guests take in the special encounters of Kemp's ridley sea turtles during their stay at Padre Island National Seashore, they can also bring along their binoculars and cameras to observe the many birds and wildlife that call this beach their home. Padre Island National Seashore has been recognized as both a Globally Important Bird Area by the American Bird Conservancy and as a Site of International Importance for Birds by the Western Hemisphere Shorebird reserve Network. Both of these designations are an important step toward providing additional protection not only to birds and their habitats, but also to a variety of other animals and plants as well.

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This treasured stretch of undeveloped beach is also located on the Central Flyway, a path for countless migratory species of birds. The island serves as an important stopover where birds can rest and feed before continuing on their long journeys. Among the 350 species of birds that have been sighted at the Padre Island National Seashore, the endangered species include the Black-capped vireo, Eastern brown pelican, Interior least tern and the Northern aplomado falcon. Other common sightings include the Long-billed curlew foaging, Sooty tern, Piping plover and the Bald eagle.

At Padre Island National Seashore, visitors wanting to seek thrills may do enjoying the ever increasingly popular water sport of windsurfing or kitesurfing. Bird Island Basin, located on the Laguna Madre approximately four miles from the visitor center inside Padre Island National Seashore has a windsurfing rank by Windsurfing Magazine as the best flat water sailing site in the United States.

It's no wonder that Padre Island National Seashore is also one of the top fishing spots for visitors with native sea grass beds supporting as many as 40,000 fish per acre and millions of small invertebrates. Common saltwater fish include Atlantic Croaker, Black Drum, Red Drum, Sheepshead, Southern Flounder and Spotted Seatrout. Sea-goers will notice many signs posted and marked channels within the Laguna Madre area. This is because the sea grass habitats are threatened in many areas where boat propellers damage the grasses. Padre Island National Seashore asks that all boaters be mindful of these at risk areas and adjust their propeller depth to help prevent damage to the sea grass beds or to turn off the engine completely.

Explore, relax and experience one of the greatest treasures of Texas- Padre Island National Seashore.

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*The Corpus Christi Convention and Visitors Bureau's mission is "to drive overnight visitor\$ to the Corpus Christi Area". For more information about the Corpus Christi Convention and Visitors Bureau or to plan your next trip to Corpus Christi, visit [www.corpuschristicvb.com](http://www.corpuschristicvb.com) or call 1-800-678-6232.*