



A  
SEASON  
*on the*  
WIND

SUZANNE  
WOODS  
FISHER

Bestselling author of *The Choice*

“What a delight Suzanne Woods Fisher’s latest novel is! *A Season on the Wind* is multifaceted and thoroughly enchanting. By the time I finished the first chapter, I was cheering on each of the central characters, was invested in their goals and secrets, and was anxiously turning pages to see what happened next. I’ve always loved Suzanne’s distinct, relatable voice. She has a gift for enabling readers to feel like they’re part of the story—so much so that they don’t want to leave the world she’s created. *A Season on the Wind* is everything a novel should be—engaging, heartfelt, bold, and charming.”

**Shelley Shepard Gray**, *New York Times* and  
*USA Today* bestselling author

“Sparks fly in a lively tale about the Audubon Christmas Bird Count in Amish country. *A Season on the Wind* overflows with warmth and conflict, laced with humor, and the possibility of rekindled love.”

**Amy Clipston**, bestselling author of *The Jam and Jelly Nook*

“*A Season on the Wind* is a compelling read, an enjoyable volume that entertains on a quiet evening, or under a shade tree on a warm spring afternoon. Suzanne Woods Fisher calls our attention to the lives of bird-watchers and birds, both rare and common, that grace the pastoral hills of Pennsylvania. An endearing visit with our Amish friends, with a side order of birds and human nature.”

**Cheryl Harner**, president of the Ohio Audubon Society

Novels by Suzanne Woods Fisher

---

LANCASTER COUNTY SECRETS

*The Choice*

*The Waiting*

*The Search*

SEASONS OF STONEY RIDGE

*The Keeper*

*The Haven*

*The Lesson*

THE INN AT EAGLE HILL

*The Letters*

*The Calling*

*The Revealing*

THE BISHOP'S FAMILY

*The Imposter*

*The Quieting*

*The Devoted*

THE DEACON'S FAMILY

*Mending Fences*

*Stitches in Time*

*Two Steps Forward*

THREE SISTERS ISLAND

*On a Summer Tide*

*On a Coastal Breeze*

*At Lighthouse Point*

*The Moonlight School*

*A*  
SEASON  
*on the*  
WIND

SUZANNE WOODS  
FISHER



*a division of Baker Publishing Group*  
Grand Rapids, Michigan

© 2021 by Suzanne Woods Fisher

Published by Revell  
a division of Baker Publishing Group  
PO Box 6287, Grand Rapids, MI 49516-6287  
www.revellbooks.com

Printed in the United States of America

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—for example, electronic, photocopy, recording—without the prior written permission of the publisher. The only exception is brief quotations in printed reviews.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Fisher, Suzanne Woods, author.

Title: A season on the wind / Suzanne Woods Fisher.

Description: Grand Rapids, Michigan : Revell, a division of Baker Publishing Group, [2021]

Identifiers: LCCN 2021004407 | ISBN 9780800739508 (paperback) | ISBN 9780800740603 (casebound) | ISBN 9781493431946 (ebook)

Subjects: GSAFD: Love stories.

Classification: LCC PS3606.178 S45 2021 | DDC 813/.6—dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2021004407>

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture used in this book, whether quoted or paraphrased by the characters, is taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

Scripture quotations labeled MSG are taken from *THE MESSAGE*, copyright © 1993, 2002, 2018 by Eugene H. Peterson. Used by permission of NavPress. All rights reserved. Represented by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

Published in association with Joyce Hart of the Hartline Literary Agency, LLC.

Baker Publishing Group publications use paper produced from sustainable forestry practices and post-consumer waste whenever possible.

21 22 23 24 25 26 27      7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Life is long enough for one more chance at a rare bird.

James D. Watson

# Meet the Cast

**Penny Weaver**—Single Amish woman, age thirty-five, moved to Stoney Ridge from Big Valley, a much more conservative Old Order Amish church, to live in her late grandmother's home. Manages Lost Creek Farm's guesthouse (where birders come to stay while birding), and also manages her young brother, Micah.

**Micah Weaver**—Amish teen, age eighteen. Has developed quite a reputation in the bird world for his remarkable ability to spot and identify birds, especially rare birds. Starting a business as a field guide for avid birders.

**Ben Zook**—A twitcher. Non-Amish man (though he had been raised Plain), age thirty-seven, renowned author and photographer of birds. Made his mark in the world of birding with his debut book, *Rare Birds*. Has come to Lost Creek Farm in hot pursuit of a “vagrant,” a bird seldom seen in North America.

**Natalie Crowell**—Cousin to Ben, age thirty-one, lives in Philadelphia, has worked in interior design until her life imploded recently. Accompanies Ben to Lost Creek Farm at his invitation. Has no interest in birds whatsoever.

**Trudy Yoder**—Young Amish girl, age fifteen, avid birder.

**Shelley Yoder**—Trudy’s older sister, age eighteen. Has a beautiful singing voice. Avid attractor of male devotion, including Micah Weaver’s.

**Boyd Baldwin**—Non-Amish veterinarian to Stoney Ridge, thirties, love interest of Natalie’s.

**Hank Lapp**—One-of-a-kind Amish man. Ageless.

**Roy King**—Amish widower, late thirties. Heart is set on Penny Weaver.

**Zeke Zook**—Elderly Amish man, father to Ben. Suffers from Alzheimer’s disease.

**David Stoltzfus**—Wise and wonderful bishop to the little Amish church of Stoney Ridge.

**White-winged Tern**—A vagrant bird that has been blown off course during fall migration. This Eurasian bird, seldom seen in all of North America, has chosen Stoney Ridge for a lengthy stopover, creating quite a stir. It has a sly knack for eluding birders.

# Birder's Glossary

*accidental*: a bird that shows up where it shouldn't (aka casual)

*bins*: binoculars

*casual*: birds that fly from wherever to a wrong place (aka accidental)

*chase*: to chase after a reported rarity

*chick*: newly hatched baby bird

*clutch*: eggs in a nest

*dip*: going after a particular bird and missing it

*dray*: squirrel nest

*fledgling*: a young bird with wing feathers large enough for flight

*jinx bird*: a relatively common bird that has managed to elude a person's life list despite repeated attempts on their part to find that species

*LBJs* (little brown jobs): a blanket term for drab songbirds that are difficult to distinguish

*lek*: a patch of ground used for communal display in the breeding season by certain birds

*lifer*: a first-time sighting for a birder

*nemesis bird*: a species that constantly eludes a birder

*rookery*: a breeding colony

*snags*: dead trees

*spark bird*: a species that triggers a lifelong passion for birding

*twitcher*: a hard-core birder who goes to great lengths to see a species and add it to his or her list

*vagrant*: bird straying well outside of the regular ecological range

*whitewash*: excrement outside of nest



Penny Weaver stayed so still that the field sparrow in her yard didn't seem to know she was there. It was better in the early morning, when she could see the solid color on his proud chest. In this late-afternoon light, a field sparrow seemed like an ordinary Little Brown Job. After he flew off, she crossed the yard to the old milking stable that her brother Micah had converted into a guesthouse with the help of a few men from their church.

Inside the guesthouse, Penny took one last look around. On a whim, she had cut a handful of late-blooming chrysanthemums from the garden and put them in a mason jar to set on the small table. The guesthouse was made up of two small bedrooms, a tiny but functional bathroom, and a sitting area with a woodstove. Against the wall, near the table, was a kitchenette of sorts: a sink, and a mini refrigerator and microwave with power provided by a generator. It wasn't fancy, certainly nothing like these English strangers were probably accustomed to. But it was clean, tidy, warm . . . and the strangers had asked the bishop, David Stoltzfus, for a place to stay while birding with Micah. She had to remember that, especially if they were the complaining type. *They* had asked.

If this worked out, it might provide needed income. The bishop came up with the notion of adding a guesthouse at Lost Creek Farm for birders, to encourage longer guiding trips for Micah

than the usual one-day outings. “This could be a good thing for Micah,” David had said. “It could be just the thing to bring him out of his shell. And it’s good for Stoney Ridge too. Micah’s eye and ear for rare birds seems to be God’s means to bring blessings to our town.”

It did seem as if the Almighty was working overtime lately to bring Micah out of the shadows. Last January, he’d spotted a Black-backed Oriole pecking away at Penny’s kitchen feeder. The Black-backed was a stunning cousin to the Baltimore Oriole, but this one lived in central Mexico. It was only the second time the Black-backed Oriole had been spotted in the United States. Ever. That little bird created a major attraction during its two-month stay, drawing bird lovers from all over the country.

As if that wasn’t enough, in early March, Micah spotted a Roseate Spoonbill. While it wasn’t hard to notice—goodness, it stood nearly a yard tall, with pink feathers like flamingos—where Micah had found it *was* remarkable. An overlooked, hard-to-get-to creek that ran along the northern edge of town. It had been nearly fifty years since the last Roseate Spoonbill was spotted in Pennsylvania. Why it had traveled from Florida—remaining for nearly a month in a creek so insignificant it had no name—was a mystery. Then again, that’s what made birding so intriguing. Birds didn’t always act or play according to the rules.

And now, in mid-November, Penny’s brother had sighted the White-winged Tern, a vagrant bird, rarely seen in all of North America. Suddenly it seemed that birders everywhere knew the name Micah Weaver.

She heard a noise outside and peeked out the window. The sound of a car coming up the long, steep drive always startled Penny, so different a sound than the gentle *clip-clop* of a horse pulling a buggy.

Opening the door of the guesthouse, she spotted the dark brim of Micah’s hat as he peered around the edge of the barn. She let

out a sigh. That boy. Nearly nineteen and still so shy. He was as gentle in nature as he was tall in height.

She hoped David was right to add this whole venture of hosting birders at Lost Creek Farm to Micah's field guiding. She hadn't slept well last night, tossed and turned, anxious. It wasn't typical for Penny to feel unsettled, which only made her even more uneasy.

She smoothed down her apron, tucked a stray strand of hair inside her prayer cap, took a deep breath, and crossed the yard to greet the guests. A small man climbed out of the driver's side of the car and waved his arm, smiling.

"Welcome. You must be the man coming to find the bird," Penny said. An awkward silence followed. Something seemed off. What had she done wrong?

"Um, my name is Natalie Crowell. My cousin is the birder."

*Oh no!* Penny realized this man was actually a woman with a startling haircut. Crewcut-short like a man's, spiky on top, white-blonde. "Welcome to our farm. Lost Creek Farm. It's where my brother Micah and I live. Micah is the field guide you've come for. And I'm Penny." She was babbling now, nervous, embarrassed.

Out of the passenger side of the car, another person emerged and popped his head over the top of the car. "I'm the one you were told about. Don't feel embarrassed. People confuse us all the time."

"Very funny," Natalie said. She pulled her big purse out of the car and turned to Penny. "Ben's my cousin, but we look nothing alike."

That did not need pointing out. Ben had longer hair than Natalie's—thick, dark brown, wavy. He raised his arms onto the top of the car, folding them, leaning forward slightly as he cupped his elbows, and as he did, Penny's stomach dropped.

"The name's Ben Zook. I've come to see that White-winged Tern that everyone in the bird world is buzzing about. I sure hope it's not a one-day wonder."

Penny's heart gave one huge thump and then started beating wildly.

It was *him*.

*Her* Ben Zook.

Even after two decades, she would know him anywhere.

She'd always known that one day, somehow, somewhere, they'd meet again. And here he was. He was here for a bird.

*Of course* the Lord would entice him back home with a bird. A rare bird. Just as birds found their way back over land and sea, so God had found a way to bring Ben Zook here.

Ben walked around the car to greet her, holding out his hand to her. His movement was quick, graceful, and Penny suddenly remembered that was his way. He was tall, so tall she had to raise her chin to see his eyes. He was so fine to look at that she couldn't help but stare at the sheer wonder of him. His deep voice made Penny think of a waterfall, fast-moving and fluid, unable to hold on to yet so mesmerizing.

Ben Zook was *standing* just a few feet away from her!

Still dumbstruck, she gazed at him, then at his offered hand. *Do something, Penny! Pull yourself together.* But she couldn't budge. His eyes registered no recognition of her. Not a flicker. Penny could see she was a complete stranger to him. Eyes couldn't lie. And still, she couldn't move a muscle.

Ben dropped his hand with an awkward smile, then turned away to take things out of the car. He opened the trunk to pull out suitcases, handing one to his cousin. He paused, leaned one hand against the car, swayed a little, and suddenly folded to the ground like a rag doll.



Ben felt a gentle touch on his forehead before his eyelids could open. He came to slowly, as if he were waking up from a sweet dream, so sweet that he didn't even want to be roused. He couldn't remember what he was dreaming about, only the mood it evoked.

It covered him in calm; his soul was settled, utterly safe. He could scarcely remember ever feeling that way.

*Wait.* He did remember. He was a little boy, maybe five or six years old, sick with some dreaded childhood illness like chicken pox, and his mother had put her cool hand on his hot forehead. Just like now.

Eyes opening, he blinked up at her. This woman wasn't his mother. And he wasn't six years old. And he had absolutely no idea what had just happened.

From somewhere far away, he heard warbling sounds, and the world started slowly coming back into focus.

"Ben. Ben! Are you okay?"

The warbling sound belonged to Natalie. Ben lifted his head, then pushed himself up on his elbows. "Was ist los?" *What happened?*

A Plain woman, the one who had touched his forehead, leaned back on her heels beside the car, a stricken look on her face. "Sie is bletzlich umechdich warre." *You fainted suddenly.*

"Zwaar?" *Truly?* Argh. Not again. He felt himself color and shrugged, feigning nonchalance. "I had a bout of the flu recently. Still recovering, I guess." He tried to get himself up and felt two large hands under his arms, hoisting him to his feet. Still a little unsteady and more than a little embarrassed, Ben leaned one hand on the car, brushed himself off with the other. *What a way to meet people.* He turned to face the man who helped him up and realized this must be Micah. Tall and thin, more so than others had described him, but still a boy, Ben could see that. His eyes, mostly. They remained downcast, shy and reserved, even as the two shook hands. "So you're Micah Weaver. I'm Ben Zook."

The boy gave a brief nod. Just a brief, awkward nod of greeting, despite the fact that Ben had traveled a long distance to meet him. Over the last few years, Ben had heard Micah Weaver's name circulated around the Pennsylvania birding community, always with a sense of awe. Apparently, the boy had an uncanny ability

to spot birds, especially migrating ones blown off course during storms. Ben hoped Micah Weaver would live up to his reputation. He had a book manuscript due in, one that was on hold, waiting for this White-winged Tern.

Ben Zook had only two loves in his life. Books and birds. In a stroke of good fortune, he'd stumbled onto a way to cobble together those two loves into a career. He wrote books about rare birds. The market wasn't exactly mainstream, but there was a steady and faithful market for it, and for that he was grateful. As Natalie often pointed out, he'd bought himself a job. Happily it was work that he loved.

Penny Weaver, the woman who had first seemed frozen in shock at the sight of Ben, snapped out of her odd stupor and jumped into action. "Micah, would you take their luggage to the guesthouse? You must be thirsty from your travels. If you'll follow Micah to the guesthouse, I'll bring you something to refresh you."

Ben glanced at the Plain woman as she hurried off to the main house, half walking, half running. Scurrying. Just the way he remembered how Amish women moved. Quick, purposeful, no-nonsense. He felt strangely touched by her care for them, two strangers, until he remembered that this was a business arrangement and he owed her a sizable check for her hospitality—regardless of whether or not he was able to photograph that rare bird. The bishop had made that clear. He had retained Micah's help to find that bird, effectively stopping other birders from hiring him for the duration.

Micah lifted all their luggage like it was made of cotton balls and was halfway to the guesthouse as Ben reached into the trunk of the car to retrieve his optical equipment bag. That, he hadn't let Micah touch. He didn't let anyone touch it.

"Ben, are you all right?" His cousin looked at him with concerned eyes.

"I'm fine, Natalie. I just need some water. I didn't drink enough today."

“You spoke in tongues to Penny Weaver.”

He scrunched his face in disbelief. “What?”

“You did! And she understood you too. It was freaky.”

Oh no. Could he have spoken in Penn Dutch? No way. There was no way. He hadn’t used the dialect since he left the Amish as a teenager. Hadn’t spoken a single word of it.

“Well, believe it or not, you did.” She looked around, sniffing, scrunching her face at the smell. “What reeks?”

He chuckled. “That is the sweet aroma of farm life.” When her eyebrows knit together in confusion, he added, “Fertilizer.” When she still looked puzzled, he added, “Manure on the fields.”

“Oh.”

That was common knowledge for a man who spent his childhood less than a mile away. A man who might’ve easily become an Amish farmer himself, were it not for his father.

But Penny Weaver and her brother Micah knew none of that, and he had no intention of telling them. He wouldn’t lie, but he believed the past belonged in the past.

Besides, Ben had always loved change. After growing up in a town that never changed, he loved it even more. Stoney Ridge, in his opinion, was the kind of town that was better to come from than to stay in, but he wasn’t really the staying type. He was a man on the move, all the time. Like a bird in that way, migrating eight months of the year.

He doubted there was anyone left in Stoney Ridge who might even remember him. So many, like his mother, had passed on, or moved away. Maybe that was the real reason he felt he could return at last. He could be here, could bag this rare bird, yet remain anonymous. He could stay on the fringes, irrelevant to a community that only cared about their own.

Then again, maybe he would’ve followed that bird anytime, anywhere. It was an extraordinary find—the first sighting of the Eurasian species in the United States this year and the first-ever reported in Pennsylvania. It was his nemesis bird. A bird that continually

dipped him. “Fische un Yaage macht hungrigen Magen,” he murmured. *Fishing and hunting make an empty stomach.*

He clapped his forehead. Why in the world did *that* saying pop into his head? It was one his father often said. The mind was such a strange thing. And how it affected the body—that was strange too.

The last year or so, Ben had felt a world-weariness that dampened his enthusiasm for most everything, even birding. He hoped this super rare White-winged Tern would snap him out of his funk. Assuming . . . the Micah Weaver kid could find it again. The way he slipped out of sight after dropping off their luggage in the guesthouse, Ben got a funny feeling he was as elusive as the bird.



Trudy Yoder. *She* was the one who had told Micah about the White-winged Tern. He’d taken the word of a fifteen-year-old girl. Stupid, stupid, stupid!

Trudy was absolutely positive she’d seen it, described it in great detail—startlingly specific. She’d never been wrong before. As annoying as Trudy could be in practically every way, she knew her birds. So Micah took her word for it without verifying the find with his own eyes and posted it as a confirmed sighting on the Rare Bird Alert. Then he added his own name to the confirmation.

News of the vagrant, spotted by Micah Weaver, traveled like wildfire.

That was when Micah got the first jab of guilt to his gut. A few days later, the moment lost even more of its shine when his sister Penny told him that a twitcher was coming to the farm, an author on bird books, expecting Micah to locate this rare bird like he could snap his fingers and it would appear. Paying him handsomely so he wouldn’t take other birders out in the field. Micah had been out at dawn every morning, out again each twilight, regardless of the weather, trying to locate that bird. So far, nothing.

As a birder, he was honor bound to tell the truth. It was a car-

dinal value among those who loved birds. If you cheated about finding a rarity, who did you cheat? Even more important, he was honor bound to tell the truth because he was Plain. It was woven into the very fabric of his soul.

The whole thing made Micah feel sick to his stomach.

Why had he taken Trudy Yoder's word for it? He knew how easy it was to misread birds. He'd done it himself, many times. He certainly knew better than to post it on the Rare Bird Alert as a confirmed sighting, adding his name. In truth, only Trudy had seen the bird, so it should have remained an unconfirmed report. He should never have attached his name to it.

So what made him do such a shameful thing?

Because his reputation as a crackerjack field guide impressed others, especially Trudy's older sister, Shelley Yoder, who sang like an angel and looked like one too. Because spotting rare birds was easy for him, unlike getting words out from around his twisted-up tongue.

It was a sinful thing, a worldly thing, to act like he was a big somebody. But, as he well knew, it was even worse to be a nobody.

## Micah Weaver, Bird-Watching Log

**Name of Bird:** *Green Heron*

**Scientific Name:** *Butorides virescens*

**Status:** *Common bird in steep decline*

**Date:** *March 5*

**Location:** *Farm pond on Beacon Hollow*

**Description:** *Adult male. Small and stocky with a daggerlike bill, thick neck, hunchbacked body, slender yellow legs. Velvet-green back and crown, a chestnut neck and breast.*

**Bird Action:** *Crows harassed the Green Heron as it performed display flights around its territory.*

**Notes:** *A migrant to Pennsylvania, the Green Heron is easy to overlook, shy, solitary, and secretive, skilled at concealing itself in its wetland surroundings. It lives around small bodies of fresh water—pond, marsh, river, creek, lake—and its diet is mostly fish. The Green Heron is one of just a few bird species that use tools. It drops feathers or insects or twigs on the water's surface to lure in fish. Pretty smart.*

*During courtship display, the male loses his dignity. He stretches his neck forward and down and snaps his bill shut, or points his bill upward while swaying back and forth. He puts on a bird dance. This actually happens.*

*What female could resist?*