

A photograph of a Sharpie bird, a species of sandpiper, standing in shallow, rippling water. The bird is covered in brown and tan mottled feathers and has a long, thin, dark beak. It is facing left. The water is shallow and filled with brown seaweed or algae. The bird's long, yellowish legs are visible in the water.

Sharpies Are Back!

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In small groups at every clump  
Of thin reeds or a grassy mound  
Stand Sharpies; healthy, well-fed, plump,  
Prospering at this swampy ground.

The floodgates are doing the job  
That we and the birds demanded.  
Now insect life is at a throb,  
Which is why the birds have landed.

All kinds of plumage can be seen  
In the flock as we scan around  
From bright to plain and in-between;  
Who was it said these birds are brown?

Just now, many birds are sleeping  
While others idly preen and scratch.  
Some wade through the water, feeding,  
And some defend their chosen patch.


Juvenile are there in numbers,  
Recognised by their chestnut caps.  
Adult birds break from their slumbers  
To chase the young with pecks and flaps.

It appears a tranquil setting  
Yet appearances can deceive  
It's constant work, never letting  
Their rivals any 'turf' achieve.

And predators are all about,  
Both imaginary and real.  
And whenever there's any doubt,  
Living, not waiting, sets the deal.

A small flock lifts, a whirl of white  
And brown. They fly a short distance  
Then settle, landing out of sight.  
A brief panic, in this instance.



A large flock of birds, likely Sharpies, is captured in flight against a clear, bright blue sky. The birds are in various stages of their wing strokes, creating a sense of dynamic movement. Their dark feathers contrast sharply with the light blue background. The text is overlaid on the image in a yellow, serif font.

But now a falcon comes in sport,  
A ruthless killer as they know;  
Five thousand birds, a single thought:  
Don't be the one that is too slow!

The birds take wing, in a flurry,  
Grouping together as they rise.  
A massive flock, and in a hurry,  
And filling the air with their cries.

Five thousand birds, they fly as one,  
And circling everywhere.  
White flashes of their wings in sun  
When they twist and turn in the air.

A flock of Sharpies on the wing  
Is a truly amazing sight,  
Watching them as they wheel and swing;  
They're masters of formation flight.

The flock neared, in one of its swings,  
Dipping low before the next soar.  
The sound of the wind from their wings  
Was a dull but insistent roar.

As spectacle, naught surpasses,  
The sounds and the aerial dance  
Made as the flock overpasses  
Enthralled with each subtle nuance.

The danger passes, they settle  
Back into calmness on the ground.  
Though still wary, on their mettle,  
In case the falcon turns around.

Each bird stays ever vigilant  
For the next alarm when it comes.  
It's folly to be negligent,  
Because the careless bird succumbs.



