Flowers Evolve to Suit Birds and Bats

The varying shapes of flowers found in tropical forests, from broadly blooming to delicately narrow, may have to do with what has stuck its nose in there to pollinate in past evolutionary eras. Different species of birds and bats may have encouraged flowers to evolve to fit the shape of their snouts or beaks, new findings suggest. Flowers seem to respond to whatever is available and doing the best job of spreading pollen, said study leader Nathan Muchhala, a University of Miami biologist. Birds and bats have also changed their body shapes over time to adapt to available food sources and flower and plant shapes, but flowers have done so more aggressively, he said.