

Evolution as opportunist

Evolution is littered with examples of opportunism. Hosts infected by viruses found new uses for the genetic material the agents of disease left behind; metabolic enzymes somehow came to refract light rays through the eye's lens; mammals took advantage of the sutures between the skull bones to help their young pass through the birth canal; and, in the signature example, feathers appeared in fossils before the ancestors of modern birds took to the skies.

A new study in *Nature* offers what may be the first attempt to comprehensively identify potential exaptations. The results of the study, which focused on metabolism, complement anecdotal examples and take an initial step toward quantifying exaptation's contribution, at least within this system, said researchers not involved in the work.

Read the full, original story here: [Evolution as Opportunist](#)