

A Guide to Beijing's Urban Wildlife



This guide has been compiled for the **Ambassadors for Nature** initiative and includes the wildlife most likely to be encountered in urban Beijing, especially the embassy districts.

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More detailed guides to the amphibians, birds, butterflies, dragonflies, mammals and reptiles, covering all the species found in Beijing, can be seen at: <https://birdingbeijing.com>

1. Amphibians

Frogs and Toads

Although there are many frog and toad species in Beijing, only two are regularly encountered within the third ring road. For a more comprehensive guide to the amphibians of Beijing, see <https://birdingbeijing.com/a-guide-to-the-amphibians-of-beijing/>

1. **Asiatic Toad** *Bufo gargarizans* 中华大蟾蜍 Zhong Hua Da Chan Chu



2. **Dark-spotted Frog** *Pelophylax nigromaculatus* 黑斑侧褶 HeiBanCeZheWa



2. Birds

Beijing is a brilliant place to watch birds. More than 500 different species have been recorded in the Chinese capital, which beats most major capital cities. In fact, Beijing ranks second, only to Brasilia, amongst G20 capital cities for the number of species recorded. Here is a short guide to the most common birds encountered in central Beijing's parks and green spaces. During migration season (Spring and Autumn), many more species will be possible.

Eurasian Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*, 红隼)



Breeds in small numbers in the city. Eats small rodents (mice, voles) and small birds. Can see ultra-violet!

Spotted Dove (*Streptopelia chinensis*, 珠颈斑鸠)



Common in parks and gardens. Often seen on the ground.

Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*, 戴胜)



One of Beijing's most spectacular birds. Raises its crest when excited or alarmed.

Grey-capped Pygmy Woodpecker (*Yungipicus canicapillus*, 星头啄木鸟)



Beijing's smallest woodpecker. Common in parks and urban green spaces.

Great Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos major*, 大斑啄木鸟)



Common in the city parks and any green spaces.

Grey-headed Woodpecker (*Picus canus*, 灰头绿啄木鸟)



The Grey-headed Woodpecker is common in open woodland and parks. Likes to feed on the ground. Ants are its favourite food!

Azure-winged Magpie (*Cyanopica cyanus*, 灰喜鹊)



One of the most noticeable birds in central Beijing. Sociable and often seen in noisy flocks.

Oriental Magpie (*Pica serica*, 喜鹊)



One of the cleverest and most adaptable species of bird and a very common species in Beijing. A scavenger.

Carrion Crow (*Corvus corone*, 小嘴乌鸦)



A scavenger. Eats rubbish left behind by people!

Large-billed Crow (*Corvus macrohynchos*, 大嘴乌鸦)



A close relative of the Carrion Crow but prefers parks and mountains.

Japanese (Eastern Great) Tit (*Parus minor*, 大山雀)



The most common member of the tit family in Beijing. Like a 'washed out' Great Tit from Europe. Eats insects in summer and seeds in winter.

Marsh Tit (*Poecile palustris*, 沼泽山雀)



Acrobatic and noisy.
Can be found in parks
all over Beijing.

Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*, 家燕)



A common migrant and
summer visitor to
Beijing. Makes nests of
mud in hutongs.

Red-rumped Swallow (*Cecropis daurica*, 金腰燕)



A common migrant and
summer visitor to
Beijing. Similar to Barn
Swallow but note pale
rump and streaked
underparts. Makes nests
of mud in hutongs.

Beijing Swift (*Apus apus pekinensis*, 普通楼燕)



One of Beijing's most iconic birds. Sometimes mistaken for a swallow, the Beijing Swift is an all-dark bird that can be seen in 'screaming' flocks around some of Beijing's most famous landmarks (Tiananmen Square, Yonghegong, etc). Arrives in April from southern Africa and is gone by the end of July. Eats, drinks and even sleeps in the air!

Chinese (Light-vented) Bulbul (*Pycnonotus sinensis*, 白头鹎)



A relatively common Beijing bird in parks and green spaces. Eats berries and insects.

Crested Myna (*Acridotheres cristatellus*, 八哥)



Seen in large parks. Likes to mimic other birds.

White-cheeked Starling (*Sturnus cineraceus*, 灰椋鸟)



Seen all year round and breeds in tree-holes in parks and large gardens.

Eurasian Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*, 树麻雀)



One of Beijing's most common resident birds. Can be seen foraging on streets and in parks.

(Chinese) Blackbird (*Turdus merula mandarinus*, 乌鸫)



Breeds in the larger parks and gardens, especially in the diplomatic quarter. Probably Beijing's best songster.

Chinese Grosbeak (*Eophona migratoria*, 黑尾蜡嘴雀)

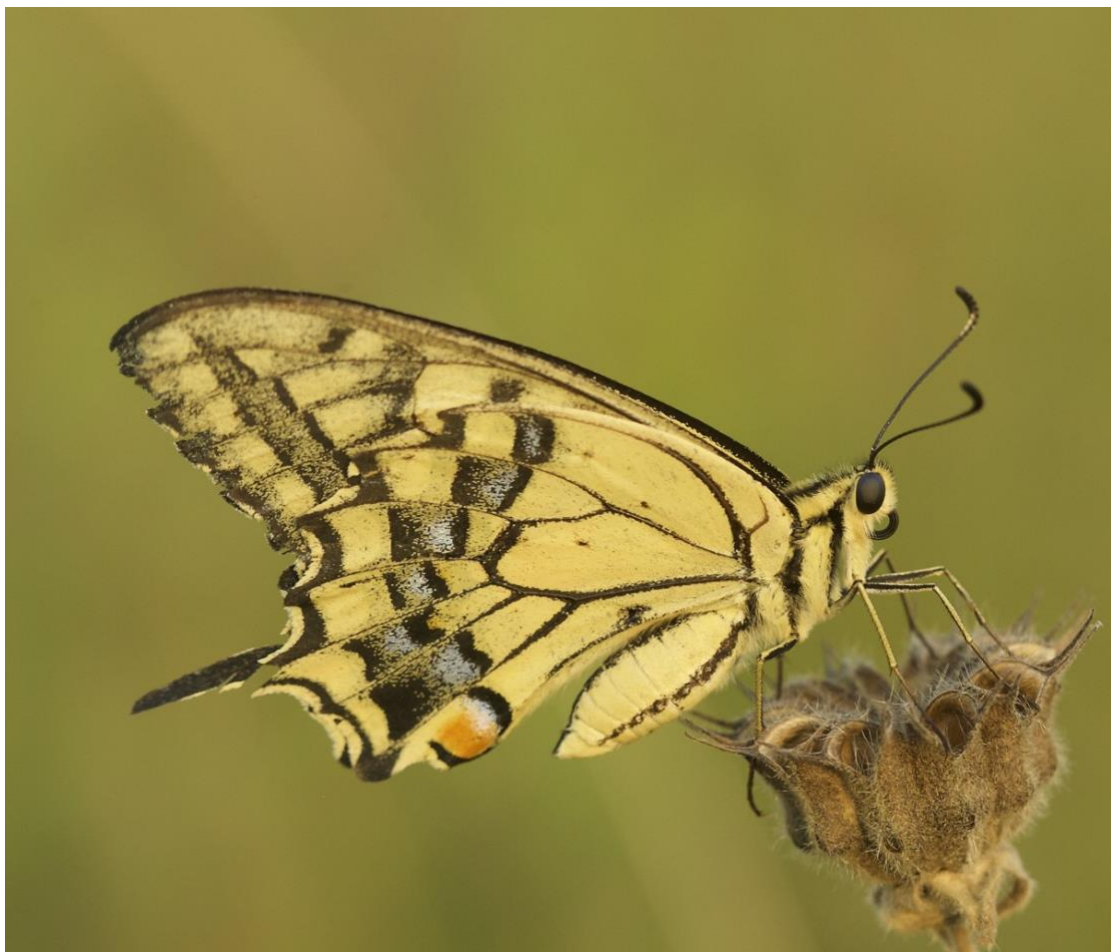


Eats seeds and nuts.
Seen in parks. Has a
beautiful whistling song.

3. Butterflies

Beijing is blessed with more than 180 species of butterfly. Many are adapted to specific habitats, such as the alpine meadows of the highest mountains or the mixed original woodlands on the outskirts of Beijing. In central Beijing only the most common, generalist, species occur. The most likely species to be encountered in the city are below. More about Beijing's butterflies can be found here: <https://birdingbeijing.com/butterflies-of-beijing/>

Old World Swallowtail *Papilio machaon* 金凤蝶/黄凤蝶/茴香凤蝶 Jīn fèng dié/ Huáng fèng dié/ Huíxiāng fèng dié



Asian Swallowtail *Papilio xuthus* 花椒凤蝶/柑橘凤蝶/春凤蝶 Huājiāo fèng dié/ Gānjú fèng dié/ Chūn fèng dié



Dragon Swallowtail *Sericanus montela* 软尾亚凤蝶/丝带凤蝶/马兜铃凤蝶 Ruǎn wěi yà fèng dié/Sīdài fèng dié/Mǎ dōu líng fèng dié



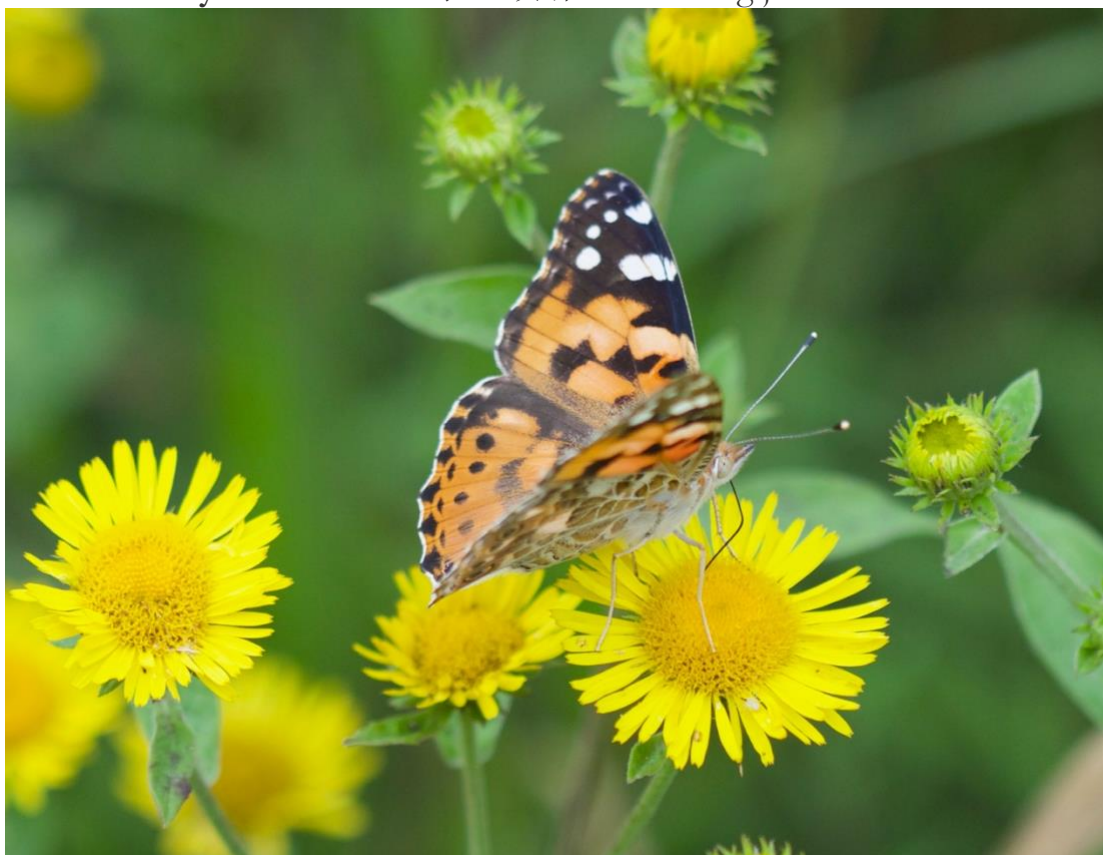
Small White/Cabbage White *Pieris rapae* 菜粉蝶/白粉蝶 Cài fěndié/Bái fěndié



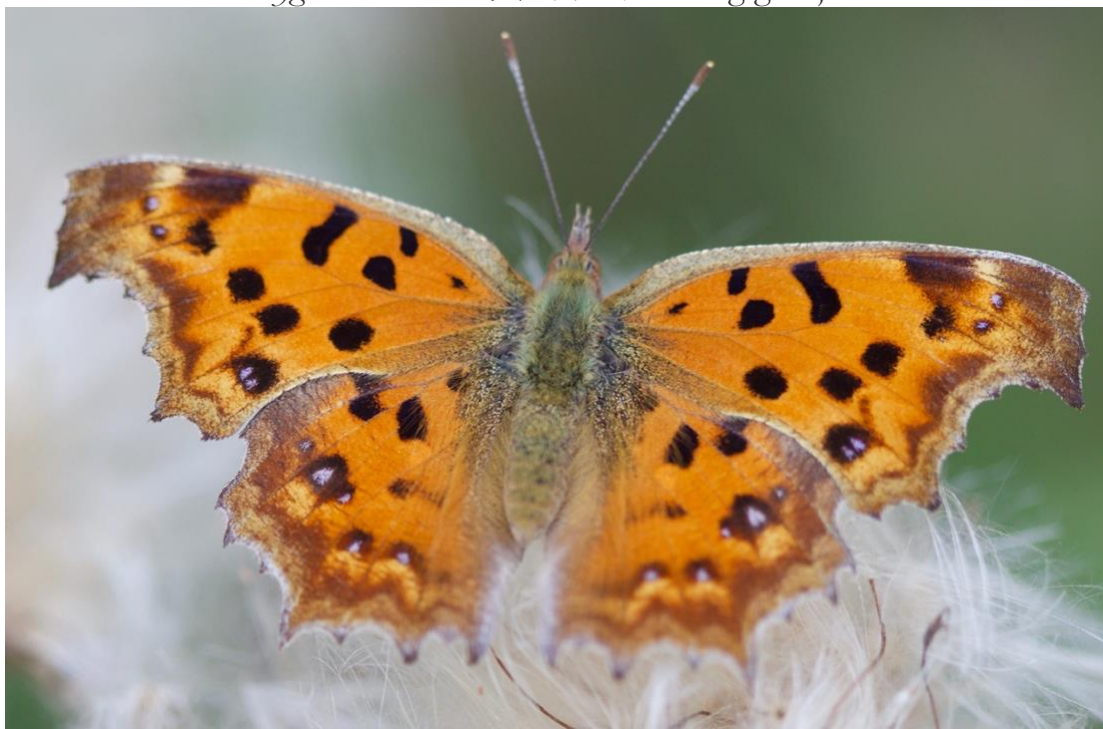
Bath White *Pieris daphidice* 花斑云粉蝶 Huā bān yún fěndié



Painted Lady *Vanessa cardui* 小红蛱蝶 Xiǎo hóng jiá dié



Asian Comma *Polygonia c-aureum* 黄钩蛱蝶 Huáng gōu jiá dié



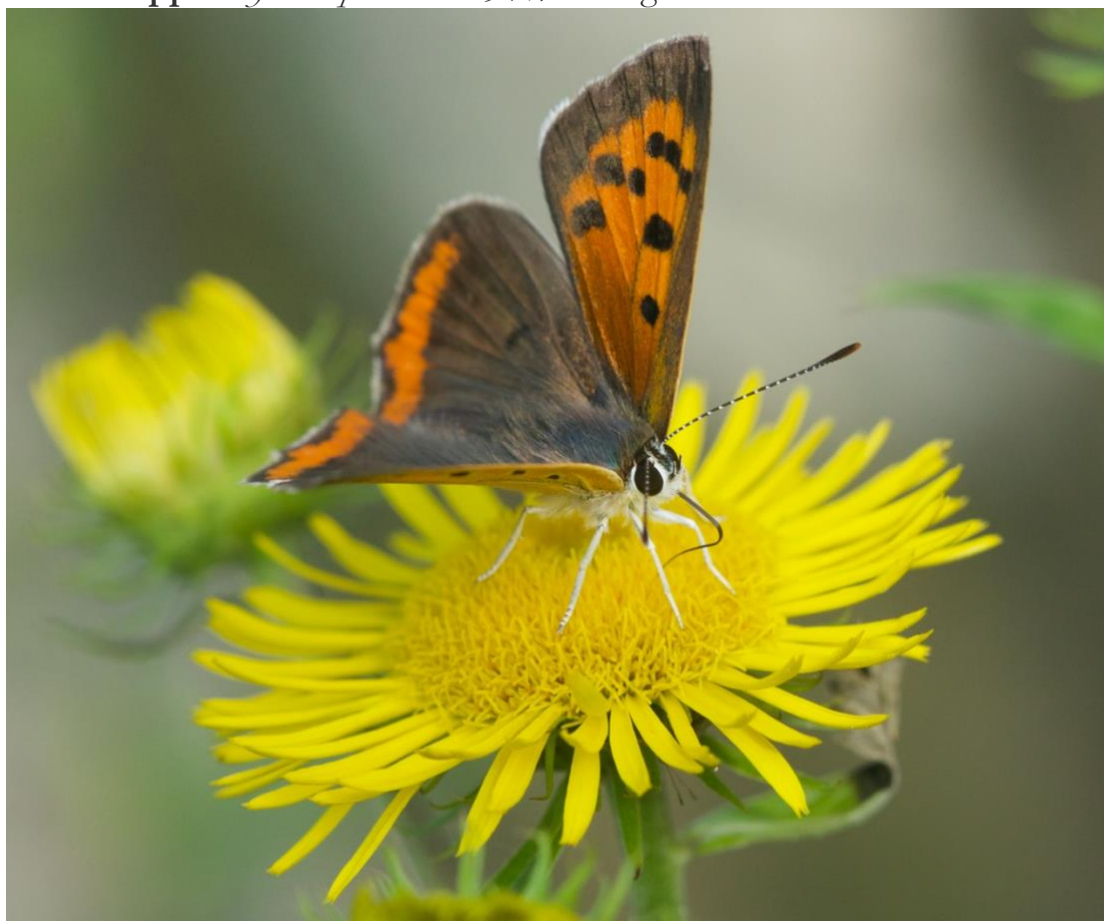
Melitaea didymoides 斑网蛱蝶 Bān wǎng jiá dié



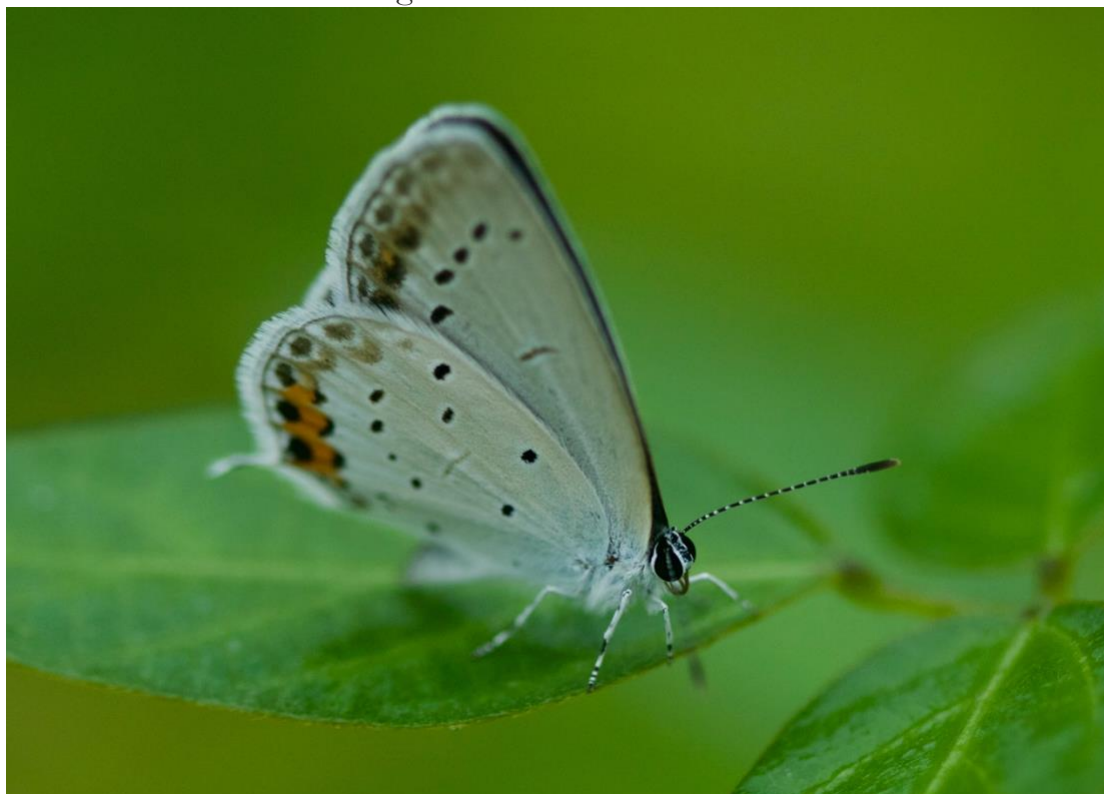
Large Copper *Lycaena dispar* 橙灰蝶 Chéng huī dié



Small Copper *Lycaena phlaeas* 红灰蝶 Hóng huī dié



Short-tailed Blue *Everes argiades* 蓝灰蝶 Lán huī dié



4. Dragonflies and Damselflies

Beijing has recorded at least 67 species of dragonfly and damselfly. Inside the 6th ring road, some of the best locations for seeing these spectacular insects include the Botanical Gardens and the Olympic Forest Park. The mountains and valleys of northern and western Beijing, for example Huairou, Mentougou, Miyun and Yanqing Districts are also great places to explore. Inside the 3rd ring road, the most likely species to be encountered are below. For more on Beijing's dragonflies and damselflies, see:

<https://birdingbeijing.com/dragonflies-and-damselflies-of-beijing/>

Aeshna soneharai 混合蜓 Hùnhé tíng



Lesser Emperor *Anax parthenope julis* 碧伟蜓 Bì wěi tíng



Scarlet Darter/Crimson Darter *Crocothemis servilia* 红蜻 Hóng qīng



White-tailed Skimmer *Orthetrum albistylum* 白尾灰蜻 Báiwěi huī qīng



Wandering Glider/Globe Skimmer *Pantala flavescens* 黄蜻 Huáng qīng



Pied Skimmer *Pseudothemis zonata* 玉带蜻 Yùdài qīng



Butterfly Skimmer *Rhyothemis fuliginosa* 黑丽翅蜻 Hēi lì chì qīng



Asiatic Bluetail *Ischnura asiatica* 东亚异痣螳 Dōngyà yì zhì cōng



Blue-tailed Damselfly *Ischnura elegans* 长叶异痣螳 Cháng yè yì zhì cōng



Dusky Lilysquatter *Paracercion calamorum dyeri* 蓝纹尾鳉 Lán wén wěi cōng



Eastern Lilysquatter *Paracercion melanotum* 黑背尾鳉 Hēi bèi wěi cōng



Platycnemis phyllopoda 叶足扇螳 Yè zú shàn cōng



5. Mammals

Beijing is a surprisingly good place for mammals. Outside the 6th ring road roam Amur Leopard Cats, Siberian Roe Deer, two species of badger, Wild Boar to name a few. Inside the 3rd ring road, the variety is limited but even here a few species can be found. For more on Beijing's mammals, see <https://birdingbeijing.com/a-guide-to-the-mammals-of-beijing/>

Siberian Chipmunk *Tamias sibiricus* 花鼠 Huā shǔ

Can be found in any wooded areas from mountains to parks, including many of the parks in the city (e.g. Ritan Park, Temple of Heaven Park).



Amur Hedgehog *Erinaceus amurensis* 东北刺猬 Dōngběi cìwèi

Fairly common in parks and scrubby areas but due to its nocturnal habits, not often seen.



Short-faced Mole *Scaptochirus moschatus* 麝鼯 Shè yǎn

The only mole species to occur in the capital lowlands. It's a species of mole adapted to arid conditions.

Siberian Weasel *Mustela sibirica* 黄鼬 Huángyòu

The Siberian Weasel, known as “Huang Shu Lang” is common in Beijing and can even be found in the city centre. Superstition states this animal has the ability to possess people's souls.



6. Reptiles

Beijing boasts at least 17 species of snake, as well as several lizards. Those listed below are those most likely to be encountered in central Beijing. The Great Wall is a very good place to see a range of snakes and lizards and more detail on the species to be found across the municipality can be found here: <https://birdingbeijing.com/a-guide-to-the-reptiles-of-beijing/>

Lizards

Peking Gecko *Gekko swinhonis* 无蹼壁虎 Wú pǔ bìhǔ



Ordos Racerunner *Eremias brenchleyi* 山地麻蜥 Shāndì má xī



Mongolia Racerunner *Eremias argus* 丽斑麻蜥 Lì bān má xī



Gail's Eyelid Skink *Plestiodon capito* 黄纹石龙子 Huáng wén shí lóng zi



Snakes

Of the 17 species recorded in Beijing, only one is likely to be found inside the 3rd ring road and then only rarely. The Tiger Keelback is usually found near water. It is a strong swimmer and preys mostly on frogs, small rodents.

Tiger Keelback – *Rhabdophis tigrinus* – 虎斑颈槽蛇 – Hǔbān jǐng cáo shé

