

# Yeyahu 野鸭湖

## (Wild Duck Lake)

A Site Guide



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### Overview

Yeyahu (Wild Duck Lake) National Wetland Reserve is the premier birding location in Beijing Municipality. Located on the shores of Guanting Reservoir, Yanqing District, the reserve is at an elevation of 479 m and covers a total area of 6,873 hectares. Flanked by mountains to the north and south, it is a spectacularly scenic all-year round location but comes into its own in spring and autumn during migration season. It can produce cranes, geese, duck, raptors, buntings, warblers and bitterns. Just about anything can turn up! It is a regular stopover site for the Critically Endangered **BAER'S POCHARD** (typically April and October) and, with the recent creation of suitable habitat, it is possible this *aythya* could breed at this site in future. From mid-October to late mid-April, cranes, geese and **RUDDY SHELDUCK** can be seen in good numbers and large flocks of **BAIKAL TEAL** can be present in late October and November and again in April. It is perhaps the best site in Beijing to see **EASTERN MARSH HARRIER** with at least one adult male and several females usually present from March to October. **YELLOW BITTERN** breeds, as does the much scarcer **VON SCHRENCK'S BITTERN**. In recent years, **BEARDED TITS** have bred alongside the more common **CHINESE PENDULINE TIT**. From mid-May, the reedbeds are alive with **ORIENTAL REED WARBLERS** and the smaller **BLACK-BROWED REED WARBLER** is regular on passage. **AMUR FALCON** and **HOBBY** both breed in small numbers. **MONGOLIAN GULLS** are regular on passage and the 'Vulnerable' **RELICT GULL** is sometimes encountered from late March into April and again in September and October. Rarities have

included **MUTE SWAN, LONG-TAILED DUCK, BLACK-THROATED LOON, DALMATIAN** and **GREAT WHITE PELICANS, PALLAS'S FISH EAGLE, LITTLE GULL, GLAUCOUS GULL, BLACK-LEGGED KITTIWAKE, LITTLE CURLEW** and **TIGER SHRIKE**.

It's a top site and thoroughly recommended at any time of the year (note that the reserve is closed in winter from late November to mid-March).

If you visit, please send your sightings to [birdingbeijing@gmail.com](mailto:birdingbeijing@gmail.com).

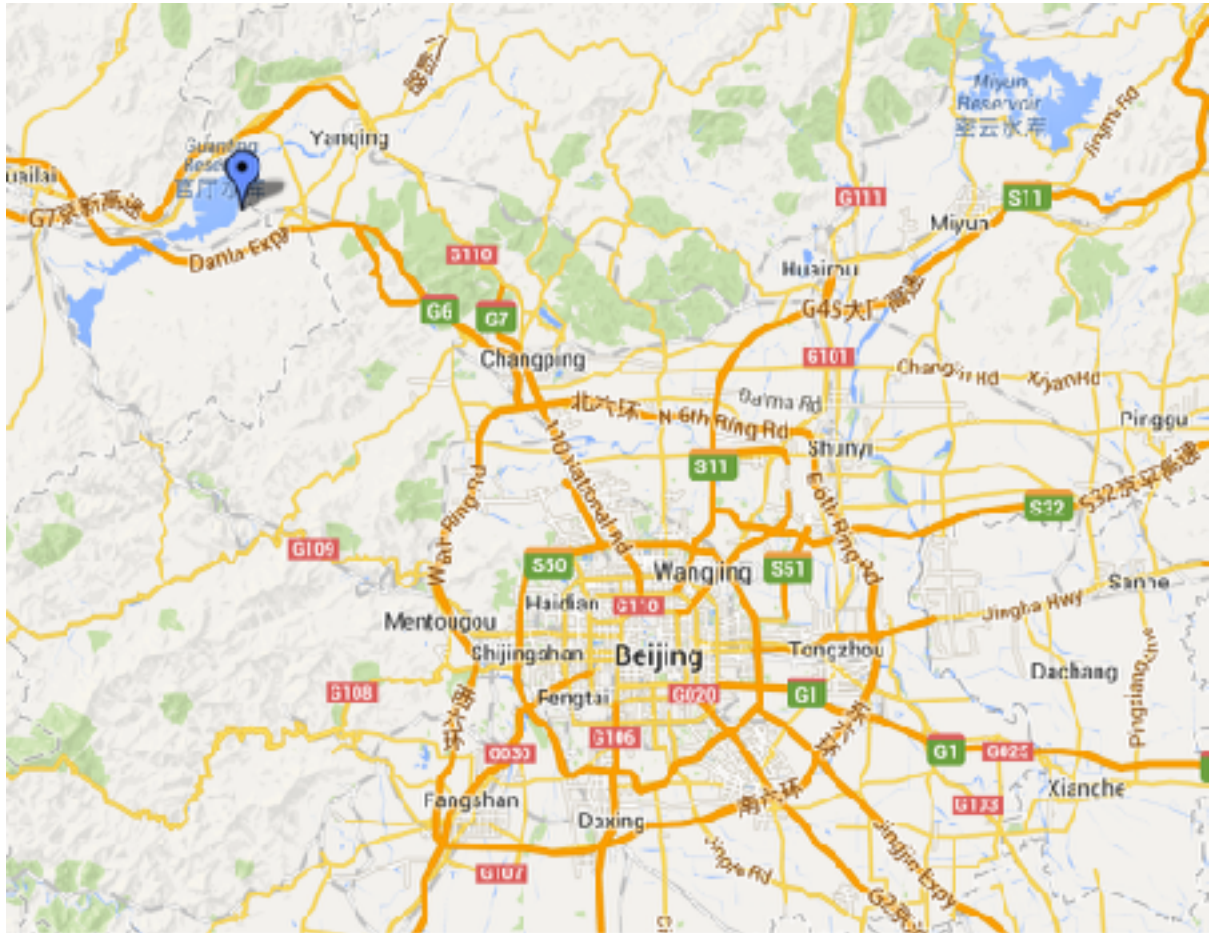
### Fun Fact

Yeyahu was the location of the tagging of **COMMON CUCKOOS** as part of the Beijing Cuckoo Project. One of the birds tagged at Yeyahu, called **Meng Zhi Juan**, was photographed back at Yeyahu in May 2017 after spending the winter in

Mozambique! For more about the Beijing Cuckoo Project, see <https://birdingbeijing.com/beijing-cuckoo-project/>



## Location and Directions



Yeyahu is adjacent to Guanting Reservoir, around 75km northwest of the city, following the G6 Badaling Expressway to Yanqing.

### By Public Transport:

Take bus 919 from Deshengmen (north 2<sup>nd</sup> ring road) to Yanqing (journey time 2-2.5 hours, depending on traffic). Cost (2016) is CNY 13 to Yanqing. 919 buses from Beijing begin at 0545 each morning and continuously thereafter (the buses leave as soon as they are full). From Yanqing, hire a local taxi to Yeyahu. Journey time should be around 20 minutes and (return) cost around Yuan 70-80 Yuan. Remember to arrange a time for your return pick up back to Yanqing bus station. The

last bus (also 919) from Yanqing bus station to Beijing Deshengmen is around 6pm.

### **By Car**

Take the G6 (Badaling Expressway) northwest out of Beijing. Follow this road for around 60km over the mountains, through a series of tunnels and past Badaling Great Wall. As the road begins to descend, take the exit signposted "Xikang Expressway" (this is the junction immediately after that for Yanqing City Area). After going through the tollbooth (toll is Yuan 35 at the time of writing), continue straight over a railway line and through a set of traffic lights. After about 1-2 km past the traffic lights, turn left (there is a brown sign indicating many tourist attractions, including "Widgeon Lake", an alternative name for Yeyahu Nature Reserve). After turning left, follow the road around to the right and you immediately come to a set of traffic lights with a petrol station on your right. At these lights go straight on. Follow this road straight until you see a brown sign to "Widgeon Lake". Follow this sign by turning left and, after around 2km, you will see the large gated entrance to Yeyahu NR. Park in the car park and walk to the ticket office.

### **Entrance Fee**

Entrance fee is 50 Yuan per person and you may need to pay 5 Yuan for the car when you leave.

### **Opening Times**

From late March to late November only (check for exact dates)

0730-1730



## Map of Yeyahu



There is a circular walk around the main lake and a boardwalk runs across the middle. The boardwalk can be very good for warblers, small bitterns, crakes and rails in late May/early June and again in September. The huge tower hide is excellent for visible migration, especially raptors, and the newly flooded areas to the north are superb for duck (esp Baikal Teal in April and October). The hide overlooking the reservoir to the north can also be good for raptors and duck.

## Hints and Tips:

Yeyahu has good trails and is flat, so the walking is relatively easy. However, it's a big site, and to do it justice you'll probably need to walk 7-8km during the day. Make sure you have comfortable footwear, layers of clothing to adapt to the changing temperatures from early morning to the middle of the day, and plenty of water. A sunhat and sun protection cream are also recommended. Precipitation is rare outside the 'monsoon' season of July/August, but check the forecast before deciding whether to take a waterproof jacket.

Yeyahu NR can be a busy tourist attraction, especially at weekends, from May to September. It is advisable to arrive early before the bulk of the tourists arrive. However, even on busy days, most of the tourists stick to the perimeter walk around the main lake and it is often much quieter if you walk along the tracks in the northern part of the reserve.

It is possible to buy drinks (water, soft drinks) and snacks (biscuits and instant noodles) at the entrance to Yeyahu NR and there is also a restaurant open at peak times.

Note that the elevation of Yeyahu NR is around 500m (versus 50m for central Beijing). Taking into account the urban heat effect, Yeyahu in the early mornings can be around 10 degrees Celsius cooler than central Beijing, often exacerbated by a brisk NW breeze. Ensure to take appropriate clothing.

There is accommodation available at Yeyahu, close to the entrance gate. Double and triple rooms are available, most with en-suite bathroom. A restaurant close by can prepare breakfast, lunch and dinner at pre-arranged times. To book, contact the nature reserve on +86 (10) 69131458.

## Species possible at Yeyahu

Status: R=Resident; P=Passage Migrant; S=Summer Visitor; W=Winter Visitor; V=Vagrant

| Species                    | Status | Comments  |
|----------------------------|--------|---|
| Daurian Partridge          | R      | Scarce resident. Personally I have only seen it in winter at Ma Chang.  |
| Japanese Quail             | P, W   | Relatively common on passage and a few winter. Possibly a breeder.  |
| Common Pheasant            | R      | Common resident   |
| Mute Swan                  | P      | Rare passage migrant, most likely in November and March.  |
| Whooper Swan               | P,W    | Regular winter visitor  |
| Tundra Swan                | P,W    | Scarce winter visitor   |
| Swan Goose                 | W      | From late October to early April  |
| Bean Goose                 | P,W    | Mostly a passage migrant with the peaks in late October/early November and again in late March/early April. Most are TUNDRA BEAN GEESE with some <i>middendorfi</i> TAIGA mixed in. |
| Lesser White-fronted Goose | V      | Rare. I have only seen once in Spring.  |
| Ruddy Shelduck             | P, W   | Common winter and passage migrant   |
| Common Shelduck            | P      | Relatively common passage migrant   |
| Mandarin Duck              | S      | Breeds in small numbers   |
| Gadwall                    | P      |   |
| Falcated Duck              | P      | Passage migrant from late March to May and from September to November.  |



|                          |         |   |
|--------------------------|---------|---|
| Eurasian Wigeon          | P       |   |
| Mallard                  | R, P    |   |
| Spot-billed Duck         | P, S    |   |
| Nothern Shoveler         | P       |   |
| Nothern Pintail          | P       |   |
| Garganey                 | P       |   |
| Baikal Teal              | P       | Passage migrant from late March to May and again from mid-September to November |
| Eurasian Teal            | P       |   |
| Red-crested Pochard      | P       | Probably breeds in small numbers.   |
| Common Pochard           | P       |   |
| Ferruginous Pochard      | P, S    | Possibly now a breeder; 20+ seen in June and July                               |
| Baer's Pochard           | P       | Scarce but regular passage migrant (late March/April and again in October)      |
| Tufted Duck              | P       |   |
| Common Goldeneye         | P, W    |   |
| Smew                     | P, W    |   |
| Red-breasted Merganser   | P       |   |
| Common Merganser         | P, W    |   |
| Eurasian Wryneck         | P       |   |
| Grey-capped Woodpecker   | R       |   |
| Great Spotted Woodpecker | R       |   |
| Grey-headed Woodpecker   | R       |   |
| Common Hoopoe            | P, S, W |   |
| Common Kingfisher        | S       |   |
| Black-capped Kingfisher  | P       | Scarce passage migrant  |
| Indian Cuckoo            | S       | Commonly heard in Spring (late April and May)                                   |
| Common Cuckoo            | S       |   |

|                        |      |   |
|------------------------|------|---|
| Common Swift           | P    |   |
| Fork-tailed Swift      | P    |   |
| Eurasian Eagle Owl     | W    |   |
| Little Owl             | P, R |   |
| Long-eared Owl         | P, W |   |
| Short-eared Owl        | P    |   |
| Oriental Turtle Dove   | P    |   |
| Spotted Dove           | R    |   |
| Eurasian Collared Dove | R    |   |
| Great Bustard          | P, W | Passage migrant and winter visitor (late October and November and March and early April the best times)                   |
| White-naped Crane      | P    | Passage migrant and occasional winter visitor   |
| Common Crane           | P, W | Common winter visitor from mid-October to April.  |
| Hooded Crane           | P    | Scarce winter visitor/ passage migrant.   |
| Baillon's Crake        | P    | Passage migrant in late May and early June  |
| Ruddy-breasted Crake   | P, S | Passage migrant and probable breeder from mid-May.  |
| Common Moorhen         | S    |   |
| Common Coot            | S, P |   |
| Common Snipe           | P    |   |
| Pin-tailed Snipe       | P    | Probable passage migrant but distinguishing from Swinhoe's possible only if number and shape of tail feathers seen well.  |
| Swinhoe's Snipe        | P    | Probable passage migrant but distinguishing from Pin-tailed possible only if number and shape of tail feathers seen well. |
| Black-tailed Godwit    | P    |   |

|                        |      |  |
|------------------------|------|--|
| Whimbrel               | P    |  |
| Eurasian Curlew        | P    |  |
| Little Curlew          | P    | Rare passage migrant   |
| Spotted Redshank       | P    |  |
| Common Redshank        | P    |  |
| Marsh Sandpiper        | P    |  |
| Common Greenshank      | P    |  |
| Green Sandpiper        | P    |  |
| Wood Sandpiper         | P    |  |
| Common Sandpiper       | P    |  |
| Terek Sandpiper        | P    | Rare passage migrant   |
| Red-necked Stint       | P    |  |
| Temminck's Stint       | P    |  |
| Curlew Sandpiper       | P    |  |
| Ruff                   | P    | Rare passage migrant   |
| Pheasant-tailed Jacana | V    | Vagrant with just one record   |
| Black-winged Stilt     | P    |  |
| Pied Avocet            | P    |  |
| Pacific Golden Plover  | P    |  |
| Grey Plover            | P    |  |
| Little Ringed Plover   | P, S |  |
| Kentish Plover         | P    |  |
| Greater Sand Plover    | P    | Scarce passage migrant, usually in late March or early April   |
| Oriental Plover        | P    | Regular passage migrant from late March with the peak in early to mid-April, most often at Ma Chang. |
| Northern Lapwing       | P, S |  |
| Grey-headed Lapwing    | P    |  |
| Oriental Pratincole    | P    |  |

|                          |      |  |
|--------------------------|------|--|
| Mew Gull                 | P    |  |
| Glaucous Gull            | V    | Rare vagrant. Only one record (in November)          |
| Heuglin's Gull           | V    |  |
| Mongolian Gull           | P    |  |
| Pallas's Gull            | P    | Scarce passage migrant                               |
| Brown-headed Gull        | V    | Scarce passage migrant                               |
| Common Black-headed Gull | P    |  |
| Relict Gull              | P    | Scarce in late March and early April; rare in autumn |
| Little Gull              | V    |  |
| Gull-billed Tern         | P    |  |
| Caspian Tern             | P    |  |
| Common Tern              | S    |  |
| Little Tern              | S    |  |
| Whiskered Tern           | P    |  |
| White-winged Tern        | P    |  |
| Osprey                   | P    |  |
| Oriental Honey-buzzard   | P    |  |
| Black-eared Kite         | P    |  |
| White-tailed Sea Eagle   | W    |  |
| Short-toed Snake Eagle   | P    | April and May and again in September and October     |
| Eastern Marsh Harrier    | S    | Breeder and present from late March to mid-October   |
| Northern Harrier         | P, W |  |
| Pied Harrier             | P    |  |
| Japanese Sparrowhawk     | P    |  |
| Eurasian Sparrowhawk     | P    |  |
| Northern Goshawk         | P    |  |
| Common Buzzard           | P    |  |
| Upland Buzzard           | P, W | Regular in winter                                    |

|                           |      |  |
|---------------------------|------|--|
| Rough-legged Buzzard      | W    | Scarce in winter   |
| Greater Spotted Eagle     | P    | Regular in April and May and again in late September and October |
| Steppe Eagle              | P    | Scarce on passage  |
| Eastern Imperial Eagle    | P    | Scarce on passage  |
| Golden Eagle              | R    | Breeds in the mountains but rarely encountered at Yeyahu         |
| Pallas's Fish Eagle       | V    | Very rare vagrant (just one record in June)                      |
| Booted Eagle              | V    |  |
| Lesser Kestrel            | P    | Passage migrant, often in the company of Amur Falcons.           |
| Common Kestrel            | R    |  |
| Amur Falcon               | P, S | Passage migrant and breeder.                                     |
| Merlin                    | P, W |  |
| Eurasian Hobby            | P, S |  |
| Saker Falcon              | P, W |  |
| Peregrine Falcon          | P    |  |
| Little Grebe              | S    |  |
| Great Crested Grebe       | S    |  |
| Horned Grebe              | P    |  |
| Black-necked Grebe        | P    |  |
| Great Cormorant           | P    |  |
| Little Egret              | P, S |  |
| Grey Heron                | P, S |  |
| Purple Heron              | P, S |  |
| Great Egret               | P    |  |
| Cattle Egret              | P    |  |
| Chinese Pond Heron        | P, S |  |
| Striated Heron            | P    |  |
| Black-crowned Night Heron | P, S |  |



|                          |      |  |
|--------------------------|------|--|
| Yellow Bittern           | P, S |  |
| Von Schrenck's Bittern   | P, S |  |
| Black Bittern            | V    | Rare vagrant. Just one record (November) |
| Great Bittern            | P    |  |
| Eurasian Spoonbill       | P    |  |
| Great White Pelican      | V    |  |
| Dalmatian Pelican        | V    |  |
| Black Stork              | P    |  |
| Oriental Stork           | P    | Rare passage migrant                     |
| Tiger Shrike             | P    | Rare passage migrant                     |
| Bull-headed Shrike       | P    |  |
| Brown Shrike             | P    |  |
| Chinese Grey Shrike      | P, W | Has bred.                                |
| Red-billed Blue Magpie   | R    |  |
| Azure-winged Magpie      | R    |  |
| Common Magpie            | R    |  |
| Daurian Jackdaw          | P    |  |
| Rook                     | P    |  |
| Carrion Crow             | P, R |  |
| Large-billed Crow        | P, R |  |
| Black-naped Oriole       | P    |  |
| Black Drongo             | P    |  |
| Bohemian Waxwing         | P    |  |
| Japanese Waxwing         | P    |  |
| Red-throated Thrush      | P    |  |
| Black-throated Thrush    | P    |  |
| Naumann's Thrush         | P    |  |
| Dusky Thrush             | P    |  |
| Grey-streaked Flycatcher | P    |  |

|                            |         |                      |
|----------------------------|---------|----------------------|
| Dark-sided Flycatcher      | P       |                      |
| Asian Brown Flycatcher     | P       |                      |
| Yellow-rumped Flycatcher   | P       |                      |
| Taiga Flycatcher           | P       |                      |
| Siberian Rubythroat        | P       |                      |
| Bluethroat                 | P       |                      |
| Red-flanked Bluetail       | P       |                      |
| Daurian Redstart           | P       |                      |
| Common Stonechat           | P       |                      |
| Desert Wheatear            | V       |                      |
| Red-billed Starling        | P       |                      |
| Purple-backed Starling     | P       |                      |
| Common Starling            | P, W    |                      |
| White-cheeked Starling     | R       |                      |
| Crested Myna               | P       |                      |
| Winter Wren                | P, W    |                      |
| Chinese Penduline Tit      | P, S, W | Breeds               |
| Marsh Tit                  | R       |                      |
| Yellow-bellied Tit         | P       |                      |
| Great Tit                  | R       |                      |
| Silver-throated Tit        | R       |                      |
| Sand Martin                | P       |                      |
| Eurasian Crag Martin       | P       | Rare passage migrant |
| Barn Swallow               | P       |                      |
| Red-rumped Swallow         | P       |                      |
| Light-vented Bulbul        | R       |                      |
| Zitting Cisticola          | P, S    |                      |
| Chinese Hill Babbler       | R       |                      |
| Chestnut-flanked White-eye | P       |                      |

|                              |         |   |
|------------------------------|---------|---|
| David's Bush Warbler         | P       | Late May/early June best time                                     |
| Lanceolated Warbler          | P       |   |
| Pallas's Grasshopper Warbler | P       | Late May/early June and late August/early September               |
| Marsh Grassbird              | V       | A few records in late May and October                             |
| Black-browed Reed Warbler    | P, S    |   |
| Blunt-winged Warbler         | P, S    | May breed in small numbers  |
| Oriental Reed Warbler        | S       | Common breeder  |
| Thick-billed Warbler         | P       |   |
| Dusky Warbler                | P       |   |
| Radde's Warbler              | P       |   |
| Pallas's Leaf Warbler        | P, W    |   |
| Yellow-browed Warbler        | P       |   |
| Arctic Warbler               | P       |   |
| Two-barred Warbler           | P       |   |
| Eastern Crowned Warbler      | P       |   |
| Plain Laughingthrush         | W       | Breeds in mountains and sometimes seen at Yeyahu in winter        |
| Bearded Reedling             | R       | Breeds in small numbers since 2016 with some remaining in winter. |
| Vinous-throated Parrotbill   | R       |   |
| Mongolian Lark               | P, W    | Scarce winter visitor   |
| Great Short-toed Lark        | P       |   |
| Asian Short-toed Lark        | P, S, W |   |
| Crested Lark                 | P       |   |
| Eurasian Skylark             | P, W    |   |
| Horned Lark                  | P, W    | Scarce winter visitor   |
| Eurasian Tree Sparrow        | R       |   |

|                        |      |  |
|------------------------|------|--|
| White Wagtail          | P, S | Ssp <i>leucopsis</i> breeds, other ssp are passage migrants including (in order of abundance) <i>ocularis</i> , <i>baicalensis</i> , <i>personata</i> , <i>alba</i> and <i>lugens</i> . The latter three ssp all rare. |
| Citrine Wagtail        | P    |  |
| Eastern Yellow Wagtail | P    |  |
| Grey Wagtail           | P    |  |
| Richard's Pipit        | P, S |  |
| Blyth's Pipit          | P    | Regular in small numbers in spring (late April and first half of May) and autumn (September)   |
| Olive-backed Pipit     | P    |  |
| Red-throated Pipit     | P    |  |
| Water Pipit            | P, W |  |
| Buff-bellied Pipit     | P    |  |
| Siberian Accentor      | P, W | Regular in small numbers in winter   |
| Brambling              | P, W |  |
| Grey-capped Greenfinch | R    |  |
| Long-tailed Rosefinch  | P, W | Scarce   |
| Common Rosefinch       | P    |  |
| Hawfinch               | P, W |  |
| Yellow-billed Grosbeak | P    |  |
| Pine Bunting           | P, W |  |
| Godlewski's Bunting    | P, W |  |
| Meadow Bunting         | P, W | Breeds in the mountains around Yeyahu, most often encountered in late autumn, winter and early spring  |
| Tristram's Bunting     | P    |  |
| Chestnut-eared Bunting | P    | Late May and early June and again in September.  |

|                         |      |                                 |
|-------------------------|------|---------------------------------|
| Little Bunting          | P, W |                                 |
| Rustic Bunting          | P    |                                 |
| Yellow-throated Bunting | P, W |                                 |
| Yellow-breasted Bunting | P    | Scarce passage migrant          |
| Black-faced Bunting     | P    |                                 |
| Pallas's Bunting        | P, W | Common in winter                |
| Common Reed Bunting     | P    | Scarce passage migrant          |
| Japanese Reed Bunting   | P, W | Scarce in winter and on passage |
| Lapland Bunting         | W    |                                 |