

# FRANKLIN COUNTY FL

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **St. George Island State Park Named Number Six Top Beach in the World**



Franklin County, FL – Dr. Stephen P. Leatherman, director of Florida International University’s Laboratory for Coastal Research, has released his 21<sup>st</sup> annual list of the world’s top 10 beaches, and Franklin County, Florida’s St. George Island State Park garnered the number six spot.

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Dr. Leatherman (also known as “Dr. Beach”) utilizes 50 specific criteria to determine his annual ranking of the world’s best beaches, including number of sunny days, color of sand, water color and oil or tar balls. *It is important to note that the area was not impacted following the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in summer 2010.*

Located on the eastern tip of St. George Island (a barrier island), St. George Island State Park boasts nine miles of undeveloped beaches and high dunes. The park is surrounded by the Gulf of Mexico to the south and Apalachicola Bay, one of the world’s last pristine estuarine systems, to the north. Occupying nearly 2,000 acres, park terrain is a combination of sandy coves, salt marshes, shady pines and oak forest.

Visitor amenities are plentiful, and include two boat ramps which provide bay access to boats, kayaks and canoes (canoes and kayaks can be rented at the ranger station). Six large picnic shelters also are located in the park and feature tables, restrooms and grills.

St. George Island State Park offers 60 full-facility, pet-friendly campground sites, including a playground. A primitive campsite, accommodating 12 people, also is available.

Inside the state park, a 2.5-mile marked nature trail along the bayside is especially popular among birders, and a series of trails and boardwalks throughout the park provides many wildlife sighting opportunities. Raccoons, ghost crabs and loggerhead turtles share the St. George stage with birds during different seasons of the year.

Birding in Franklin County is a year-round event; however, the spring and fall migration periods are notable for both species diversity and sheer numbers of birds. St. George Island rims the southern boundaries of the county and forms a barrier between the Gulf and the mainland, providing the first landfall for migratory birds as they head north across the Gulf from Mexico to America during spring migration. This factor also influences fall migration on St. George Island, as many birds will use the island as their takeoff location prior to setting off across the Gulf en route to Mexico and South America.

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Visitors may learn more about St. George Island State Park by visiting the Florida State Parks website at <http://floridastateparks.org/stgeorgeisland/default.cfm>.

**For additional consumer information, contact:  
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