



EDITOR'S PAGE

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NOTE:

NEW ADDRESS →

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Readers are encouraged to submit articles to the staff.

NOUNS OF ASSEMBLAGE -- II

One of my favorite guides to the workings of the English language is Eric Partridge's (!) Usage and Abusage. Here is his list of collective nouns. Bitterns or Herons, siege; Bustards, flock; Chickens, brood; Choughs, clattering; Coves, flight; Cranes and Curlews, herd; Crows, murder; Ducks (in flight) team, (on water) paddling; Eagles, convocation; Finches, charm; Geese (on water) gaggle, (on wing) skein; Goshawks, flight; Grouse (a single family) covey, (larger band) pack; Gulls, colony; Hens, brood; Hummingbirds, charm; Jays, band; Lapwings, deceit; Larks, exaltation; Mallard(s), flush; Nightingales, watch; Parrots, flock; Partridges, covey; Peacocks, muster (medievally, an ostentation or a pride); Pheasants (a family) brood, (large group) nye; Pigeons, flight or flock; Plovers, congregation; Poultry, run; Quails, bevy; Ravens, unkindness; Rooks, clamor; Snipe, walk; Sparrows, host; Starlings, chattering; Storks, mustering; Swallows, flight; Swans, herd or, less usually, a wedge; Swifts, flock; Wigeon(s) (in the air) flight, (on water) bunch, company, or knob; Wildfowl(s), plump or trip; Wrens, herd.

To this list, I would like to add: a parliament, bench or court of Owls, a comedy of Nuthatches, a reciprocation of Sanderlings, a glide of Shearwaters, a cord of Woodpeckers, and a council of Cardinals.

L. J. Robinson

Other readers have contributed the following to our list: a cacophony of grackles, a concerto of Mockingbirds, a tangle of egrets, a domesticity of wrens, a poignancy of thrushes, a shriek of loons, a tyranny of grosbeaks (especially at the feeder!), an obscenity of grosbeaks (elsewhere), a yard of juncos and an udder of cowbirds.

Also, an uprising of pheasants, a walk of jays, a ring of cygnets, a pirouette of terns, a constellation of starlings, a rant of ravens, a fleet of swifts, and a gulp of swallows.