

The Animals and Habitats of China

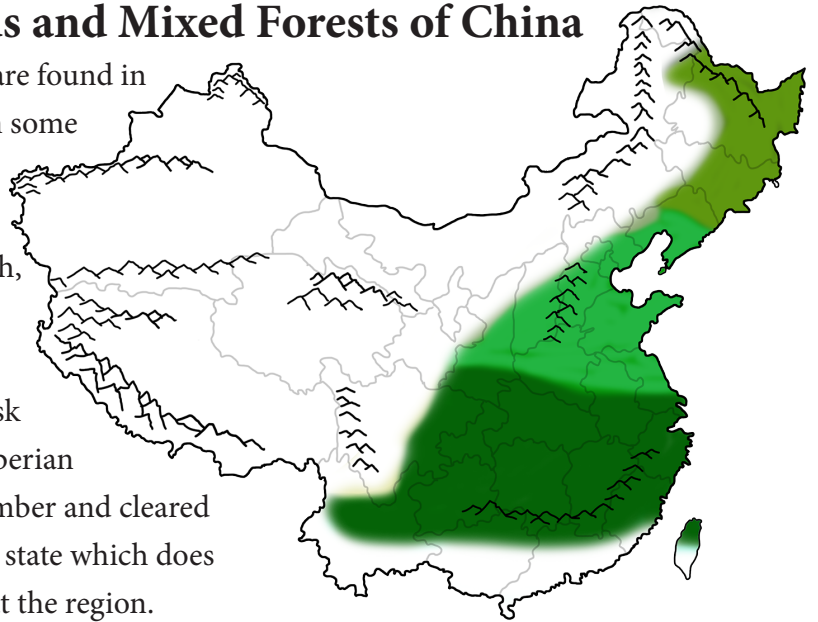
China is the most populated country on Earth with an estimated 1.437 billion people (as of 2020). This makes up more than 18% of the entire world population. A huge country, China has a total land area of about 3,624,807 square miles (about 5,799,691 square km). China contains a diverse number of habitats, from forests: boreal (taiga), deciduous, coniferous, mixed, and tropical forests to grasslands (steppes), deserts and mangroves. China is mountainous with many distinct ranges, each with their own mix of habitats.

The following pages each describe one of China's habitats or region of habitats with a locator map and the wildlife you might expect to see there. At the end, there is a larger version of the map below and a map of China's Provinces to help with understanding the habitat descriptions. Please note that this reference is a brief summary of each location developed for young students unfamiliar with China's rich and complicated habitats and topography.

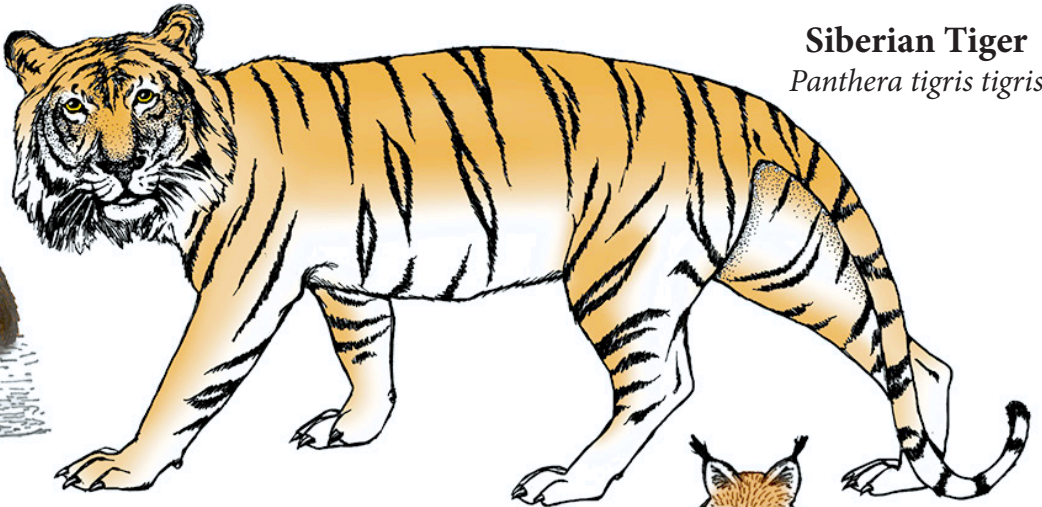


Temperate Coniferous and Mixed Forests of China

China's **temperate coniferous and mixed forests** are found in the north and northeastern region of China and in some areas around the Tibet plateau. Tree species include Korean pine, spruce, Siberian larch, and broadleaved trees, such as ash, basswood, birch, oak, poplar, Manchurian walnut, Mongolia oak, Manchurian, elm, willow. Animals here include: red pandas, leopard, sable, Sika deer, red deer, musk deer, gorals, lynx, otters, Asiatic black bear, and Siberian tiger. These forests have been heavily logged for timber and cleared for agriculture, so remain a somewhat fragmented state which does affect the health of wildlife populations throughout the region.

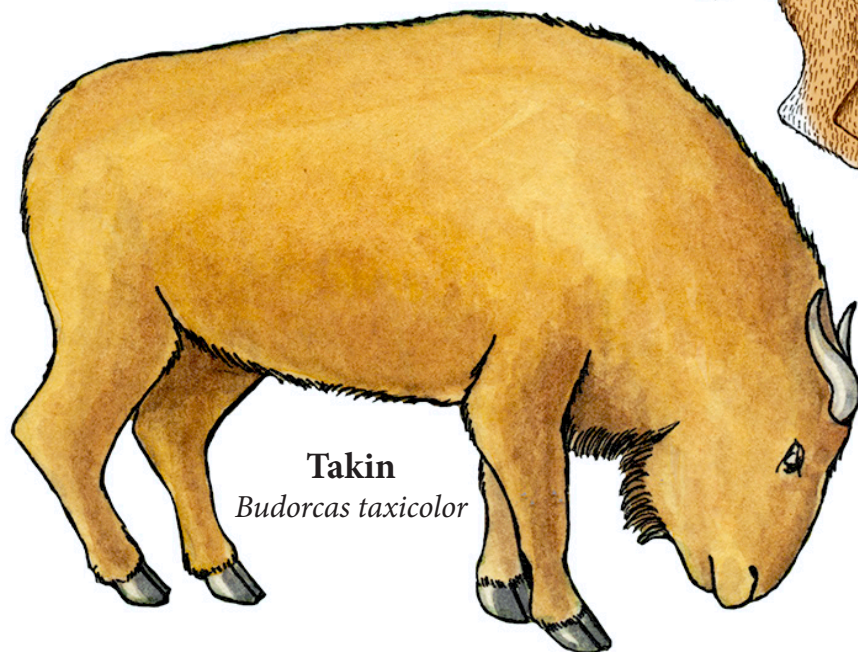
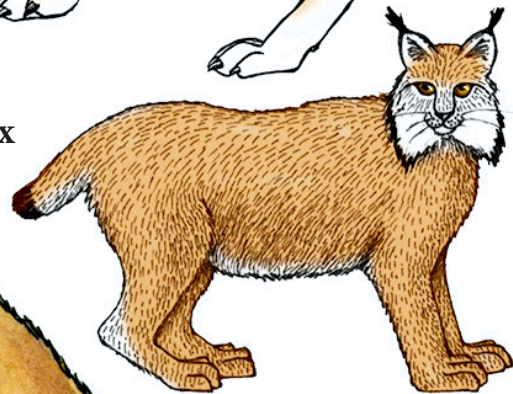


Siberian Tiger
Panthera tigris tigris



Sable
Martes zibellina

Eurasian lynx
Lynx lynx



Takin
Budorcas taxicolor

Red Panda
Ailurus fulgens



China's Taiga

China's **boreal forest** – also called **taiga**, is found in the northeastern most region of China. The conifers here are well adapted for the long, cold winters. These forests are part of one huge taiga that runs across northern Mongolia and Southern Russia. Tree species there include: pine, larch, spruce, and fir.

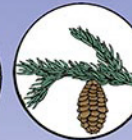
The animals, that are adapted to survive in this cold forest, are brown bears, moose, red deer, Siberian musk deer, mountain goats, Arctic hare, lynx, wolverines, mink, Hazel grouse, sable, and the Siberian tiger.



Siberian Tiger
Panthera tigris tigris



Hazel Grouse
Tetrastes bonasia

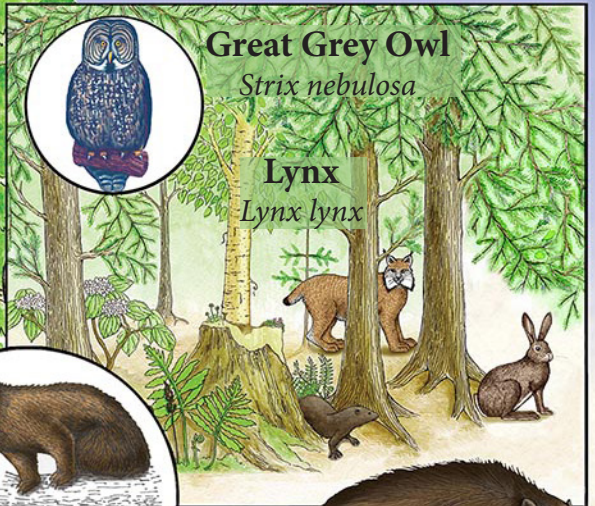


Arctic Hare
Lepus arcticus



Great Grey Owl
Strix nebulosa

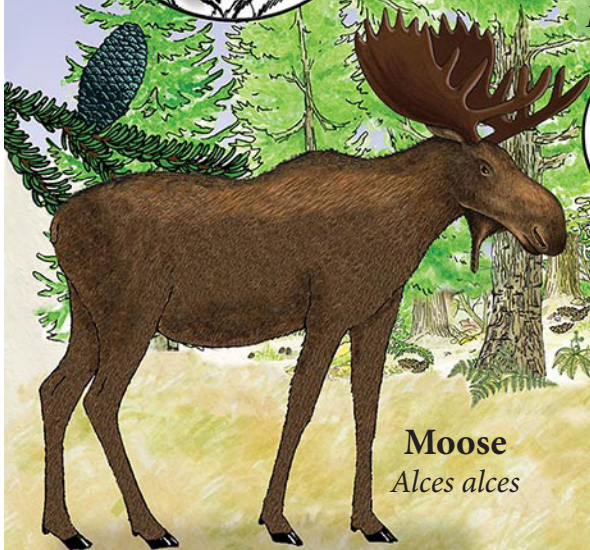
Lynx
Lynx lynx



Sable
Martes zibellina



Moose
Alces alces

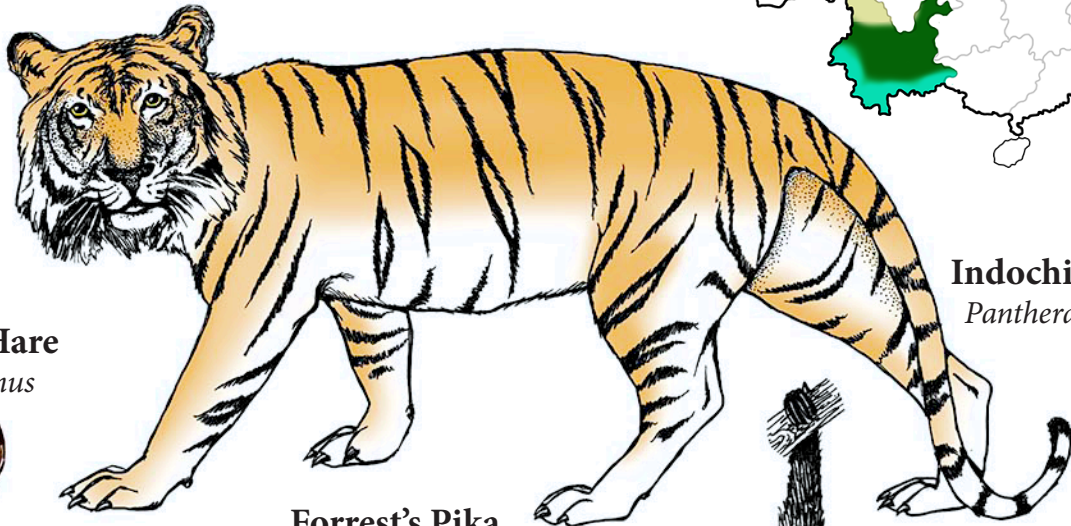


Wolverine
Gulo gulo

Temperate and Tropical Forests of China

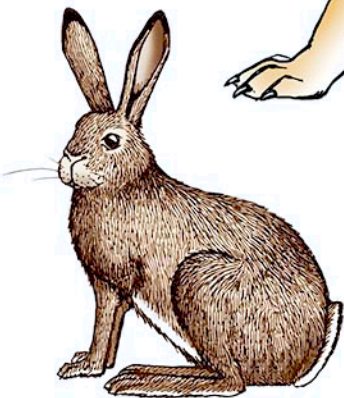
China's Yunnan province contains the richest biodiversity in China.

It has both **temperate and tropical forests**. About half the animal species of China are found in Yunnan, including the Asian elephant, western black-crested gibbon, Eastern Hoolock gibbon, snub-nosed monkey, slow loris, Indochinese tiger, red panda, forest pika, Yunnan hare, Asiatic brush-tailed porcupine, Mishmi takin, to name just a few. There are thought to be over 700 species of birds here.

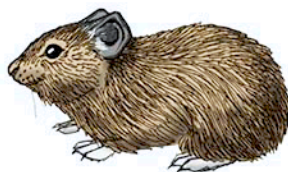


Indochinese Tiger
Panthera tigris tigris

Yunnan Hare
Lepus comus



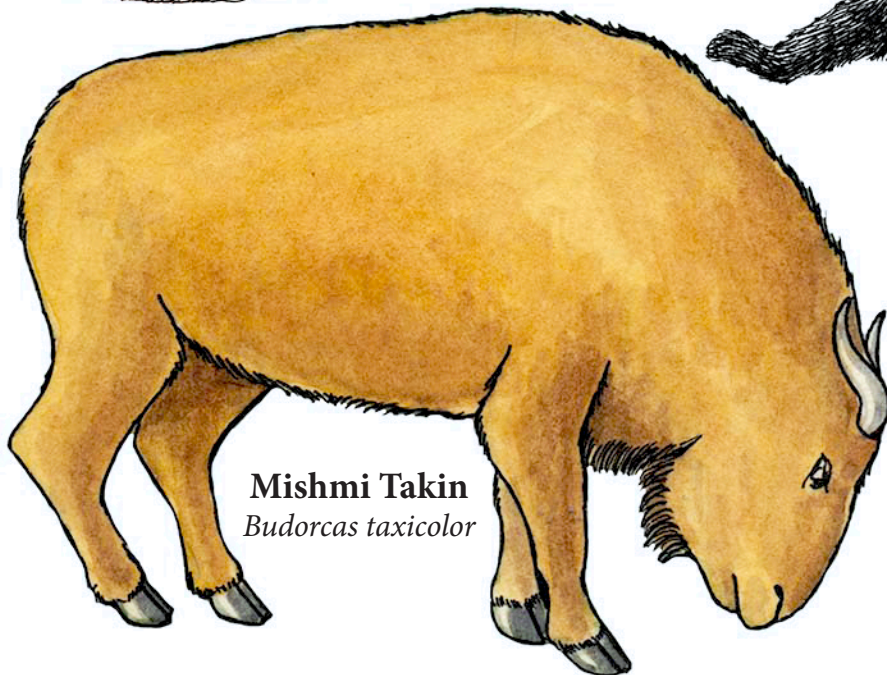
Forrest's Pika
Ochotona forresti



Black-crested Gibbon
Nomascus concolor



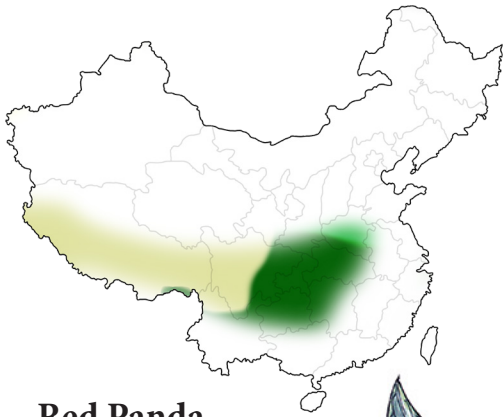
Red Panda
Ailurus fulgens



Mishmi Takin
Budorcas taxicolor

Subtropical And Tropical Coniferous Forests Of China

There are **subtropical and tropical coniferous forests** in the Hengduan Mountains in central and southwest China. Here there is habitat for the clouded leopard, stump-tailed macaque, Indian muntjac deer, sun bear and red panda. The giant panda is found only in the mountainous regions of central China where bamboo and coniferous forests grow. **Clouded leopards** live in the forest, where they climb trees and spend much of their time perched on branches watching for prey below. One of the smallest of the “big cats”, a male only weighs up to 50 pounds. **Sun bears** live in dense, tropical rainforests. They are the smallest bear, weighing only up to 150 pounds. They can climb trees and are often found sleeping or basking in the sun high up the canopy. **Red pandas** live in temperate forests between 5,000 - 13,000 ft. They are about 3.5 feet long, including their long, striped tail. Like the Giant panda, they are physically carnivores, but eat mainly bamboo shoots, grass and fruit.



Red Panda

Ailurus fulgens

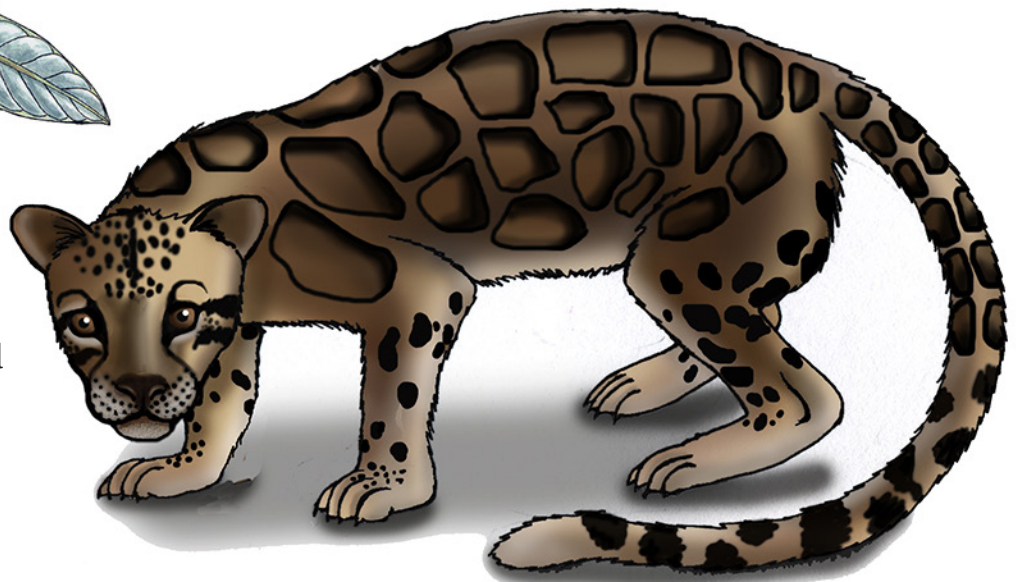


Sun Bear

Helarctos malayanus

Clouded Leopard

Neofelis nebulosa

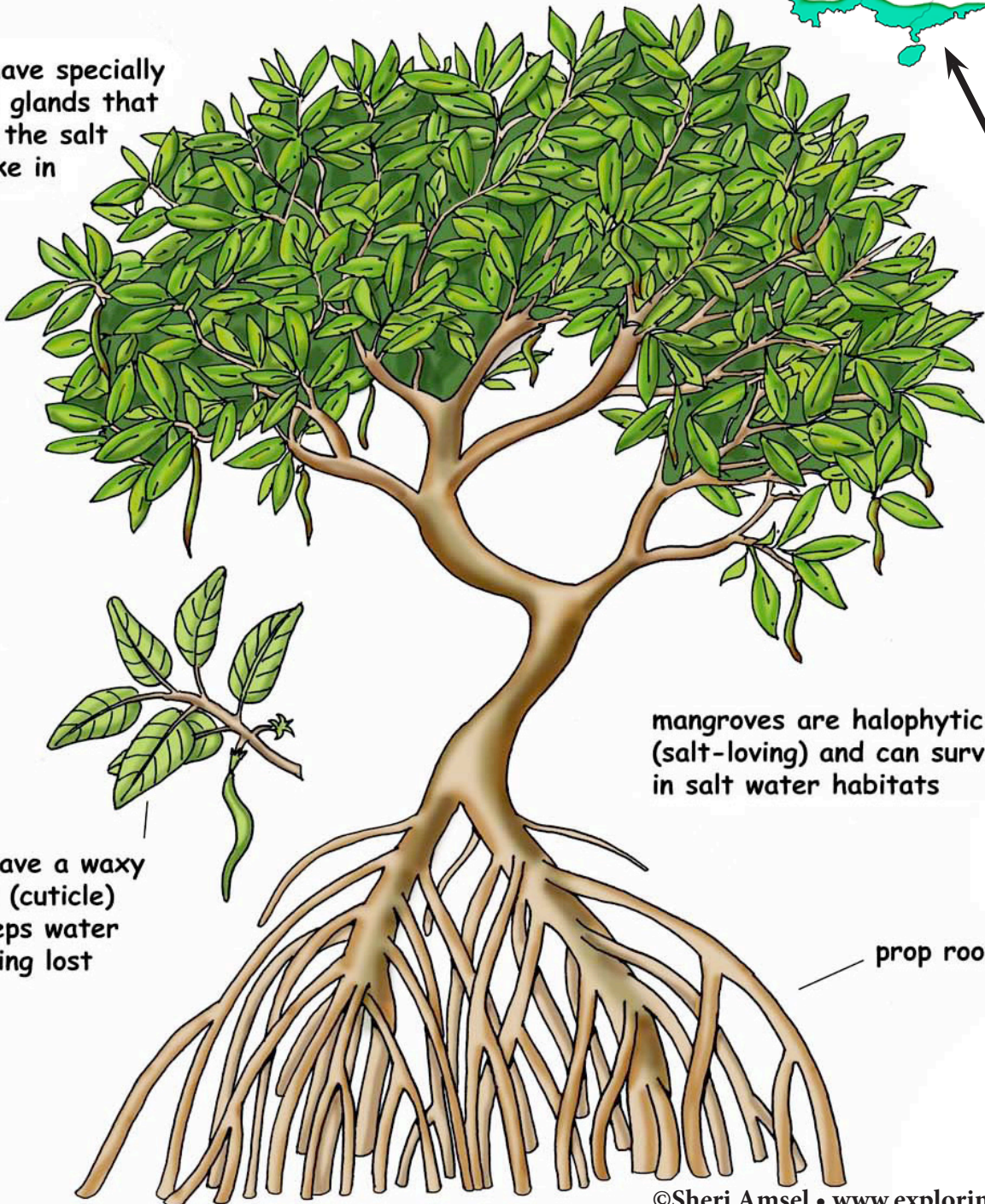


Mangroves of China

China's **mangroves** are located along the coast of the South China Sea on Hainan Island and along the coast of Guangdong, Guangxi, Taiwan, and southern Fujian. They have both red and black mangroves. Mangroves are important, because they protect coastlines from erosion and storm surge damage. This habitat is also vital for native wildlife and migrating birds. Some animals found in China's mangroves are: otters, leopard cats, herons, egrets, black-faced spoonbills, and whistling ducks.



leaves have specially adapted glands that secrete the salt they take in



mangroves are halophytic (salt-loving) and can survive in salt water habitats

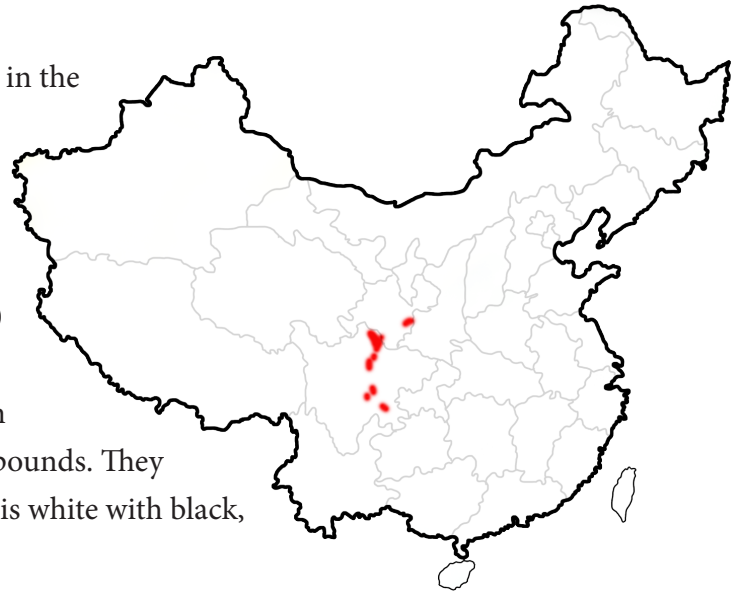
leaves have a waxy covering (cuticle) that keeps water from being lost

prop roots

Bamboo Forests of China

There are **coniferous forests** and **dense bamboo stands** in the mountainous regions of central China. This is the only place on Earth where **giant pandas** are found wild.

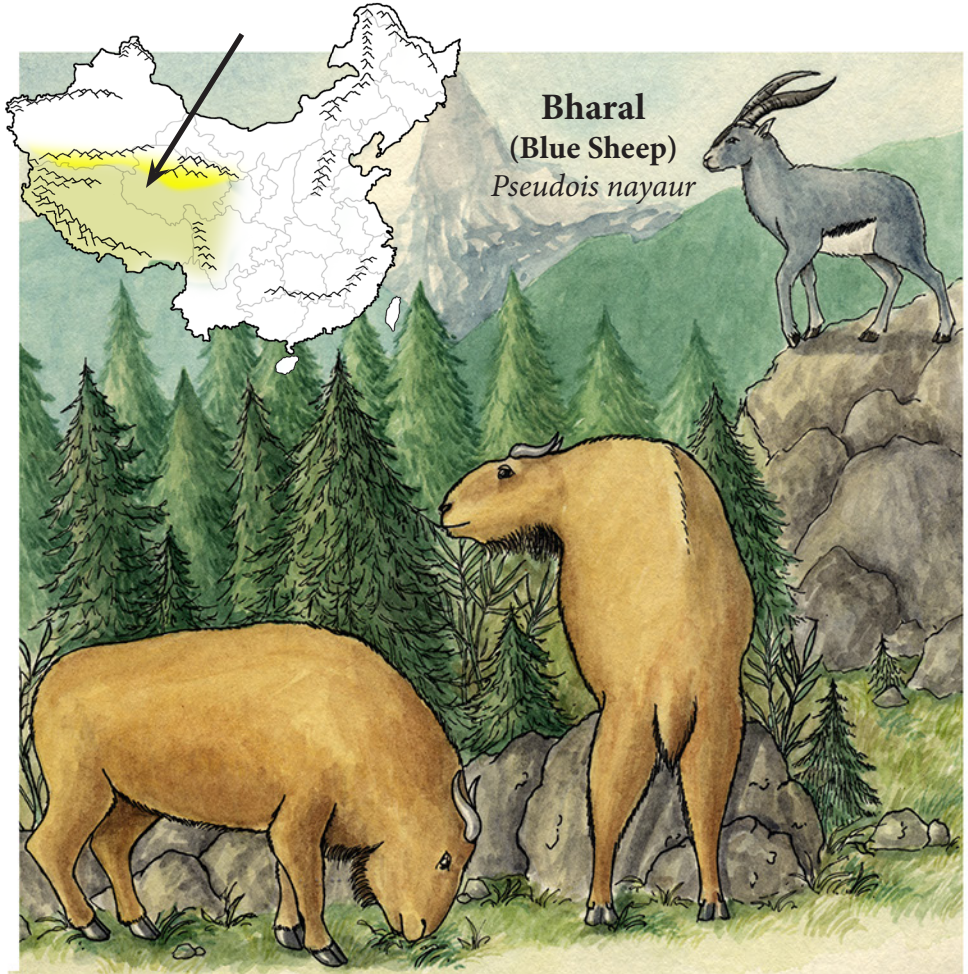
They live in forests up in the mountains between 4,000 - 12,000 feet, near dense stands of bamboo. They eat the branches, stems and leaves. They can eat 30 to 80 pounds of bamboo parts a day, eating much more of the tender bamboo shoots than the leaves. Giant pandas can reach more than 6 feet long and weigh up to about 275 pounds. They have a distinctive black and white fur pattern. The head is white with black, rounded ears and black eye rings.



The Roof of the World

The **mountains and high elevation region of China** is the most extensive plateau in the world at 13,000 - 20,000 ft. This region covers a quarter of China and includes the Himalayas along the southern border and Mt. Everest at 29,028 ft. Most of the plateau is rocky desert with some hearty species of rhododendron. Few people live there. The animals of the region include: snow leopard, takin, tahr, bharal (blue sheep), rodents, Tibetan antelope, wild ass, bearded vulture and yak. **Takin** live in the grassy valleys, rocky hillsides, and dense forests of the Himalayas at high elevations up to 14,000 feet.

They are very large animals, reaching 7ft. long and more than 850 pounds. They live in small herds of females and young. **Yaks** live at high altitudes (up to 18,000 ft) in grassy, treeless, mountainous regions and dry steppes. They are large animals, the males reaching more than a ton (2,200 pounds). Males usually live alone, while females will form herds. They eat grass, moss and lichens. **Snow leopards** are rarely seen. They roam rocky outcrops, cliffs and ravines. They can be up to 8 ft long, including their long tails. Their thick fur covers the tail and even the bottoms of its paws to help them survive in this cold, snowy habitat.



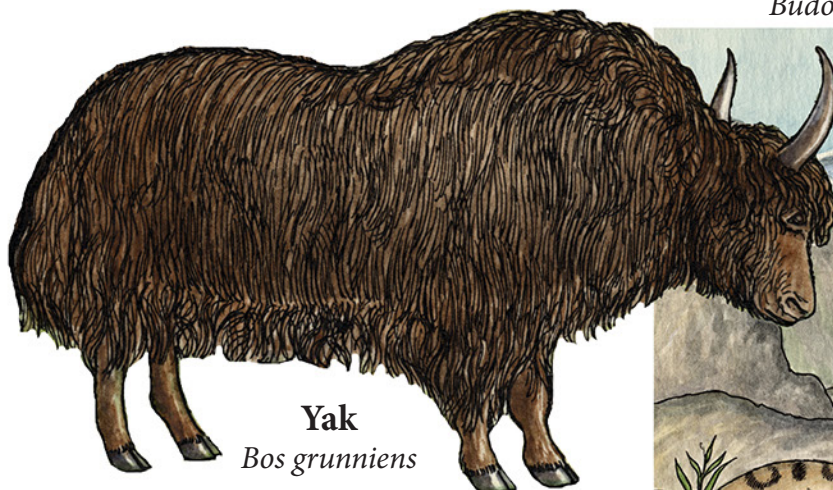
Bharaal
(Blue Sheep)
Pseudois nayaur

Takin

Budorcas taxicolor

Snow Leopard

Uncia uncia



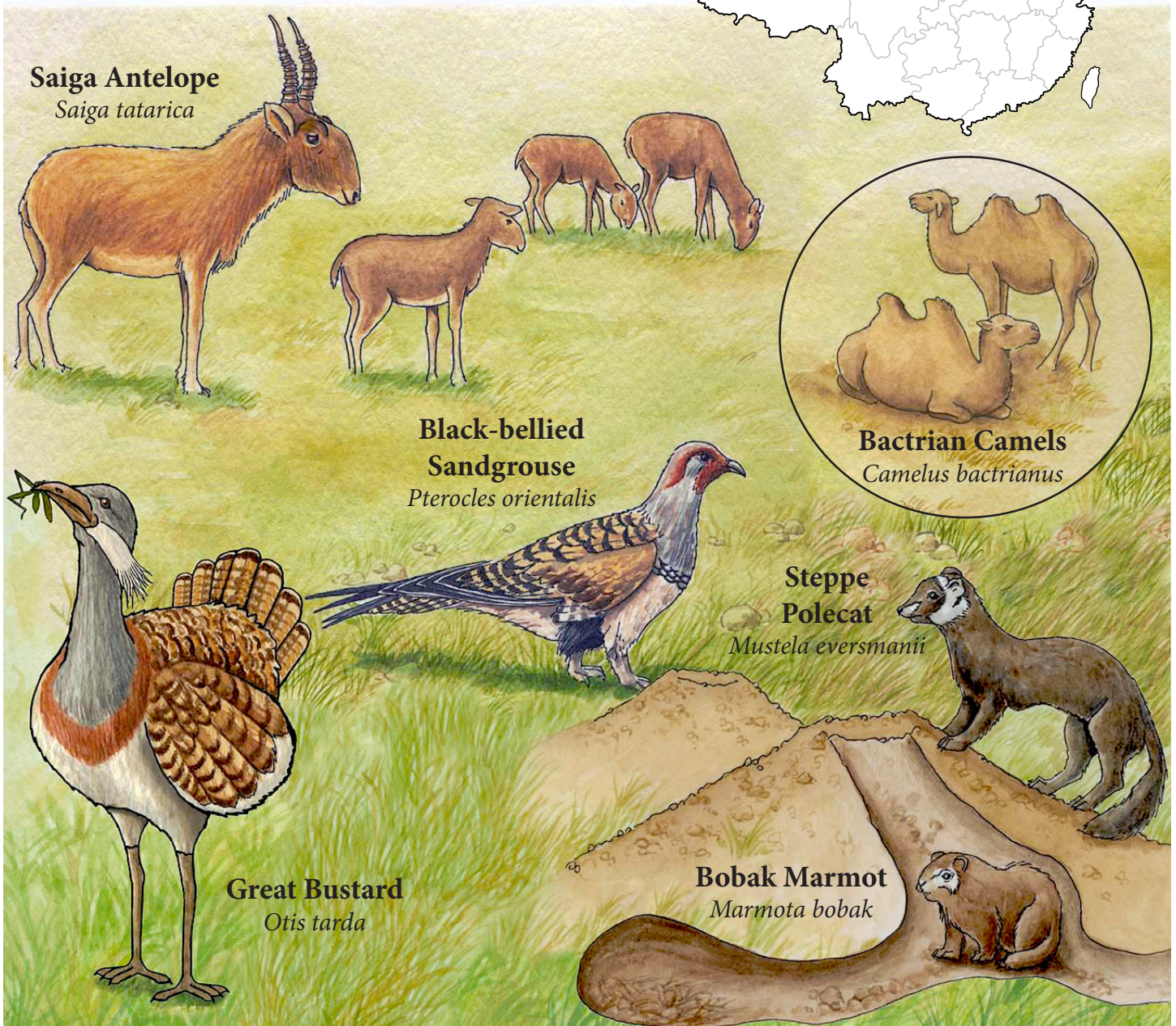
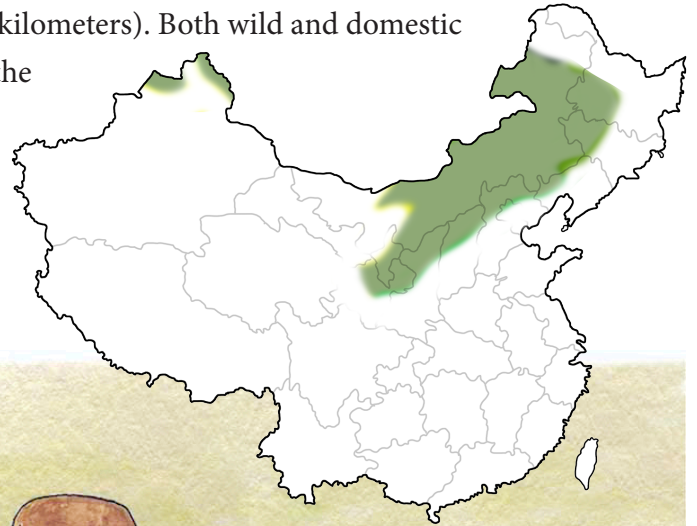
Yak

Bos grunniens



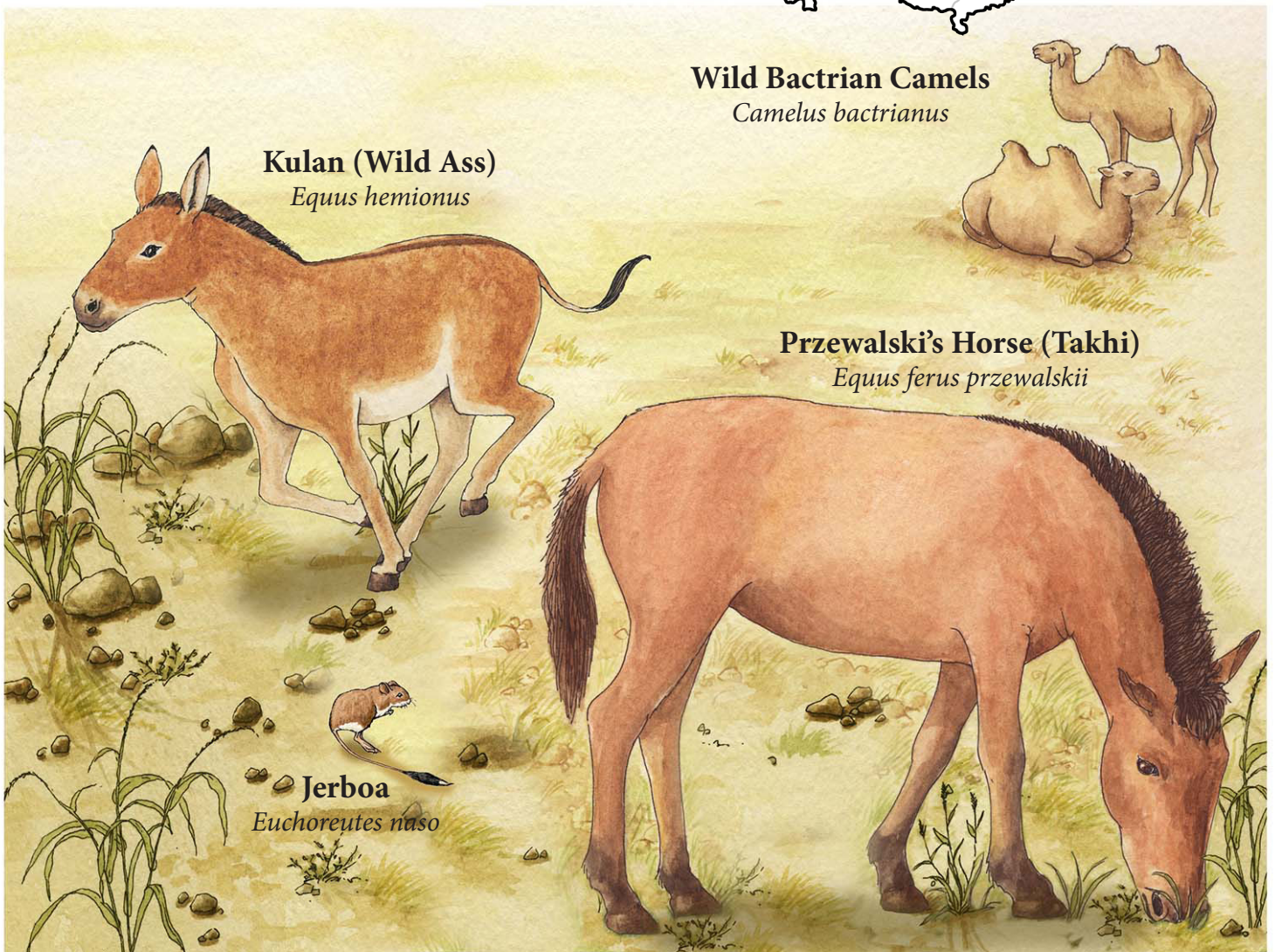
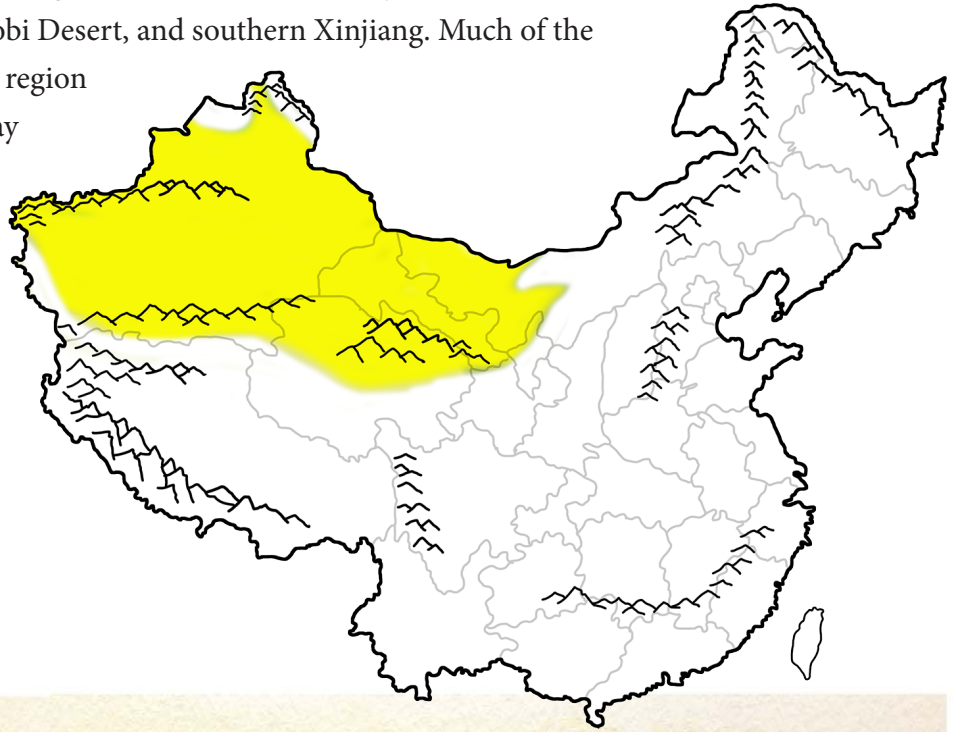
The Steppes of China

The **steppes** region of China is a semi-arid, temperate habitat found in the north in two areas. A large swath of steppes run north from the center of China east across the Inner Mongolian plateau. Two smaller areas of steppes are found in northwestern China in northern Xinjiang Province. The steppes extend north of China in a vast region across the Mongolian Republic. These high altitude grasslands are cold, windy regions and, in China alone, cover almost 600,000 square miles (a million square kilometers). Both wild and domestic animals graze on the steppes. The steppes become drier in the western region and transition into the Gobi desert. The wildlife in one or both areas of steppes include bactrian camels, Asiatic wild ass, Mongolian gazelle, saiga (gaobi antelope), bobak marmot, steppe polecat, brown-eared pheasant, black-bellied sandgrouse, and great bustard.



China's Desert

The **desert region of China** is vast, covering about 20% of the country. This includes northwestern Inner Mongolia, which contains the Gobi Desert, and southern Xinjiang. Much of the desert region of China is very dry. This region experiences extreme heat during the day and extreme cold at night. Only well adapted plants and animals can survive in much of this habitat. Some of the animals found here include the Asiatic wild ass (Kulan), Asiatic ibex, the black-tailed gazelle, wild camel, wild horses (Takhi), Jerboa, Gobi wolf, Golden eagle, leopards, and lizards.



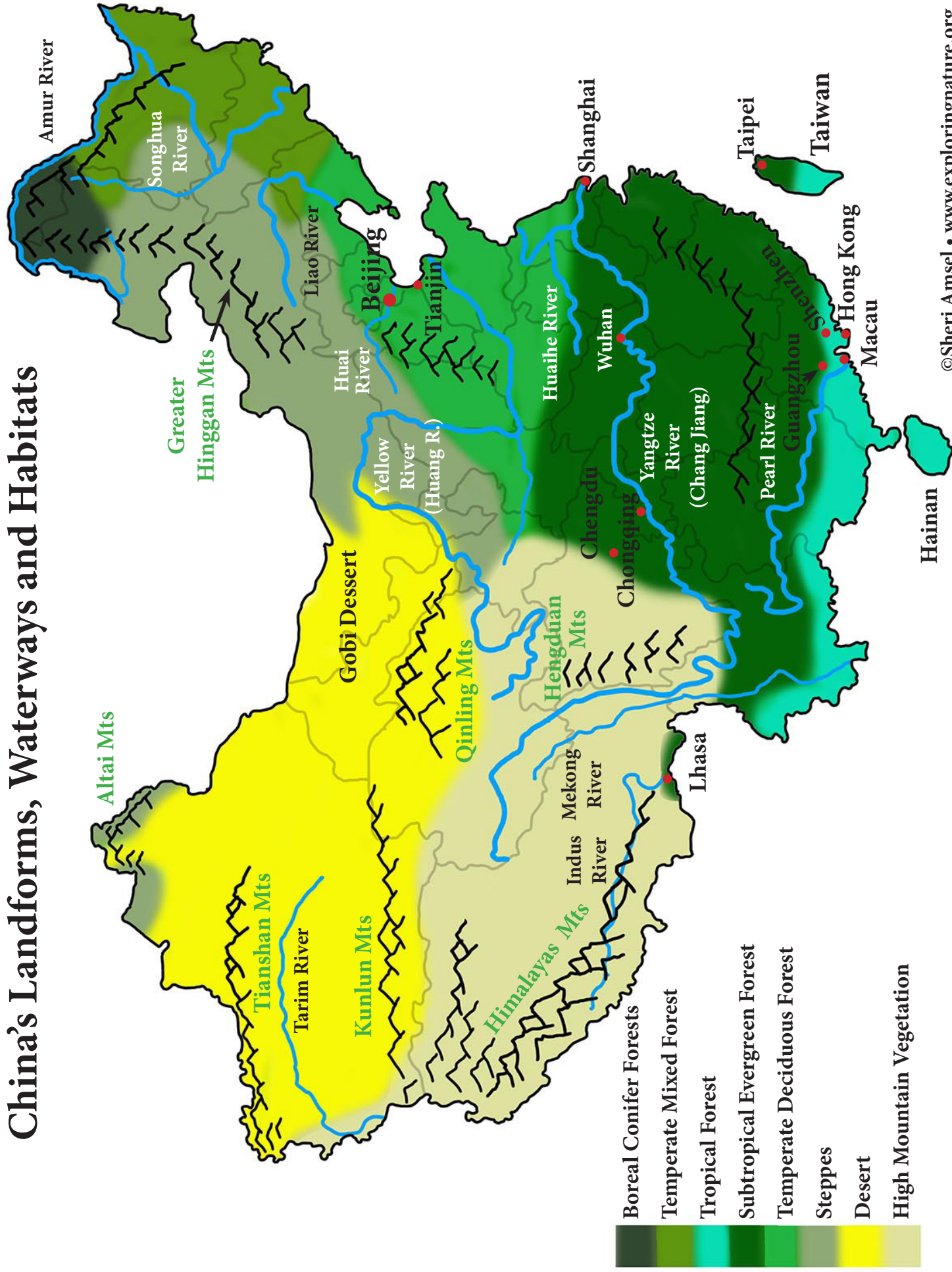
Kulan (Wild Ass)
Equus hemionus

Wild Bactrian Camels
Camelus bactrianus

Przewalski's Horse (Takhi)
Equus ferus przewalskii

Jerboa
Euchoreutes naso

China's Landforms, Waterways and Habitats



Provinces of China

