

ORNITHOLOGICAL MULTITUDES

A *pride* of lions is well known about town,
But what about the ornithological collective noun?
A *stool* of decoys, a *dissimulation* of birds,
We should use correctly collective words.
A *ruffle* of wings, a *muff* of feathers
Correctly describe particular measures.
A *leash* of ducks swimming becomes a *raft* when together,
But is a *team* of ducks when flying wherever.
Don't confuse a *gaggle* of geese on the ground,
Which becomes a *skein* when flying around.
A *nye* of pheasants, a *bevy* of quail,
Or a *covey* of partridge, you say without fail.
A *rafter* of turkeys, a *congregation* of plovers,
A *pack* of grouse spring from their covers.
A *murder* of crows, *unkindness* of ravens,
A *building* of rooks in vernacular havens.
Or a *parliament* of owls, an *exaltation* of larks,
A *tithing* of magpies when seen in the parks.
A *murmuration* of starlings, an *ostentation* of peacocks
A *descent* of woodpeckers, a *fall* of woodcock.
A *deceit* of lapwings, a *party* of jays.
A *watch* of nightingales, one always says.
A *covert* of coots, a *siege* of herons,
A *wisp* of snipe can be seen in the barrens.
A *charm* of goldfinch, a *piteousness* of doves,
A *host* of sparrows, we spy in the groves.
So, if it's an omelet you wish to make for your friends,
Take a *clutch* of eggs from a *brood* of hens.

Hanson C. Robbins