© THE ARIZONA REPUBI

W ming

Continued from Page T1

Saratoga National Fish Hatchery

Anglers revere the North Platte River as a blue-ribbon trout stream, but a fishing license costs $14 a day for non-Wyoming residents. Gear and a guide cost a lot more.

Leave the river fish to nap in their chilly holes and go check out the hundreds of lake, brown and rainbow trout kept for breeding at the 102-year-old Saratoga National Fish Hatchery.

The hatchery helps restore native-trout populations from coast to coast. Huge brood-stock trout swim lazily up and down long, narrow pools called raceways. Their sole purpose is to produce eggs, sperm and fingerlings.

The hatchery also breeds the humble and highly endangered Wyoming toad for release in ponds and lakes east of the Medicine Bow Mountains.

The hatchery, a couple of miles north of Saratoga on a good gravel road, is open year-round. A self-guided tour begins with the fingerlings and proceeds to the buildings with the big fish.

Follow the trail of fish painted on the pavement. Then follow the painted ducks to a scenic overlook.

Details: www.fws.gov/saratoga.

Afternoon clouds laze above Sheep Rock, a bluff overlooking the North Platte River and Bird Cloud Ranch in southeastern Wyoming. Bird Cloud Ranch i the home of "Brokeback Mountain" author Annie Proulx. MEAD GRUVER/AP