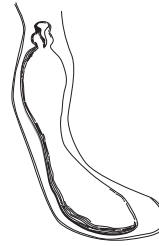


Relationships



It's hard to avoid leeches in the Nile, where the crocodile lives. Because the crocodile's skin is so tough, leeches usually attach themselves to the soft areas in the reptile's mouth. Birds called Egyptian plovers (*PLUHV-uhrs*) hop in and out of the crocodile's mouth, making meals of the leeches and any food that's stuck between the crocodile's teeth.



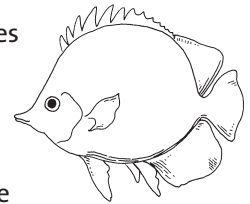
The "innkeeper," *Urechis caupo* (*Yoo-REK-uhs COW-po*), is a worm-like creature that digs a U-shaped burrow in mud flats along the California coast. It shares its burrow with goby fish, scale worms, pea crabs, clams and other marine animals. While these animals get shelter and

occasional food scraps from *Urechis*, the innkeeper is neither helped nor harmed by the relationship.

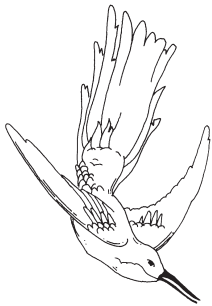
Lichens, which grow on trees and rocks, are not one living thing but a partnership between two organisms – a fungus (*FUN-guhs*) and algae (*AL-jee*). The fungus cannot produce its own food, but has a thread-like net for capturing things to eat and for anchoring onto a surface. Algae plants grow within this net and are held in place by it. Because algae have chlorophyll (*CLOR-uh-fill*), they can manufacture food for themselves and their fungus partner.



Some rain forest trees rely on very unlikely animals to disperse their seeds:

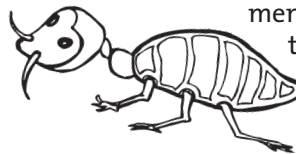


fish! During certain times of the year, the Amazon River floods. Then fish swim into parts of the forest that they can reach only during flood season. As fruit falls from the trees into the water, the fish eat it. Later, they excrete the seeds in another area.



Only a sword-billed hummingbird can drink the nectar of the *Passiflora* (*PASS-ee-floor-ah*) *mixta*. The birds need tremendous amounts of energy, which the flower provides. In

the process of getting a meal, the birds pollinate the flowers.



Many termite species eat only wood, yet termites cannot digest the main substance in wood, cellulose (*SEL-yuh-lohss*). How do they get the nourishment they need? It turns out they have tiny protozoa (*pro-tuh-ZOE-uh*) living in their digestive tract that can digest wood. So, when a termite eats wood, the protozoa digest the cellulose and supply some nutrients to the termite.

These ants live in the hollow root balls of certain plants called epiphytes (*EP-uh-fights*). The hollow balls provide a protected nest for the ants. And the material that the ants carry into their nests creates a great nutrient-rich compost for the epiphytes.



By trapping insects, plants like this bucket orchid get pollinated. Perfume lures bees to the flowers. When the bees crawl inside the flowers, they fall into a pool of liquid.



By crawling out a special "side door," the bees save themselves from drowning. In this process, they become coated with pollen, which they carry to the next orchid they visit.