

# America's Best Fishing Towns

## Field & Stream

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### **Mountain Home, AR ranked second best fishing town in America**

Mountain Home is featured prominently in the February issue of Field & Stream magazine as the second best fishing town in America. The magazine staff identified what they believe to be the 20 best fishing towns in America. Towns were judged on the availability of year-round fishing opportunities, cost of living, fishing culture and outdoor-related economy, quality of life and diversions other than fishing. The towns range in size from single-stoplight crossroads to boomtowns, all with populations under 100,000. Field & Stream consulted multiple outdoor writers and editors as well as professional anglers and fishing guides for the list.

Jeff Williams, state biologist with the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission, said news of local fisheries' increasing stature in the angling world is gratifying and sobering. "There's no doubt our streams are some of the most popular anywhere. We have put a lot of effort into making them produce a lot of fish and a lot of trophy fish," said Williams. "This definitely has the potential to bring quite a few more people to these waters. "They already draw fishermen from all over the U.S. and outside," Williams said.



The fisheries' high profile in the angler world underscores the need to move forward with the 2008-12 comprehensive Bull Shoals & Norfolk Tailwaters Management Plan, said Williams. The plan stems from local and national concerns regarding angler pressure the tailwaters are being made to endure on the White and North Fork rivers that flow from Bull Shoals and Norfolk dams. Williams said he believes the magazine feature may help to demonstrate a need for additional resources in terms of biology and enforcing fishing regulations.

Down Main Street, news of the national publicity brightened an otherwise cold and gray January day for Eddie Majestie, executive director of the Mountain Home Area Chamber of Commerce. "I'll be darned. There we are. 'The Big-Fish Easy-Living Town'," said Majestie, reading from the Field & Stream Magazine Web site. "I couldn't have said that better."

The February issue of Field & Stream is in the mail to subscribers now and on news stands next week. The magazine painted Mountain Home as follows: "Nestled in the scenic Ozarks, Mountain Home is consistently rated one of the best places to retire to in the country. It's affordable, beautiful, safe, and laid-back. "Taxes are low, and the fishing is off the charts. Norfolk Lake and Bull Shoals Lake teem with largemouths, as well as stripers and walleyes. The kicker, however, is that you can also catch big trout with flies in the White or Norfolk (North Fork) Rivers. It's fair to say that these tailwaters — part of a 170-mile network of cold-water streams — are some of the world's best trout fisheries. "The Norfolk served up the former world-record brown trout (38 pounds 9 ounces) in 1988; the White has stretches that hold hundreds of 5-plus-pound brown trout per mile. Obviously, with fish like that, Mountain Home's reputation is well understood by serious anglers. "But the area isn't overcrowded, overpriced, or overdeveloped."

"These are the best places to live if you live to fish," said Anthony Licata, Editor of Field & Stream. "If you're dreaming of life in an affordable, smaller town with an authentic fishing community and great quality of life, then pack your bags because these 20 are hands down the top options."

Field & Stream Magazine has been published for more than 130 years and is self-styled the "World's Leading Outdoor Magazine." The magazine has 1.5 million paid subscribers and an estimated 10 million readers.