HOW BIRDS AND WOMEN PICK THEIR PARTNERS

Where you live may influence what qualities you look for in a partner, says Kevin McGraw, a biologist at Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y., who usually observes the mating habits of birds. "Birds and people are not all that different," he concludes after reading 2,300 personal ads in 61 newspapers from 23 cities. In crowded, expensive cities (New York, San Francisco, Boston), women want men who can provide financial stability, he found. In smaller cities (Kansas City, Pittsburgh), women look for men with positive emotional traits such as honesty, compassion and good listening skills rather than money. In crowded places with scarce resources, female birds prefer males that build nests and find food, while in less crowded settings, females are content with singing a duet or foraging for food with a mate. Next, McGraw will look at what men want. – *Carol Potera*