What do these twenty words have in common?

aisle  kneed  knit  scent  wretch
hour  knew  knot  whole  wright
knap  knickers  llama  wrap  write
knave  knight  psalter  wrest  wrote

If the first letter of each word is removed (those who play word games call this process a beheadment), what remains is a homophone of the original word.

What do these twenty words have in common?

bear  great  ore  ruse  tale
break  hide  pare  seer  tear
reed  hose  pride  steak  tide
gale  meet  rude  steel  wear

The letters of each word can be rearranged (anagrammed) to make another word that is a homophone of the original word.

Now take a look at another list of twenty words, and decide what the cluster has in common homophonically. This time, the answers reside in Answers and Solutions.

add  borne  caste  inn  please
bee  butt  damn  lamb  sow
belle  bye  flue  lapse  too
block  canvass  fore  ore  wee

Now do the same with this list, again checking Answers and Solutions for the answer.

aunt  cannon  hoarse  mooed  reign
boarder  choral  lead  mourning  seamen
buoy  fined  maize  oar  two
callous  guild  mined  read  waive

One of the brightest and most pyrotechnic delights of our language is its uncommon stockpile of homophones — words that are pronounced the same but spelled differently and with different meanings. What do you call a naked grizzly? A bare bear. What
do you call a raspy-throated equine? A hoarse horse. Bare-bear and hoarse-horse are among the hundreds of same-sound-different-spelling pairs in the English vocabulary.

Hears a rye peace eye maid up inn my idol thyme. Aye rote it four yew two sea Howe homophones Cannes seam sew whiled from there knows down too they're towns. With pried, eye no it will knot boar ewe. Its meant two bee red allowed:

One night a knight on a hoarse horse
Rode out upon a road.
This male wore mail for war and would
Explore a wood that glowed.
His tale I'll tell from head to tail.
I'll write his rite up right.
A hidden site our hero found,
A sight that I shall cite.

With woe he shouted "Whoa!" as rain
Without a break did reign.
To brake, he pulled the rein, and like
A shattered pane, felt pain.

The poor knight met a witch, which made
Sweat pour from every pore.
He'd never seen a scene like that.
His sore heart couldn't soar.

Then they a game for truffles played,
In which he mined her mind.
To prove who was the better bettor
And find who should be fined.

He won one twice; he won two, too.
To grate on her felt great.
To wrest the rest, he went for four,
And, at the fore, ate eight.

Due to her loss, the mourning witch,
'Midst morning mist and dew,
Her truffles missed. I know no way,
Do I, to weight her rue.

The razed field raised our brave knight's fear
As a swarm of cared fleas flees.
He heard a herd of dear deer pray
The pleas of prey: "Please, please."

A grisly grizzly bear, all bare,
And a hare that had no hair
And a foul fowl bawled that they were bald.
In their pink skins they stood there.

The knight did see a blue whale wail
As it blew out plumes of sea.
"Yoo hoo, you who come riding here,
Please hear and pity me."

...
Our knight began to reel for real. 
The world whirled, so to speak. 
All the days of the week his sole soul felt 
The dizzy daze of the weak. 
Our heir to knighthood gave it up. 
He felt the fare not fair. 
His wholly holy sword soared up 
As he threw it through the air. 
The bell has tolled, I'm told. The hour 
To end our tale draws nigh. 
Without ado, I bid adieu, 
So, by your leave, bye-bye.

The foregoing was excerpted from my book *The Miracle of Language* (Pocket Books, 1991).

How many triple homophones can you think of? It shouldn't be too difficult to capture two or three like the trio lurking in this sentence. Or the one embedded in the joke "Have you heard about the successful perfume manufacturer? His business made a lot of sense (scents, cents)."

In the list below, we came up with 88 tight triads (two beginning with three different letters) and 14 fabulous foursomes (two beginning with three different letters). Notes on the diatomic scale (do, re, mi, etc.) have been permitted, but no proper nouns, foreign words, regional pronunciations, archaisms, or letters of the alphabet are allowed (we say aloud). Have we missed some?

adds, ads, adz
aisle, I'll, isle
ait, ate, eight
bald, balled, bawled
beau, bo, bow
bight, bite, byte
bird, burd, burred
bole, boll, bowl
born, borne, bourn
braise, brays, braze
burro, borough, burrow
busted, bused, bust
cay, key, quay
censer, censor, sensor
cent, scent, sent
cinque, sink, sync
cite, sight, site
cord, cord, cored
clamber, clammer, clamor
crews, cruise, cruse
dew, do, due
do, doe, doug
does, doughs, doze
earn, erne, urn
ewe, yew, you

ewes, use, yews
fane, fain, feln
fays, faze, phase
firs, furs, furze
flew, flue, flue
for, fore, four
fraise, frays, phrase
freees, freeze, frieze
gild, gilled, guild
gnu, knew, new
gored, gourd, gourde
heal, hee, he'll
hoard, horde, whored
holey, holy, wholly
idle, idol, idyll
knap, nap, nappe
knead, kneed, need
knows, no's, nose
lacks, lacs, lax
lay, lea, lei
load, lode, lowed
lochs, locks, lox
mean, mesne, mien
meat, meet, mete
lea, lee, li

N IS FOR
This is a list of eight to be examined. If you send the incorrect letter, you will be given a chance to take another try.

Chappa contains in print, we will give you a prize.

Gorey contains in print, you will be given a prize.

Hector contains in print, you will be given a prize.

In D is for etc.
of Language shouldn’t be king in this heard about de a lot of (two begin­­joromes (two atonic scale 'oper nouns, 'r letters of 'd some?

mussed, must, musth
nay, nee, neigh
o, oh, owe
palate, pallet, palette
pare, pair, pear
peas, pease, pees
poor, pore, pour
praise, prays, preys
rain, reign, rein
raise, rays, raze
raiser, razer, razor
rapped, rapt, wrapped
read, reed, rede
road, rode, rowed
rood, rude, rued
seas, sees, seize
sac, sack, sacque
sewn, sone, sown
sign, sine, syne
ai, aye, eye, l
air, ere, err, heir
bi, buy, by, bye
birr, brr, bur, burr
carat, caret, carrot, karat
cense, cents, scents, sense
heigh, hi, hie, high

slew, slough, slue
sol, sole, soul
sold, soled, souled
stade, staid, stayed
steal, steel, stele
stoo, stoup, stupe
tael, tail, tale
tea, tee, ti
tee, tease, tees
their, there, they're
to, too, two
toad, towe, towed
to, too, two
vane, vain, vein
wail, wale, whale
ware, wear, where
way, weigh, whey
we, wee, whee
whined, wind, wined
wise, whys, wyes
lays, laze, leas, leis
oar, o'er, or, ore
peak, peek, pic, pique
right, rite, wright, write
sew, so, sol, sow
weal, we'll, wheal, wheel
weald, whealed, wheeled, wield

N IS FOR NEWSLETTER

This is the title of a new logological monthly, containing eight to ten pages of articles relating to alphabetic wordplay, for $10 per six issues (Nyr Indictor, editor, PO Box 465, Chappaqua NY 10514). The June 1993 issue (Vol. 1, No. 1) contains an article on the alphabetic wordplay of Edward Gorey ("G is for George smothered under a rug, H is for Hector done in by a thug...") and a rundown of ABC books in print (including a taxonomy of the five basic forms they take); the July 1993 issue surveys "The Vexing 'X'" and how this letter is handled by different authors. Reader challenges are also issued: the June challenge was to create an alphabet of words beginning and ending with the same letter, from AbyssiniiiA to ZizZ (J is the hardest; see JubaraJ in Dan Tilque’s November 1992 Word Ways article). Can sufficient material be found in this highly-specialized branch of logology to keep a journal afloat? Stay tuned.