

Special Double Issue!

JUNE/JULY 2010

OUTDOOR LIFE

THE SOURCE FOR HUNTING AND FISHING ADVENTURE

America's Top

200

Towns for Sportsmen

- ▶ 20 Whitetail Wondertowns
- ▶ Best Places To Retire
- ▶ Top Towns for Raising Kids

SUMMER FISHING GUIDE

- ▶ Best Fishing Road Trip in the USA
- ▶ Kevin VanDam's Bass Secrets
- ▶ How to Read a Walleye Lake

Carbondale, Colorado, number 26 on our list, offers big game, upland birds and world-class trout fishing.

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Rounding Out the Top 10

- 2 Pocatello, ID
- 3 Page, AZ
- 4 Lewiston, ID
- 5 Kanab, UT
- 6 Bend, OR
- 7 Mountain Home, AR
- 8 Saratoga, WY
- 9 Rawlins, WY
- 10 Pierre, SD

THE REST OF THIS YEAR'S TOP 10 LIST includes several familiar names from past rankings, as well as these newcomers.

► **Kanab, UT** Once upon a time, Kanab was known as "Little Hollywood," because the town and its surrounding area were used as the set in many classic Westerns, including *Stagecoach* and *The Outlaw Josey Wales*. Those visually stunning canyons and buttes that once played host to John Wayne and Clint Eastwood are home to robust populations of elk, mule deer, antelope, black bears, turkeys, bobcats and mountain lions. Meanwhile, anglers enjoy backcountry trout fishing in the surrounding picturesque mountain streams and lakes.

► **Bend, OR** Outdoorsmen who call Bend home enjoy an embarrassment of sporting riches. Year-round blue ribbon trout and steelhead fishing in the Deschutes, Metolius, Fall and Crooked rivers makes Bend a trout-bum mecca. Just outside of town, the Deschutes and Ochoco national forests are home to bighorn sheep, blacktail deer, mule deer, elk and pronghorns.

► **Saratoga, WY** The motto of this charming little town (3.6 square miles, 1,759 people) in south-central Wyoming's lush Platte River Valley is, "Where the Trout Leap in Main Street." Indeed, the North Platte River runs right through town, and the surrounding area boasts more than 100 miles of freestone-creek trout fishing. Game species in Carbon County include moose, elk, antelope, mule deer, white-tail deer, bighorn sheep, blue grouse, wild turkeys, mountain lions and black bears.

► Turn to page 74 for the full list of 200 towns.



And the Winner Is... Rapid City, SD

ON THE MOUNT RUSHMORE OF GREAT TOWNS for hunters and fishermen, Rapid City, South Dakota, belongs in George Washington's preeminent spot. With the 2.3-million-acre Black Hills National Forest serving as the city's very own sporting playground, locals enjoy hunting white-tails, mule deer, elk, Merriam's turkeys, mountain lions and bighorn sheep among the National Forest's stands of ponderosa pines, rimrock formations and open fields. Drive to the north and east of Rapid, and you enter South Dakota's famed grasslands and croplands, home to pronghorns and legendary populations of upland birds, including prairie chickens, sharp-tail grouse and, of course, pheasants. Add to that tremendous opportunities for prairie dog shooting in the Buffalo Gap National Grasslands and waterfowling on and around nearby reservoirs, and Rapid City has something for every hunter.

Pactola Reservoir and Sheridan and Deerfield lakes in the Black Hills hold lake trout, brown trout, rainbow trout, yellow perch, bluegills and northern pike. Scenic mountain streams, including Rapid, Boxelder, Spring, Battle and Spearfish creeks, are home to browns, 'bows and brookies.

The Monument State's second most populous city (65,491 people) enjoys a mild climate, given its latitude and elevation (average annual maximum temperature of 59.4 degrees), sees just 16.6 inches of precipitation a year and has a year-round 63 percent chance of sunshine. All this adds up to more time to enjoy the bounty of hunting and fishing opportunities that the greater Rapid City area has to offer.

Why It's Number 1

In addition to its proximity to some of the best and most varied hunting and fishing in the nation, Rapid City excels in several of the socio-economic categories we considered when calculating our rankings.

► **It's a Boom Town** Rapid City's population has increased nearly 10 percent since 2000. This signifies that the city is heading in the right direction in terms of development and available amenities.

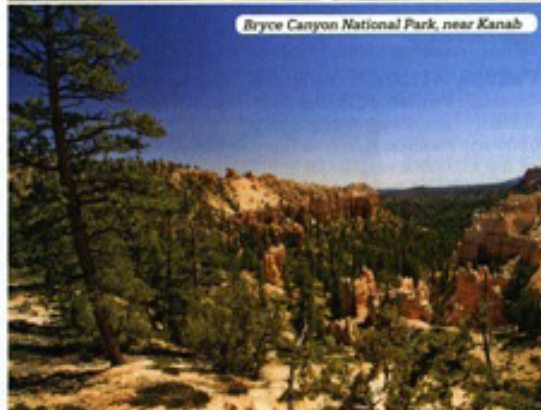
► **Jobs, Jobs, Jobs** Rapid City enjoys a relatively low unemployment rate (4.8%), as does South Dakota as a whole (4.8%), when compared with the national rate (9.7% as of this writing). Vibrant industries, including the military and health care, can be credited for that.

► **Bang for Your Buck** While not at the top of the list for median household income, median home value and cost of living index, Rapid is no slouch in those categories. The median household income is \$41,786, its median home value is \$150,600, and the cost of living index rating, according to city-data.com, is 83.8 (the national average is 100).

Open: Chris Arndt/istock.com. The page: Rich Kose/istock.com



The Deschutes River, outside of Bend



Bryce Canyon National Park, near Kanab



Overall Ranking

Bozeman, MT	57
Carbondale, CO	36
Cooper Landing, AK	20
Eugene, OR	55
Grants Pass, OR	195
Hailey, ID	73
Kenai, AK	32
Knoxville, TN	198
Manistee, MI	127
Marquette, MI	13
Maupin, OR	63
Mountain Home, AR	7
Oswego, NY	136
Pocatello, ID	2
Port Angeles, WA	106
Redding, CA	137
Salmon, ID	99
Tillamook, OR	92
Truckee, CA	194
Winthrop, WA	85

Top Trout Towns

IF IT'S SALMONIDS THAT GET YOUR juices flowing, check out these towns. They offer the best opportunities for trout, salmon and steelhead.

▶ **Bozeman, MT** The Big Hole. The Bighorn. The Gallatin. The Missouri. The Yellowstone. The Madison. The Stillwater. The Springs Creeks. The list of legendary trout waters available to Bozeman anglers is staggering. Trout

fishing here is a year-round endeavor, and these are technical rivers and streams with educated fish. Serious trout anglers only need apply.

▶ **Knoxville, TN** When folks discuss the perfect towns for trout bums, talk usually turns to sleepy little Rocky Mountain hamlets that sit at the confluence of two or three blue ribbon streams. But east of the Mississippi,

that conversation needs to include Knoxville. Home to the University of Tennessee, Knoxville is not quaint, but it's within a short drive of more than 1,000 miles of fishable trout waters in the Smoky Mountains and eastern Tennessee.

For the Birds

THESE TOWNS ARE WELL KNOWN for their upland bird or waterfowl hunting—or both.

▶ **Jamestown, ND** While South Dakota deservedly gets much of the collective attention of pheasant hunters every fall, its sister state to the north doesn't receive nearly the respect it deserves. And given its location in the middle of the Prairie Pothole Region, Jamestown not only hosts tremendous upland hunting, but is a hot spot for waterfowlers as well.

▶ **Stuttgart, AR** No town in the U.S. is as synonymous with duck hunting at Stuttgart. Its flooded timber and rice fields have long been magnets for Mississippi Flyway mallards, earning it the title "The Rice and Duck Capital of the World." Stuttgart is also home to Mack's Prairie Wings, the legendary sporting-goods store and waterfowl emporium, and the Stuttgart Chamber of Commerce lists more than 40 waterfowl-related businesses (guides, outfitters, etc.) as members.

Overall Ranking

Aberdeen, SD	155
Ashtabula, OH	151
Bismarck, ND	11
Elk City, OK	184
Grand Island, NE	145
Grand Marais, MN	14
Jamestown, ND	113
Mitchell, SD	142
Moses Lake, WA	57
Naples, FL	132
Pierre, SD	10
Rochester, MN	12
Scottsbluff, NE	175
Stuttgart, AR	185
Tillamook, OR	92

