

## Mating game is never over for some males

*by carlin*

Men who put on a little pot belly after marriage can give thanks that they are not barn swallows. A study published on Thursday shows females of that species keep shopping around even after mating.

And these females aren't looking for good providers or even good company. They want only the best-looking birds, a research team at Cornell University in New York found.

"This is something that most humans can relate to -- think of how much time and money we spend on our looks and status long after we have established stable relationships," added Rebecca Safran, who is now at Princeton University.

For barn swallows, known scientifically as *Hirundo rustica erythrogaster*, good looks equals a nice red breast and belly, Safran and colleagues report in Friday's issue of the journal *Science*. And the equivalent of a little hair dye serves them well.

If the male's red breast is not as dark as other males, the female is more likely to secretly mate with another male, they found.

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