

The Northern Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) is a species with conspicuous courtship rituals, the most noticeable part being the males' aerobic song-flight. The aim of this study was to determine which song-flight characteristics are important in female mate choice and whether the perceived difficulty of the song-flight is correlated with other indicators of male quality. In 2014 and 2015 male lapwings were observed in the meadows and arable land in South Bohemia, Czech Republic, in the vicinity of České Budějovice, a traditional breeding area. In 24 males we video-recorded their song-flights and observed mating behaviour and/or incubation of nests, had they any. We measured various aspects of the most dramatic displays of agility and stamina in the song-flight (Ascent, Vertical Dive, and Alternating Flight) in order to find which of them acted as influencing factors in female mate choice. We found that the more complicated the pirouette in the Vertical Dive and the faster the pace of the Alternating Flight, the earlier the male nested. The most convincing result showed that the longer the male spent more or less vertically inclined along his longitudinal axis in the Alternating Flight on one side before revolving to the other, the higher the probability for him to establish a polygynous bond – attract more than one female. This is probably an honest signal of quality, showing the male's ability to manoeuvre in what is probably an aggressively motivated type of flight, demonstrating the ability to deter predators.