

## Hats off to Panama

by Joan Childs



Joan Childs 2008

swarm or two and see the really specialised ant birds of the forest, plus a wealth of butterflies, monkeys, bugs and sloths.

Depressingly, new roads are being ploughed through primary forest to make building plots for American second homes, even encroaching into protected areas. And they are not very sympathetic to their environs, removing all their garden's forest trees and planting grass and pretty-pretty flowers, which require the water sprinkler to be on all day. However, there is still a lot of great forest left, along with fabulous wildlife. Go!

<http://canopytower.com/>

There is a huge list of bats for Canopy Tower in Panama, and I wondered before I left how I might be able to identify any bat that I saw. The truth is, I couldn't, but there were certainly plenty flying about, and I found a roost (actually under the 'eaves' of Canopy Tower itself, where we were staying - if you look at the picture, that's under the bit that sticks out around the perimeter at the top).

And that's really the extent of batting that I did out there. However, I would really recommend Canopy Tower, and its sister ecolodge Canopy Lodge, for a great wildlife break. If you check out the website you will see that the Tower is a converted US base which sticks out above the canopy, giving you a birds' eye view of, well, the birds. Those canopy species, normally difficult to see, are suddenly 'in your face' and it's a great place to view the raptor migration (we had 22,000 Mississippi kites in one day for example, which was very spectacular). Experienced guides take you out to virgin forest where with luck you will bump into an ant