



In Memoriam: Weishu Xu, 1930–2008

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IN MEMORIAM: WEISHU XU, 1930–2008

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Weishu Xu, Corresponding Fellow (since 1986) and Honorary Fellow (since 2000) of the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU), died on 20 May 2008 in Beijing. Weishu was born in Jixian County, Tianjin City, China, on 16 July 1930. **He received a B.Sc. in Biology** from Beijing University in 1952. After graduation, he joined the Beijing Natural History Museum and started working in the areas of avian taxonomy, ecology of endemic species, and bird migration in the Department of Zoology. He was the first to conduct a comparative study of the eggshell structure of Reeves's Pheasant and Elliot's Pheasant. He cooperated with British researchers in monitoring the population dynamics of migratory birds for over 10 years in Beidaihe, a famous birding site in northern China. During his 40-year research career, he published eight books and 40 papers, including *The Raptors of China* and *Fauna Sinica—Aves*, vol. 3 (*Falconiformes*), vol. 8 (*Passeriformes, Eurylaimidae—Irenidae*), and vol. 9 (*Passeriformes, Bombycillidae—Prunellidae*).

As a founding member of the China Ornithological Society (COS), Xu contributed greatly to Chinese ornithology. He worked as the Chief Editor of *The Newsletter* of the COS for more than 20 years. He served on the Committee of Cheng's Fund for Young Ornithologists, which selects and encourages young Chinese

researchers to work on birds. He was a kind, sympathetic, optimistic man, with many friends in China and throughout the world. He was largely responsible for the success of the 23rd International Ornithological Congress (IOC) in Beijing. In August 1998, Xu extended the formal invitation to the International Ornithological Committee to host its Congress in Beijing on behalf of the COS. Four years later, as Secretary General of the 23rd IOC, Xu worked tirelessly to host this historic event, the first Congress in China, the first in Asia, and the first in the 21st century.

Xu was a member of the Council of the China Zoological Society (1979–1992), Secretary General of the China Natural History Museum Society, Vice Secretary General and Vice President of the COS from 1980 to 2002, Secretary General of the National Committee of China in the International Union of Biological Sciences (1996–2008), and a Fellow of the British Ornithologists' Union, as well as of the AOU. He was a Honorary Vice President of the 19th IOC (1986–1990).

Weishu Xu leaves his wife, Yonghua Feng, a botanist recently retired from the Beijing Pere David's Deer Garden. They have a daughter who now works in the field of horticulture in the United States.