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With Kaye Browne

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Secret Life Of The Female Barn Swallow

30 September 2005

A new report on the sex lives of the humble Barn Swallow is likely to put a dent in the male psyche

You see, the Cornell Uni team discovered that even after mating, the female Barn Swallow keeps shopping around - and they're not looking for good providers or even good company.

No - they're looking for the best looking birds to get a bit on the side.

According to Rebecca Safran, who led the study, the bad news for male swallows is that for them, the mating game is never over... and they can't afford to put on the human male equivalent of a little pot belly... and still think they're going to get the affections of the female.

For barn swallows, good looks equals a nice red breast and belly, and with the use of a little hair dye, Safran and her team were able to observe the females eyeing up, and later mating secretly with the artificially enhanced males.

Safran's team says if females are assessing mates on a day to day basis it might explain why in many species males continue to take as much care of their plumage as they did before pairing up.

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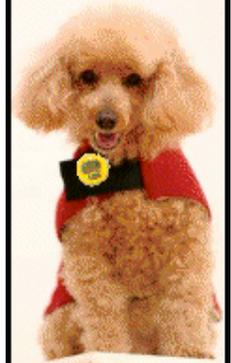
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