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Strange RV Encounters: USS Needlefish and Mermaid on a Half-Shell on Padre Island, Texas

The Weird, the Wacky, and the Wonderful



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Feb 4, 2014

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Once you've made your escape from the [jaws of the last of the giant shark doors](#), look across the street toward the Padre Islander gift shop, the one with the lighthouse on top. In front of the parking lot is a homemade, water-worthy mini-submarine.

According to a sign inside the store, [the USS Needlefish mini-sub](#) was created in 2001 by Bill Gifford of Northfield, N.J. A labor of love, it took Gifford four years to handcraft this workable work of art. It is dedicated "to all those who fought in WWS and helped preserve our freedom."

Mermaid on a Half-shell

And what island would be complete without a mermaid on a half-shell? Seated in front of her massive sandcastle, the 20-foot tall mermaid sits above a half clamshell reflecting pool. The area surrounding the giant clamshell is decorated with a splash of dolphins and various gigantic shells.

If you look past the mermaid's obvious beauty, you'll notice her claw-like hands, adding a touch of contrasting edginess to the serenity of the otherwise peaceful sculpture. It makes you wonder what the artist thinks of the Disney mermaids.

To see the mermaid and giant sandcastle sculpture created by artist Kevin Hoffmann in 2004, head toward Corpus Christi past the last shark door on SPID/Park Road 22. She'll be on your left - you can't miss her.

Join me on my next adventure, as I head back to the mainland toward Corpus Christi.

To see many more photos, [follow more of my weird, wacky, and wonderful RV adventures on Flickr.](#)

Read how it all began: [Strange RV Encounters: An Introduction.](#)

Published by [Juliana Mathews](#)

In the summer of 2011, Juliana bought an RV, gave up most of her possessions and began traveling around the country with her cat, seeing all the weird, wacky and wonderful roadside attractions. She writes... [View profile](#)



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