

## Chapter 54

### Evolutionary Aside 54.1—Hybrids and Behavior

In a classic study in the history of ethology, William Dilger of Cornell University examined two species of lovebird (parakeets in the genus *Agapornis*) that differ in the way they carry twigs, paper, and other materials used to build a nest. Fischer's lovebird (*A. fischeri*) collects long strips of material for its nest, which it carries in its beak while flying. The peach-faced lovebird (*A. roseicollis*), however, collects shorter materials, which it tucks under its flank feathers during flight. When Dilger bred the two species and produced hybrids, he found that the offspring not only selected intermediate-length materials, but had great difficulty carrying them, as they would repeatedly shift the material back-and-forth between the beak and flank feathers. Apparently, nest material selection and transportation behavior are genetically based, and the hybrid individuals, having alleles from both parents, exhibited intermediate behaviors.