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Surface ozone trend details and interpretations in Beijing, 2001–2006

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Abstract. Beijing is a megacity situated in the rapidly developing Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region of northern China. In this study, we analyze data on ozone and nitrogen oxide levels obtained at six urban sites in Beijing between the months of July and September. Our goal is to investigate average trends and interpretations over the 2001-2006 period. Average concentrations of NO_x (NO_x=NO+NO₂), O₃, and O_x (O_x=O₃+NO₂) were 49.2±5.9 ppbv, 26.6±2.8 ppbv, and 60.3±1.9 ppbv, respectively. NO_x concentrations decreased linearly at a rate of 3.9±0.5 ppbv/yr after 2002, while ozone concentrations increased at a rate of 1.1±0.5 ppbv/yr during 2001–2006, and O_v concentrations remained nearly constant. The reduction of NO_x emissions and elevated non-methane hydrocarbon (NMHCs) emissions may have contributed to the increased O₃ concentrations in Beijing. When the contributions from Beijing's urban and surrounding areas were disaggregated via trajectory cluster analysis, daily maximum and average O_x concentrations attributable to Beijing's local emissions increased linearly at rates of 1.3±0.6 ppbv/yr and 0.8±0.6 ppbv/yr, while the O_x concentrations attributable to regional areas decreased linearly at rates of 0.6±0.3 ppbv/yr and 0.5±0.3 ppbv/yr, respectively. The decrease in O_x concentrations of the surrounding areas was found to counteract increasing Beijing urban O_x production, leading to nearly constant O_x concentrations in the Beijing region over the study period. Our results may be helpful for redefining government strategies to control the photochemical formation of air pollutants in the Beijing region. Our conclusions have relevance for developing megacities worldwide.

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