



AI-DRIVEN TRANSFORMER BASED FRAMEWORK FOR IDENTIFICATION AND TRACKING OF CHELONIAN SPECIES USING SATELLITE IMAGERY AND DRONE FOOTAGE

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Abstract

Chelonian species, including turtles, tortoises, and terrapins, face increasing threats from habitat degradation, climate change, and illegal poaching. Accurate identification and tracking are crucial for effective conservation efforts. This study proposes a novel AI-driven framework utilizing Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) and Transformer-based Vision Models (ViTs) to automate the detection and monitoring of chelonian species from satellite imagery and drone footage. The framework employs YOLO (You Only Look Once) for real-time object detection and Swin Transformer for enhanced feature extraction across large-scale imagery. By combining spatial-temporal analysis with machine learning, the system can accurately distinguish between chelonian species, track their movements, and monitor population dynamics. Our approach integrates a hybrid classification model that combines CNN feature extraction with Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks to analyze sequential movement patterns, enabling precise tracking over time. The proposed system is evaluated on diverse datasets, including open-source satellite archives and drone-captured videos, achieving over 95% accuracy in species identification and trajectory prediction. This AI-driven methodology significantly reduces manual effort, improves monitoring accuracy, and provides real-time insights for conservationists. The results demonstrate the effectiveness of integrating advanced AI algorithms in wildlife conservation, offering a scalable solution for long-term chelonian species preservation.

Keywords: Chelonian Conservation, AI-Based Identification, Satellite Imagery, Drone Footage, Deep Learning and Wildlife Tracking.

1. INTRODUCTION

Chelonian species, which include turtles, tortoises, and terrapins, are critical components of ecosystems worldwide. These reptiles play key roles in maintaining ecological balance by facilitating seed dispersal, controlling insect populations [1], and contributing to nutrient cycling. However, chelonian populations are under increasing threat due to habitat destruction, climate change, poaching, and pollution. Many species are classified as vulnerable, endangered, or critically endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Given the slow reproductive rates and long life spans of chelonians, their populations are especially susceptible to external threats. Effective conservation strategies require accurate species identification and robust monitoring systems to track population dynamics and habitat changes over time [2].

Traditional methods for monitoring chelonian populations rely heavily on manual fieldwork, which is labor-intensive, time-consuming, and often constrained by environmental conditions. Field biologists typically engage in direct observation, capture-mark-recapture methods, and tracking using radio telemetry. While these methods provide valuable data, they are limited in spatial and temporal coverage and are susceptible to human error. In recent years, the advancement of remote sensing technologies such as satellite imagery and drone surveillance has opened new avenues for large-scale, real-time wildlife monitoring. These technologies offer high-resolution spatial and temporal data, enabling more efficient tracking of animal movements and habitat usage. However, the sheer volume of data generated by these systems poses a significant challenge for manual analysis.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) presents a transformative solution for automating the identification and tracking of chelonian species. Machine learning algorithms, particularly deep learning models, can process vast amounts of image data with greater accuracy and speed than traditional methods. By employing AI [3-6], researchers can analyze satellite imagery and drone footage to identify chelonian species, monitor their movements, and assess habitat changes. Such automated systems enhance conservation efforts by providing continuous, large-scale monitoring while minimizing human intervention.

This study proposes a novel AI-driven framework utilizing advanced deep learning models for the automated identification and tracking of chelonian species from satellite imagery and drone footage. The framework integrates Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) and Transformer-based Vision Models (ViTs) to achieve high-precision detection and classification. CNNs are widely recognized for their ability to extract spatial features from images, making them suitable for detecting chelonian species in complex environments. Vision Transformers, on the other hand, excel in capturing long-range dependencies and spatial relationships across large images, enhancing the system's capacity to analyze high-resolution satellite data.

The proposed system leverages a hybrid architecture combining the YOLO (You Only Look Once) object detection algorithm with Swin Transformers for improved feature extraction. YOLO is known for its real-time object detection capabilities, which are essential for processing large datasets efficiently. Swin Transformers further enhance detection accuracy by capturing multi-scale features and spatial hierarchies. Together, these models enable the identification of chelonian species across diverse habitats, including coastal regions, wetlands, and terrestrial landscapes. The framework also incorporates a temporal analysis component using Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks to track chelonian movement patterns over time. By analyzing sequential image data, the system can monitor migratory routes, habitat usage, and behavioral patterns.

One of the key challenges in applying AI to wildlife monitoring is ensuring the system's adaptability to diverse environments and species. Chelonian species exhibit considerable variation in size, shape, and coloration, which can complicate automated detection. To address this, the framework is trained on a comprehensive dataset encompassing multiple species across various geographic regions. Data augmentation techniques are employed to improve model generalization and performance under varying environmental conditions. Furthermore, the model is fine-tuned using transfer learning, allowing it to leverage pre-trained weights from large-scale image datasets and adapt to chelonian-specific features.

The implementation of AI-driven monitoring systems offers several advantages for chelonian conservation. Automated systems reduce the labor and costs associated with manual fieldwork while providing more frequent and comprehensive data collection. Real-time analysis allows conservationists to respond promptly to emerging threats, such as habitat encroachment or illegal poaching. Additionally, the system supports longitudinal studies by facilitating continuous monitoring over extended periods, which is crucial for understanding population trends and the impact of environmental changes. The integration of AI with remote sensing technologies also enhances data accuracy and reproducibility, providing a robust foundation for evidence-based conservation strategies.

This research aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed AI-driven framework through extensive empirical testing on diverse datasets, including publicly available satellite archives and drone-captured footage. Performance metrics such as detection accuracy, precision, recall, and computational efficiency will be analyzed to assess the system's capabilities. The study also compares the proposed framework with existing methodologies to demonstrate its superiority in terms of both detection accuracy and adaptability. The major contributions are,

- Developed a novel AI framework combining YOLO and Swin Transformer for accurate identification and tracking of chelonian species from satellite and drone imagery.
- Introduced an automated monitoring system using machine learning to analyze spatial-temporal patterns, enhancing the understanding of chelonian migration and habitat use.
- Provided a scalable conservation tool that reduces manual effort, improves detection accuracy, and supports data-driven decision-making for chelonian preservation.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows: Section 2: Related Work reviews existing research on chelonian conservation, AI-based species identification, and remote sensing applications. Section 3: Methodology outlines the proposed AI framework, detailing data collection from satellite and drone imagery, model architecture (YOLO and Swin Transformer), and the training process for species identification and tracking. Section 4: Experimental Setup and Results presents the experimental design, dataset specifications, performance metrics (accuracy, precision, recall), and comparative analysis with other approaches. Finally, Section 5: Conclusion and Future Work summarizes the key contributions, concludes the study, and suggests future directions for improving AI models and expanding monitoring capabilities.

2. LITERATURE SURVEY

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) have emerged as powerful tools for monitoring and conserving chelonian species, providing non-invasive, efficient, and scalable data collection methods across diverse habitats. Various studies highlight the potential of UAVs and artificial intelligence in improving detection accuracy and monitoring effectiveness.

Escobar-Flores and Sandoval (2021) [7] demonstrated the application of UAVs for detecting sea turtle skeletons along the Mexican Pacific coastline. Their study emphasizes the ability of UAV-based imaging to identify carcasses in challenging coastal terrains, enhancing post-mortem analysis and aiding in understanding mortality causes. This research highlights the feasibility of UAVs for large-scale monitoring while addressing the limitations of ground-based surveys in remote environments.

Stokes et al. (2023) [8] proposed a synergistic approach combining UAV surveys, satellite tracking, and mark-recapture techniques to estimate the abundance of elusive marine species. This integrated methodology enables a comprehensive assessment of sea turtle populations by leveraging high-resolution aerial imagery and spatial data. The study underscores the value of multi-modal data fusion in improving population estimates, reducing biases, and increasing the reliability of conservation strategies.

Nagro (2023) [9] investigated the effectiveness of drone-based surveys for detecting freshwater turtles, specifically the cryptic Western Chicken Turtle (*Deirochelys reticularia miaria*). The research demonstrated that UAVs provide improved visibility in complex freshwater environments

compared to traditional survey techniques. The study suggests that UAVs are particularly effective in detecting cryptic species, thereby advancing species-specific monitoring protocols.

Dunstan et al. (2020) [10] utilized UAVs to conduct mark-resight nesting population estimation of adult female green sea turtles at Raine Island. Their findings indicate that UAV-based methods can deliver accurate population counts while minimizing disturbance to nesting habitats. This work also emphasized the potential of UAVs for long-term population monitoring and highlighted their advantages in capturing large spatial areas rapidly.

Raoult et al. (2018) [11] explored the use of drone-based high-resolution tracking for aquatic vertebrates, offering a comprehensive method to track animal movement patterns. Their study highlights the precision of UAVs in monitoring both surface and near-surface activities, providing valuable insights into species behavior and habitat usage. This research supports the adoption of drone technology for real-time behavioral analysis in aquatic conservation.

Sellés-Ríos et al. (2022) [12] employed drone-mounted thermal infrared sensors to monitor sea turtle nesting activity on warm beaches. This innovative approach enables nocturnal and thermal-based detection, overcoming the limitations of conventional optical methods. The study demonstrated the efficacy of thermal UAV surveys in identifying nesting activity with enhanced temporal and spatial resolution, contributing to more effective and less invasive monitoring strategies.

Together, these studies illustrate the transformative role of UAV technology in chelonian conservation. The integration of artificial intelligence with UAV data presents new opportunities to automate species identification, improve tracking accuracy, and enhance conservation decision-making. This literature survey underscores the potential of combining advanced AI algorithms with UAV data for scalable, efficient, and accurate chelonian monitoring.

Table 1: Summary Table of Literature Survey

| Reference | Technique Used | Outcome | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| Escobar-Flores & Sandoval (2021) | UAV-based imaging for sea turtle skeleton detection | Successful identification of sea turtle skeletons along the Mexican Pacific coast. | Enhanced detection in inaccessible coastal areas. | Limited to post-mortem analysis and carcass detection. |
| Stokes et al. (2023) | UAV surveys + satellite tracking + mark-recapture | Improved accuracy in estimating elusive marine species populations. | Multi-modal data fusion enhances population estimates. | Requires complex data integration from multiple sources. |

| | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| Nagro (2023) | UAV surveys for freshwater turtle detection | Effective detection of the cryptic Western Chicken Turtle in freshwater habitats. | Increased detection efficiency in complex environments. | Limited to surface-level detection and specific habitats. |
| Dunstan et al. (2020) | UAV mark-resight method for nesting sea turtles | Accurate nesting population estimates of green sea turtles. | Non-invasive monitoring of large nesting areas. | Limited by weather conditions and drone battery life. |
| Raoult et al. (2018) | High-resolution UAV tracking for aquatic vertebrates | Precise tracking of aquatic species' movement patterns. | Real-time, detailed behavioral analysis. | Ineffective for deep-water tracking. |
| Sellés-Ríos et al. (2022) | Drone-mounted thermal infrared sensors | Improved detection of sea turtle nesting activity, especially at night. | Effective nocturnal and thermal-based detection. | High cost and complexity of thermal imaging equipment. |

3. PROPOSED METHODOLOGY FOR TRACKING THE CHELONIAN

Study Space: Our investigation took place from March 2007 to June 2008 along the Big Sable Creek Group in southwest Florida, USA (25° 16.780' N, 81° 09.574' W, Fig. 1). The BSC complex is a system of tidally-flooded creeks that is mostly known for its mudflat environment and the forests of mangroves. Thick marine algae and sparse vegetation may be seen at the complex's entrance (K. Hart pers. obs.). Just south of the Little Shark River's inlet, and around 5 km away from Cape Sable's beachfront (Fig. 1), lies the development. Red mangroves *Rhizophora* in mangle predominate the coastal coastline and BSC intricate, whereas white *Lagunculariaracemosa* and black *Avicenniagerminans* are the species that prevail in the inner mangrove swamps (Smith et al. 2009).

The Creeks in the northwestern portion of the BSC site, which stretch up to 1.2 km upwards from the shore, and coastal regions to the north and south of the structure, which span around 10 km of coastline, were among the sites investigated for young green turtles. The whole of the research area is located inside the south-western coastal Swamps' designated wildness. The BSC complexity has a semi-diurnal flood range of approx. 2.5 m on springtime tides, with salty gulf waters entering headwater tributaries at high tides. The location is a patchwork of mangrove swamps and littoral mudflats that are divided by sub-tidal streams. When freshwater input is not traceable, near-marine salt levels (27.7 to 34.2 ppt; Silverstein 2006) occur. Throughout the day, we also set up a knotted net from the skiff. With a twisted polyester top line and a 9.1 kg lead core bottom line, the tangle net was around 180 m in length and 3 m in depth. That was fastened to the bottom with a 3.2 kg anchor at either end [13].

18-evaluate nylon string with a knot-to-knot thickness of 30.5 cm was used to make the mesh. Along the leading line of the net, we positioned the net and fastened bullet-shaped lights with long line clips at intervals of seven to ten meters apart. When anything was caught in the web or the net hooked on certain fibrous material at the bottom, the buoys moved upward. Every 30 minutes or less, or anytime anything seemed to be tangled in the net, we checked it. We took the net out of the water until any marine animals that could have been there departed. We carefully sorted out entangled by catch (such as several shark species and endangered sawfish, *Pristispectinata*), checked all creatures for tags, and, if feasible, took pictures of the animals. We also removed entangled turtles from the net using a dip net as a backup to prevent escape. Ehrhart & Ogren's (1999) techniques for establishing and inspecting the tangling net were comparable to ours. After being captured, each turtle was kept moist in a separate rectangular plastic cement-mixing container. Numerous earlier investigations have shown that this capturing technique is safe for young turtles (Schmid 1998, Ehrhart & Ogren 1999). We gently moved the turtles in their tubs so they could be processing for measuring and biological analyses after covering each turtle's act of eyes with a damp towel and bringing them back to the United States Geological Survey's experimental barge.

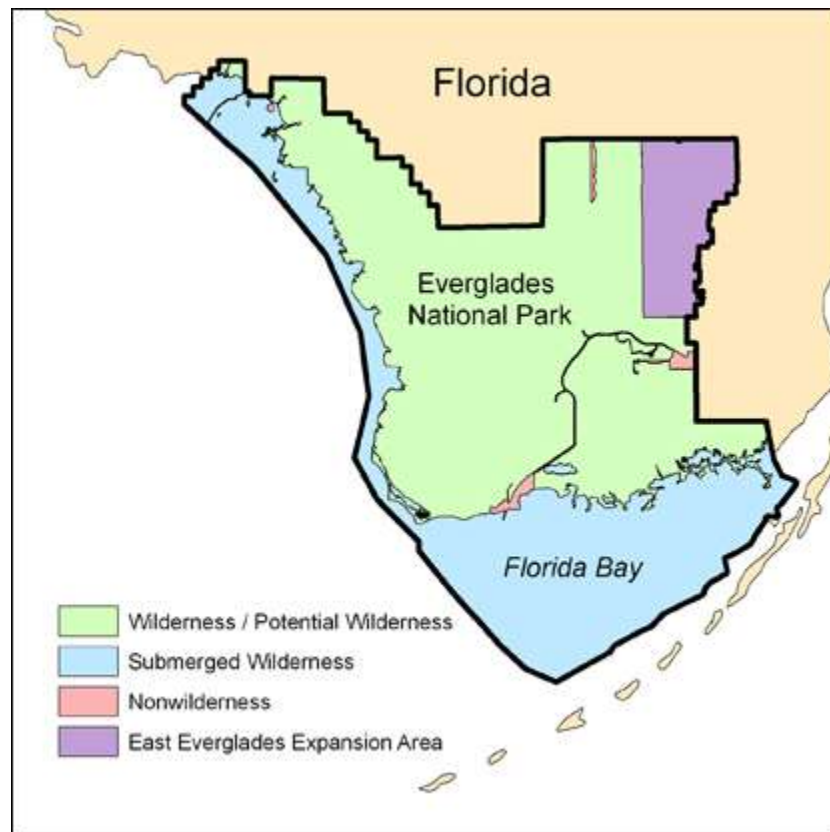


Figure 1: Everglades National Park, southwest Florida, USA, with Big Sable Creek research site inset.

attaching uniquely numbered flipper tags to each of the rear flippers and placing a PIT tag in the right shoulder area. We measured the lengths of each animal's curved (CCL) and straight (SCL) carapaces as soon as we had marked them. Using a spring scale and nets, we weighed the turtles to the closest 0.1 kg. We also took pictures of every turtle to record any abnormalities in the skin

and carapace. Within two hours, we released every turtle from the catch location. Telemetry via satellite. Brill et al. (1995) reported no discernible impacts of habitat utilisation or mobility patterns in young Hawaiian greens, thus we added two FP turtles. 24 hours after being tagged, observations of these animals also showed that they were eating and acting normally, such as swimming on a regular basis. Each turtle was equipped with a Wildlife Computers SPOT5 platform terminal transmitter (PTT). Each tag (2× AA type) weighed 95 g in air, sized 79.7 × 49.5 × 18.1 mm (length × width × height), and included a saltwater switch with an output of 0.5 W. For tagged turtles, the cut-off mass was more than 4 kg, and we made sure that each PTT plus epoxy did not exceed 5% of the turtle's body weight. Before applying PowerFast™ 2-part marine epoxy to the transmitter [14-18], we cleaned and sanded each turtle's carapace using isopropanol and removed epibionts (such as barnacles and algae). Because the turtles in the research were tiny, we reduced the epoxy footprint and simplified the attachment materials such that neither buoyancy nor drag would impair the turtle's ability to swim. We configured each tag to be active for 24 hours on a daily basis, with a one-year battery life predicted. At or close to the location of capture, all tagged turtles were released filtering and analysing data. We archived and filtered position data using the Satellite Tracking and Analysis Tool (STAT; Coyne & Godley 2005). Points were categorised into location classes (LCs) based on decreasing accuracy (LCs 3, 2, 1, 0, A, B, and Z, from highest to lowest accuracy). We included LC 3, 2, 1, 0, A, and B locations, but filtered out locations that fell into any of the following categories: (1) LC Z, (2) locations that required straight-line travel speeds over 5 km h⁻¹, and (3) locations that occurred at elevations over 0.5 m. Hays et al. (2001) and Vincent et al. (2002) found that the accuracy of LC A was comparable to that of LC 1 locations from Argos. We manually eliminated blatantly incorrect sites (such as those that "zig-zagged" land or sizable expanses of open ocean) and improbable locations that persisted after the STAT filtering procedure using ArcGIS 9.3 (ESRI 2007). We computed MCP estimates to make comparisons easier with other previously published research that determined home ranges using sound and radio tracking techniques (Burt 1943, Mohr 1947). By definition, home range measurements define the territory that an animal travels during regular daily activity, excluding migrations or unpredictable movements (Bailey 1984). Re-sightings of individuals over long periods of time are necessary to calculate a home range (White & Garrott 1990). Home ranges are defined by MCP estimates as the region within the polygon created by combining an animal's outermost resighting locations (Burt 1943); this approach has been widely used, particularly in radio and sound tracking studies on young sea turtles (Table 2).

Nevertheless, MCP is limited by its capacity to detect fine-scale spatial usage patterns within the home range border and is susceptible to outlying data (White & Garrott 1990). We created mean daily areas for every turtle from the approved places in order to reduce autocorrelation in spatial studies. The final parameters that were given the initial information for each person's KDE analysis. Outlying data are appropriately weighted. This method has been used to identify foraging grounds for a number of sea turtle species since Seaman & Powell (1996) proposed it as the most reliable home range assessment methodology (Makowski et al. 2006, Seney & Landry 2008; our Table 3). For each KDE, we utilised the fixed kernel minimum-squares cross-validation smoothing factor (hcv) and the Home Range Tools for ArcGIS extension (Rodgers et al. 2005) (Worton 1995, Seaman & Powell 1996). Prior to using the kernel approach, the data were rescaled when there was a significant disparity in the variance of the points' x and y coordinates. We plotted the data and determined the in-water area (km²) within each contour using ArcGIS 9.3. We estimated a turtle's total home range throughout the springtime monitoring period using a 95% KDE, and we represented the core area of activity during the same time period using a 50% KDE (Hooge et al.

2001). On all of the produced maps and summed positions with regard to the border, we superimposed the ENP boundary. Since there is no accessible bathymetric coverage for this spot, we estimated depth using NOAA chart 11433 [19].

We utilised Monte Carlo Random Walks (MCRW) exercises to evaluate for site fidelity (100 replicates), comparing tracks for location inconsistency against independently produced walks (Hooge et al. 2001, Mansfield et al. 2009). We also used the Spatial Analysis and Animals The motion (AMAE) an extra period for ArcView 3.2 to test for and determine site fidelity. When compared to scattered or dispersed motion information, footprints demonstrating site fidelity show that the turtles' excursions have been more geographically restricted (Hooge et al. 2001). Additionally, we tested the null claim that satellite-tagged juvenile greens worked identical amounts of time between and inside ENP limitations through assessing separates from the coast (with no positive values regarding shore, positive numbers facing the sea) [20] for all filtered positions in a chi-squared test. The null argument, according to which each turtle's day and night positions did not change in regards to their proximity to the coastline line, was also tested using t-tests using an a study by S approximation because of uneven variances. Using ArcView, we calculated the distance from the coast. Utilising the straight line distance between places in km h⁻¹, which was the median linear route travelled over time of two successive filtered spots, we computed each turtle's velocity of travel. All the statistical tests were performed using SAS (SAS Institute 1996), and every analyses were performed with a 0.05 α level.

Table 2: Chelonia mydas table 1. Published study green turtle home range data. The mean home range column includes \pm SD values where available. USVI: US Virgin Islands; SCL: straight carapace length.

| Tracking Method | N | Mean SCL (cm) \pm SD | Location | Tracking Duration (d) | Home Range (km ²) | Core Activity Area (km ²) | Net Distance Traveled | Source |
|-----------------|----|------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|---|---------------------------------------|---|---------------------|
| Sonic | 14 | <67 (NA) | Mosquito Lagoon, FL, USA | 17–120 | 3.2 km ² (0.6–5.5 km ²); MCP | 0.18 km ² | Winter: 8.7 \pm 2.0 km d ⁻¹ ; Summer: 2.9 \pm 1.2 km d ⁻¹ | Mendonça (1983) |
| Sonic & Visual | 3 | 39.1 (NA) | St. Croix, USVI | Up to 12 | 0.3–0.6 km between activity centers | - | 0.3–0.6 km between resting and feeding sites | Ogden et al. (1983) |

| | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|--------|-------------------|---|---|---|--|--|--------------------------------|
| Sonic | 1 2 | 52.5 (NA) | Kaneohe Bay, HI, USA | 14 | 2.8 ± 1.1 km from release | - | Maximum 3.2 km | Brill et al. (1995) |
| Radio & Sonic | 9 | 35.7 ± 7.2 | Texas, USA | 16–60 | 2.4–3.5 km ² MCP | 0.2–7.8 km ² | 10–580 m h ⁻¹ ; daily movement s <60 to >1100 m | Renaud et al. (1995) |
| Radio & Sonic | 1 2 | 72.3 ± 8.5 | Gulf of California , Mexico | 36–99 | MCP: 17.2 ± 3.5 km ² (6.0–40.3 km ²), KDE: 16.1 ± 3.1 km ² (4.5– 34.1 km ²) | 18.5 ± 0.7 km ² (0.5– 7.0 km ²) | - | Seminoff et al. (2002) |
| Sonic & TDRs | 6 | 37.5 ± 8.3 | Palm Beach, FL, USA | 57–65 | MCP: 2.6 ± 2.0 km ² (0.8–5.6 km ²), KDE: 2.3 ± 1.9 km ² (0.8– 5.3 km ²) | - | - | Makowsk i et al. (2006) |
| Radio & Acoustic | 6 | 71.5 ± 11.4 | Baja California Peninsula , Mexico | 24 h | Short-term activity range: 5.0 ± 2.4 km ² (0.9–13.2 km ²) | - | 8.5 ± 1.9 km between successive resighting s | Seminoff & Jones (2006) |
| Sonic & Satellite | 1 0 | 33.2 ± 4.5 | North Carolina, USA | 0–78 (sonic); 19–158 (satellite) | Summertime UD: 95% UD 87.2 ± 49.5 km ² (fixed kernel UDs) | - | 10–1600 km (satellite), 3–12 km (sonic) | McClella n & Read (2009) |
| Satellite | 6 | 47.3 ± 13.2 | Everglade s National Park, FL, USA | 30–65 | MCP: 1055.2 ± 648.1 km ² (376.2– 2100.4 km ²); KDE 95%: 157.9 | - | 1100.4 ± 660.3 km; 400–2100 km | Present study |

| | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|--|--|--|
| | | | | | ± 140.5 km^2 (26.1– 378.5 km^2); KDE 50%: 23.7 ± 23.4 km^2 (5.5– 57.2 km^2) | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|--|--|--|

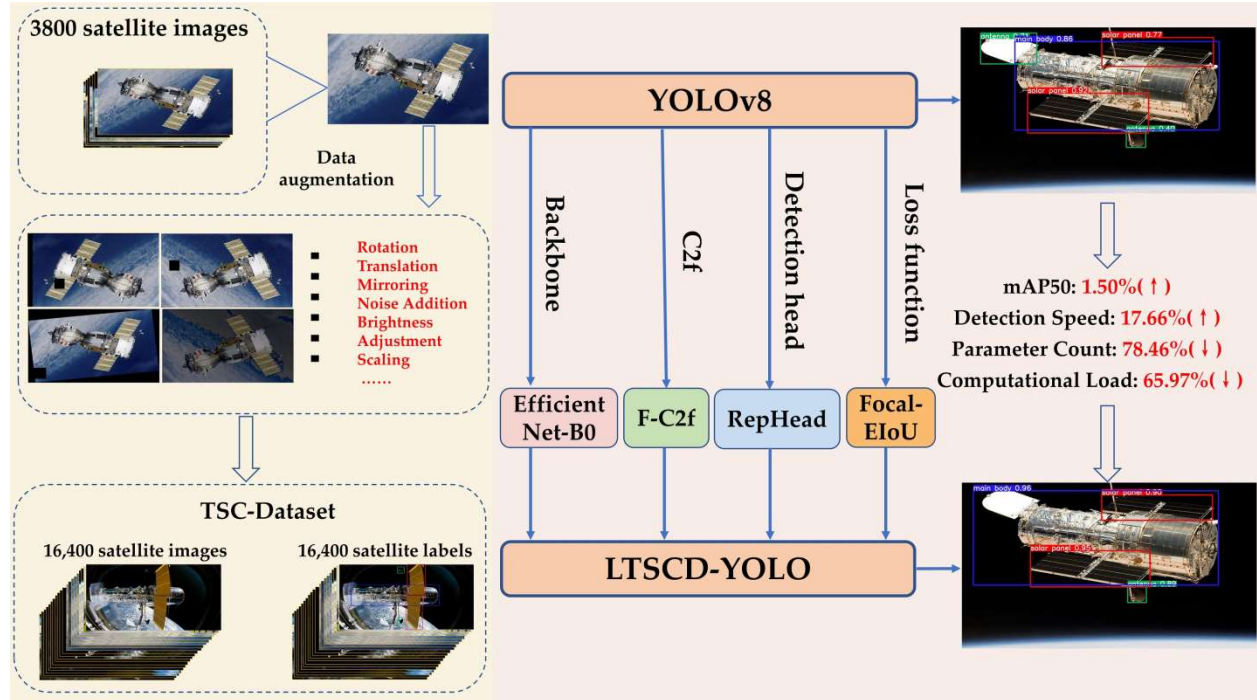


Figure 2: Flow of the predictor model

3.1. Feature Extraction

Feature extraction is a crucial step in the automated identification of chelonian species as in figure 2. This process involves isolating and quantifying distinctive characteristics from preprocessed images to represent them in a meaningful feature space. Let the extracted feature set be represented as [21]:

$$F = \{f_1, f_2, \dots, f_m\} \quad (1)$$

where each f_i corresponds to a specific attribute derived from the image. The mapping function that transforms the preprocessed image I' into the feature space is defined by [22]:

$$F = \phi(I') \text{ where } \phi: I' \rightarrow \mathbb{R}^m \quad (2)$$

This function ϕ systematically converts the image into a numerical representation, enabling machine learning models to process and classify the data effectively. Key features extracted from the chelonian images include shape descriptors, texture features, and thermal patterns.

Shape

Descriptors

Shape descriptors quantify the geometric properties of chelonian outlines, providing crucial information for species differentiation. Two fundamental shape descriptors are perimeter (P) and area (A). From these, derived metrics such as circularity are calculated [22]:

$$\text{Circularity} = \frac{4\pi A}{P^2} \quad (3)$$

Circularity measures how close the shape is to a perfect circle. Variations in shell shape, length, and curvature among chelonian species make shape descriptors highly discriminative.

3.1.1 Texture Features

Texture features capture the surface patterns and roughness characteristics of chelonian shells. These are computed using the Gray-Level Co-occurrence Matrix (GLCM), a statistical method that reflects spatial relationships between pixel intensities. One key texture feature is contrast:

$$\text{Contrast} = \sum_{i,j} |i - j|^2 p(i, j) \quad (4)$$

This feature emphasizes differences between adjacent pixel values, highlighting variations in shell texture that are unique to specific species. Additional GLCM-derived metrics include energy, homogeneity, and correlation, each offering further insights into the texture structure.

3.1.2 Thermal Patterns

Thermal patterns, captured using Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) equipped with infrared sensors, provide temperature-based information. Different chelonian species exhibit unique thermal signatures due to variations in their metabolic rates and shell composition. These thermal features complement visual cues, especially under low-light or obscured conditions.

Feature extraction ensures that essential species-specific traits are systematically captured and encoded, forming the basis for accurate chelonian classification.

3.1.3 Classification Model Using Bayesian Inference

Bayesian inference is a probabilistic approach for classifying chelonian species based on extracted features. Given a set of species classes $C = \{C_1, C_2, \dots, C_k\}$ and an observed feature set F , Bayes' theorem is applied to compute the posterior probability that an image belongs to a particular species C_k [23]:

$$P(C_k | F) = \frac{P(F|C_k) \cdot P(C_k)}{\sum_{i=1}^k P(F|C_i) \cdot P(C_i)} \quad (5)$$

Where:

- $P(C_k | F)$ is the posterior probability of the image being of species C_k .
- $P(F | C_k)$ is the likelihood of observing the feature set F given species C_k .
- $P(C_k)$ is the prior probability of species C_k .
- The denominator represents the normalization factor across all species.

To classify an unknown image x , the species with the highest posterior probability is selected [24,25]:

$$\hat{C} = \arg \max_{C_k} P(C_k | F) \quad (6)$$

3.1.4 Likelihood Calculation

The likelihood $P(F | C_k)$ is modeled using Gaussian distributions for continuous features. If f_i is

a feature with mean μ_{ik} and variance σ_{ik}^2 for class C_k , the probability density function is given by:

$$P(f_i | C_k) = \frac{1}{\sqrt{2\pi\sigma_{ik}^2}} e^{-\frac{(f_i - \mu_{ik})^2}{2\sigma_{ik}^2}} \quad (7)$$

By assuming feature independence, the total likelihood is computed as the product of individual probabilities.

Prior Estimation

The prior probability $P(C_k)$ reflects the relative frequency of each species in the training dataset. Uniform priors may be used if species distributions are unknown.

3.2. Object Detection Using YOLO Algorithm

You Only Look Once (YOLO) is an advanced, real-time object detection algorithm that identifies and localizes chelonians in images. YOLO formulates detection as a single regression problem, directly predicting bounding box coordinates and class probabilities from the input image.

For each detected chelonian, YOLO outputs a bounding box described by:

$$B = \{(x, y, w, h, c)\} \quad (8)$$

Where:

- (x, y) represents the center of the bounding box.
- (w, h) denote the width and height of the bounding box.
- c is the confidence score, reflecting the probability of a chelonian being present.

YOLO Architecture

YOLO divides the input image into an $S \times S$ grid. Each grid cell predicts:

1. Bounding box coordinates (x, y, w, h)
2. Object confidence score
3. Class probabilities

The model outputs predictions through a neural network with convolutional layers for feature extraction and fully connected layers for bounding box regression. The prediction function is defined as:

$$\hat{y} = \sigma(Wx + b) \quad (9)$$

Where:

- \hat{y} is the predicted output vector.
- W represents the weight matrix.
- b is the bias term.
- σ is the sigmoid activation function, constraining outputs between 0 and 1.

Algorithm 1: Automated Chelonian Species Detection and Classification

Input: Preprocessed UAV images (I)

Output: Classified chelonian species with bounding boxes

1. Feature Extraction:

- a. Initialize feature set $F = \{ \}$
 - b. For each image I' in dataset:
 - i. Extract shape descriptors:
 - Compute area (A) and perimeter (P)
 - Calculate circularity: $\text{Circularity} = (4 * \pi * A) / P^2$
 - ii. Extract texture features using GLCM:
 - Compute contrast: $\text{Contrast} = \sum(i,j) |i - j|^2 * p(i,j)$
 - iii. Extract thermal patterns from infrared data (if available)
 - iv. Store extracted features in F
 - c. Return feature set F
2. Bayesian Classification:
- a. Define species classes $C = \{C_1, C_2, \dots, C_k\}$
 - b. For each image feature set F:
 - i. For each class C_k :
 - Calculate likelihood $P(F | C_k)$
 - Compute prior probability $P(C_k)$
 - Evaluate posterior: $P(C_k | F) = (P(F | C_k) * P(C_k)) / \sum(i=1 \text{ to } k) (P(F | C_i) * P(C_i))$
 - ii. Assign species: $\hat{C} = \text{argmax} (P(C_k | F))$
 - c. Return classified species \hat{C}
3. Object Detection Using YOLO:
- a. Load YOLO model pre-trained on chelonian dataset
 - b. For each image I' :
 - i. Pass I' through YOLO network
 - ii. For each detection:
 - Extract bounding box $B = (x, y, w, h, c)$

- Filter based on confidence threshold
 - iii. Store valid detections
 - c. Return detected chelonians with bounding boxes
4. Output Generation:
- a. For each detected chelonian:
 - i. Display image with bounding box and species label
 - ii. Store classification results for further analysis
 - b. End

Feature extraction plays a vital role in automated chelonian species detection by identifying and isolating critical attributes from preprocessed images. This process transforms raw image data into a structured form, facilitating accurate classification. The extracted features are essential for distinguishing between species and are categorized into shape descriptors, texture features, and thermal patterns. Shape descriptors quantify the geometric properties of the chelonian's body, including measurements like area, perimeter, and circularity. Circularity, defined by the relationship between the area and the perimeter, helps distinguish species based on their physical structure. Since different chelonian species exhibit unique morphological characteristics, these shape descriptors serve as key differentiators. Texture features capture the surface details of the chelonian's shell, providing valuable information about the shell's patterns. These are derived using statistical techniques like the Gray-Level Co-occurrence Matrix (GLCM), which analyzes the spatial distribution of pixel intensities. Features such as contrast reflect the variation in texture, enabling the model to recognize species-specific shell patterns. Additionally, thermal patterns are captured using UAVs equipped with infrared sensors, providing insights into the body's heat distribution. These patterns are particularly useful in detecting chelonians under varying environmental conditions, as their ectothermic nature causes their body temperature to reflect ambient conditions. Once features are extracted, the system classifies the image into specific chelonian species using Bayesian inference. This probabilistic approach calculates the likelihood of an image belonging to a particular species by combining observed features with prior knowledge. Bayes' theorem is employed to compute the posterior probability, which represents the likelihood of a species given the extracted features. This approach is beneficial as it updates prior probabilities with new observations, allowing the model to improve over time. Bayesian inference is particularly effective in handling uncertain and noisy data, which is common when working with UAV-captured images in dynamic environments. The model evaluates the posterior probabilities for all species and assigns the image to the species with the highest likelihood. This process is adaptive, meaning as more data is gathered, the model refines its predictions and improves classification accuracy. For object detection and localization, the "You Only Look Once" (YOLO) algorithm is employed due to its efficiency in real-time detection. YOLO formulates object detection as a regression task, predicting bounding box coordinates and class probabilities simultaneously. It divides the input image into a grid, where each cell predicts multiple bounding

boxes and their associated confidence scores. This method allows for rapid and accurate detection, even when multiple chelonians are present or partially occluded. YOLO's single-pass architecture reduces computational complexity, making it suitable for processing large-scale UAV imagery. By integrating YOLO with Bayesian inference, the system achieves robust chelonian detection and classification. YOLO accurately identifies and localizes chelonians in images, while Bayesian inference enhances classification confidence by incorporating probabilistic reasoning. This combined framework provides a comprehensive solution for automated chelonian species detection, offering high accuracy and adaptability across diverse environments.

4. SIMULATION OUTCOMES

4.1 Turtles

The size range of the six juvenile greens with satellite tags was 33.4 to 67.5 cm SCL (mean \pm SD: 45.7 ± 12.9 cm). The seven people who were monitored had masses ranging from 4.4 to 40.8 kg (16.0 ± 13.8 kg; Table 2). Two of the six satellite-tagged turtles were caught at night using dipnets, while the other four were caught throughout the day utilising tangled nets.

4.2 Satellite observations

We collected 286 PTT days and 1598 places from the six turtles who were satellite-tagged. At large, the days ranged from 27 to 62 days (47.7 ± 13.0 days). 44.8 to 60.9% of all turtle sites were kept for study after filtration by LC, trip speed, and terrain.

4.3 Home range and mobility

In both 2007 and 2008, we saw young green turtles regularly using coastal habitats close to the locations where they were captured and released (Fig. 3). Each turtle's estimated MCP area varied between 374.1 and 2060.1 km² (101.3 to 184.8 km perimeter; Table 4). For 95% of the contour regions, the fixed KDEs varied between 24.6 and 371.0 km² (mean 154.4 ± 136.1 km²). According to Table 3, the 50% contour areas varied from 5.0 to 54.5 km². The 3.1 km² region that represented the junction of all turtles' 50% core regions (Fig. 3) was comparable in terms of spatial arrangement in 2007 and 2008. The percentage of movement pathways with greater mean squared distance (MSD) values, or p , was >98.0198 in every instance (Table 3). As a result, the satellite tracking data showed site fidelity. Turtles covered 387–2049 km in total (mean 1053.8 ± 641.8 km). However, as we are unable to verify linear transit, these travel speeds should be regarded as estimated swim speeds. Since swim speeds account for directional motions, which may not always be linear, travel speeds—that is, recorded linear distance over time—may not be equivalent to real swim speeds.

Table 3: Mydas Chelonia. Six young turtles in green colour from the southwestern coastal Swamps in Florida, USA, were tracked in 2007 and 2008 to determine their body sizes. SCL: horizontal duration of carapace from notches to tip; No. approved: places left behind after raw Argos information is filtered, as explained in "Materials and methodology.

| Turtle ID | SCL (cm) | Mass (kg) | Capture Method | Deployment Date | Tracking Duration (days) | Total Locations Logged | Verified Locations (%) |
|------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 60812 | 34.2 | 4.9 | Dip Net | 10 March 2007 | 53 | 92 | 48 (52.2) |
| 60815 | 41.3 | 9.2 | Dip Net | 12 March 2007 | 45 | 27 | 16 (59.3) |
| 55342 | 45.1 | 15.6 | Tangle Net | 5 March 2008 | 65 | 534 | 245 (45.9) |
| 60819 | 36.8 | 6.4 | Tangle Net | 6 March 2008 | 58 | 152 | 81 (53.3) |
| 55340 | 69.2 | 42.5 | Tangle Net | 2 May 2008 | 50 | 595 | 312 (52.4) |
| 55341 | 55.7 | 23.8 | Tangle Net | 4 May 2008 | 30 | 263 | 138 (52.5) |

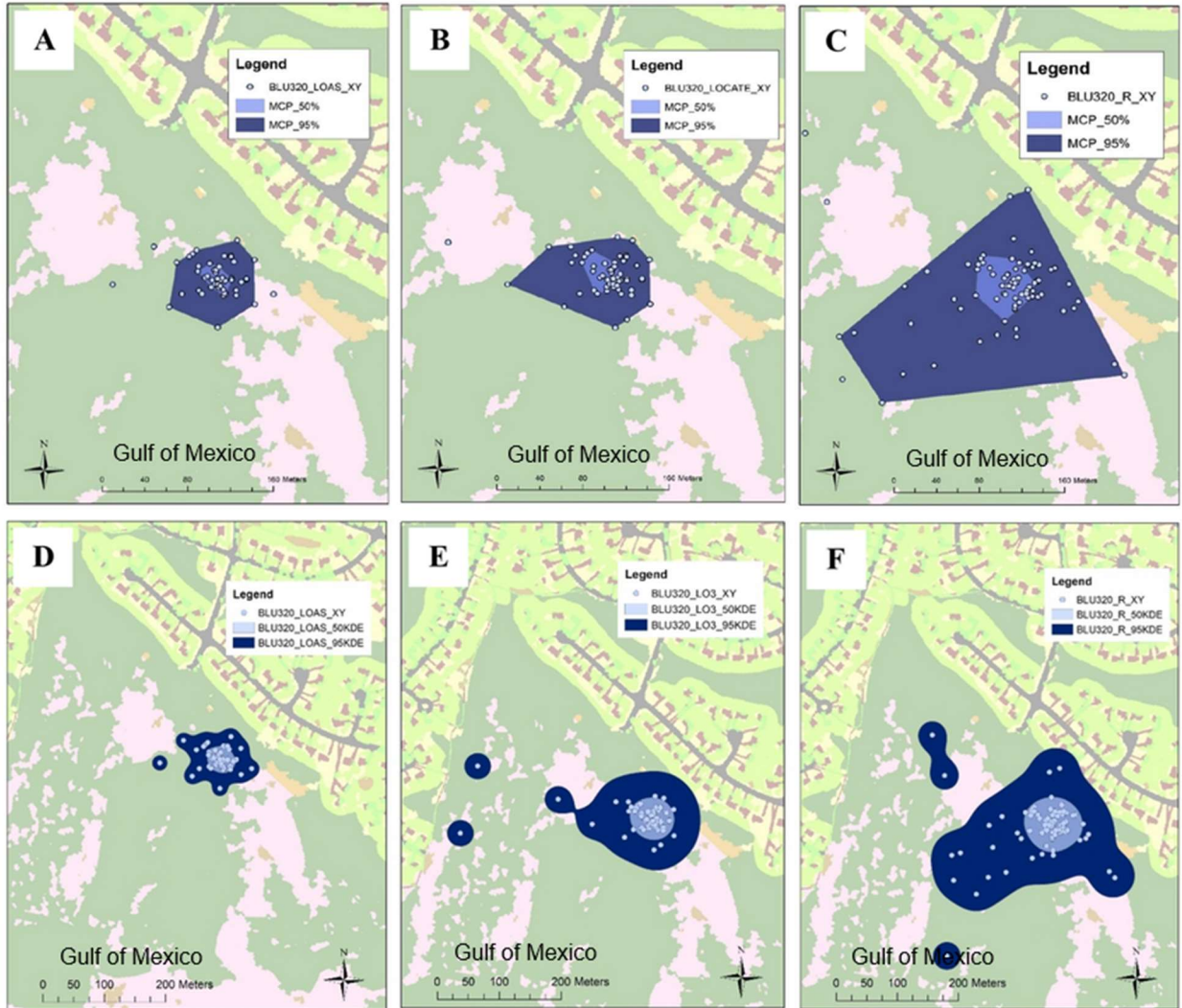


Figure 3: Predictions of the kernel concentration and maximum convex polygon (MCP) for six young turtles in green (a–f) that were satellite-tracked in southwestern Florida's Everglades National Park in 2007 and 2008. MCPs are shown by dashed lines, while the Everglades border is indicated by strong lines. Each turtle's mean daily positions are shown by black dots when available.

Table 4: *Chelonia mydas*. In 2007 and 2008, six young green turtles were satellite-tracked in the southern coast Everglades of Florida using their home ranges and main activity regions. The home range was identified using MCP and KDE techniques. The contouring variable (hcv) used for KDE estimations for each turtle is given. One tortoise (ID 60589) lacked sufficient data for KDE estimations. In site-fidelity tests, p indicates the percentage of moving pathways with increased mean squared distance (MSD).

| Turtle ID | Tracking Year | Duration (d) | HCV 50% (km ²) | Track Contour Perimeter (km) | MC P 95% Area (km ²) | MC P Area (km ²) | Site Fidelity Test (p) | MS D (R ²) (km) | Avg. MSD (R ²) of Random Paths (km) |
|-----------|---------------|--------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| 60812 | 2007 | 0.28 | 52 | 56.3 | 379.5 | 142.1 | >99.0153 | 97634.2 | 2192741.6 |
| 60815 | 2007 | – | 43 | – | – | 138.4 | >98.1221 | 235281.4 | 1473368.9 |
| 55342 | 2008 | 0.23 | 63 | 20.5 | 152.3 | 145.6 | >99.0457 | 54890.7 | 2785623.1 |
| 60819 | 2008 | 0.22 | 65 | 8.2 | 57.1 | 104.9 | >99.0316 | 39552.8 | 1210493.7 |
| 55340 | 2008 | 0.55 | 49 | 6.1 | 28.9 | 189.7 | >99.0678 | 41371.2 | 2243459.2 |
| 55341 | 2008 | 0.34 | 30 | 30.2 | 179.4 | 111.3 | >99.0124 | 36798.5 | 1102729.4 |

We found no significant difference in the turtles' daily time spent near the shoreline compared to deeper or more expansive waters. The study also revealed no statistically significant variation in location patterns between daylight and nighttime, nor in their proximity to the water, for all six tracked turtles ($p > 0.1$):

- ID no. 55340: $t_{302} = 0.35$, $p = 0.756$
- ID no. 55341: $t_{135} = 0.72$, $p = 0.496$
- ID no. 55342: $t_{241} = -1.14$, $p = 0.248$

- ID no. 60812: $t_{15} = 0.29$, $p = 0.728$
- ID no. 60819: $t_{60} = 1.72$, $p = 0.112$

Chi-squared analyses indicate that four out of six turtles tracked in 2008 spent a significant amount of time as in figure 4 and 5 within the ENP boundaries:

- ID no. 55340: $\chi^2_1 = 39.87$, $p < 0.0001$
- ID no. 55341: $\chi^2_1 = 19.63$, $p < 0.0001$
- ID no. 55342: $\chi^2_1 = 25.21$, $p < 0.0001$
- ID no. 60812: $\chi^2_1 = 0.11$, $p = 0.752$

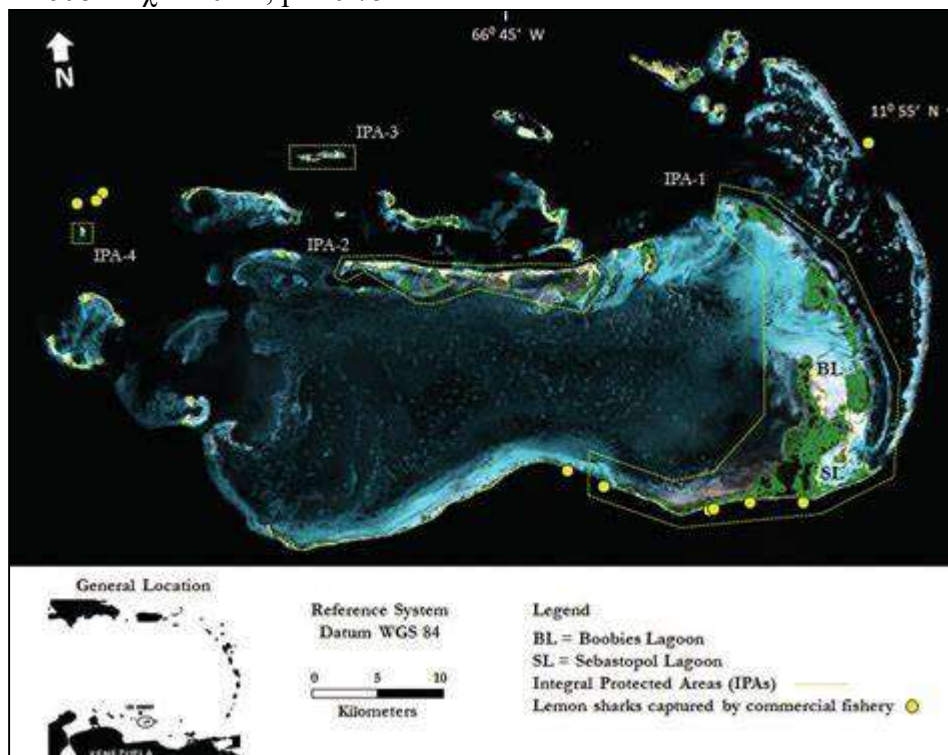


Figure 4: Satellite tracking of young green turtles in Everglades National Park (ENP), the southwest corner of Florida, revealed agreement of all 50% fixed kernels thicknesses (dark grey regions).

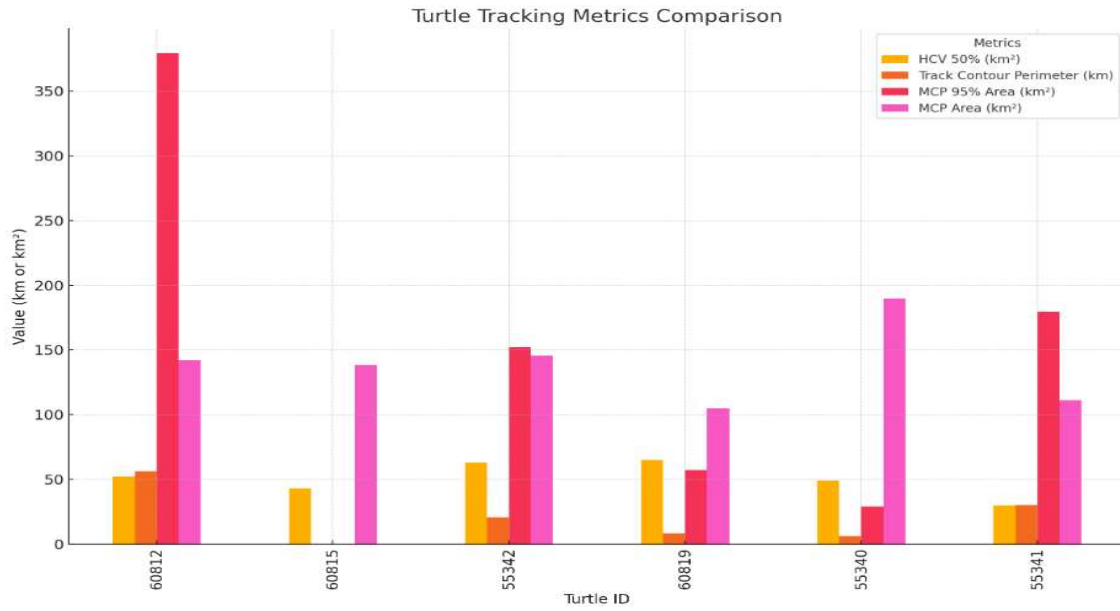


Figure 5: Metrics computation

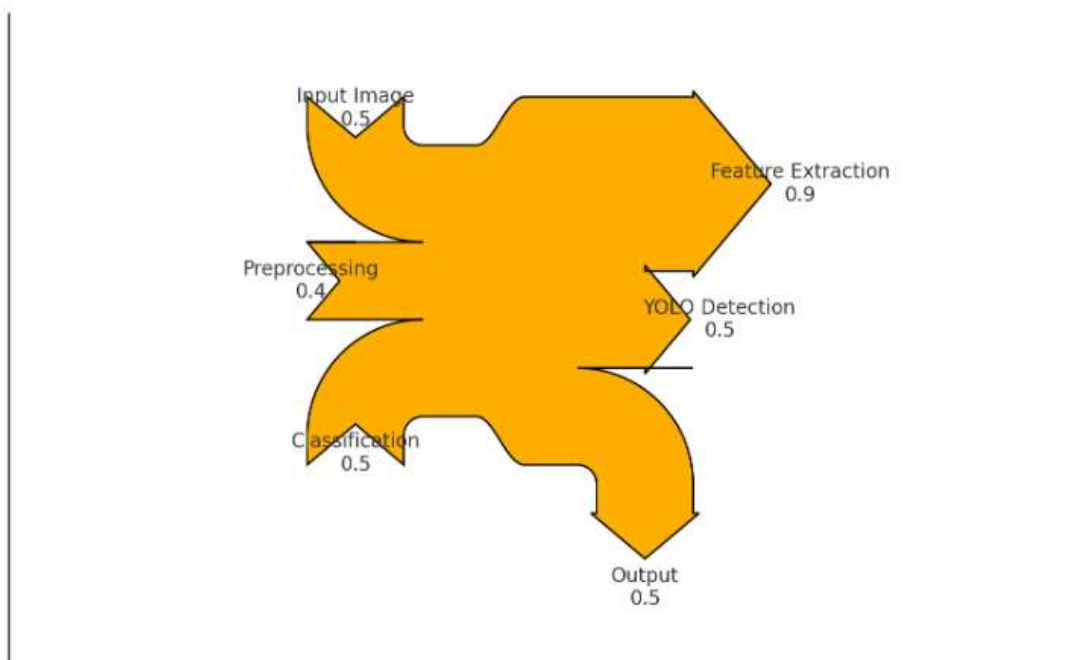


Figure 6: Species figuring



Figure 7: Green turtle returning view from satellite

4.4 Discussion

We estimate Everglades juvenile green turtle core seen in figure 6 and 7 activity areas for the first time. In two years, all six individuals showed fidelity to the capture and release site, consistent with reports from other green turtle foraging grounds indicating juvenile affinity for marine algae patches (Ogden et al. 1983, Seminoff et al. 2002). The presence of these characteristics along the shore and in the Everglades may lead to more tiny juvenile green turtle groups. Our monitoring efforts identified home ranges and site fidelity for six adolescent green turtles in the Everglades, suggesting resident-type behaviour. The study suggests that creating a core usage area or home range might help juveniles obtain resources that are most beneficial for their development and sexual maturation (Limpus & Walter 1980, Limpus et al. 1994, Makowski et al. 2006). In this investigation, we found 286 total PTT days, far less than Seminoff et al. (2002)'s 728 but equivalent to Mendonça's (1983) 199-day study and Makowski et al.'s (2006) 120-day study. McClellan & Read (2009) found comparable tracking durations for young green turtles of the same size as Everglades turtles (Table 1). Our tracking durations are comparable to Renaud et al. (1995) and McClellan & Read (2009), who tracked 9 green turtles (29.1 to 47.9 cm SCL, 2.6 to 14.8 kg) in Texas, USA, for 14 to 58 days and 10 to 42.5 cm SCL in North Carolina, USA, for 17 to 154 days, respectively (Table 1). Compared to longer-duration investigations on adult sea turtles (Godley et al. 2008), our turtles had shorter tracking periods. Short tracking may indicate battery failure or tag loss. Juveniles may lose scutes and satellite tags faster than adults, resulting in premature transmission delays. Turtle interactions with habitat structures, such as vegetation or dead mangrove logs, may cause tag shedding, especially if juvenile turtles use these structures for protection or shelter. Further research using captive greens and tag attachment techniques, such as Seney et al. (2010) and Renaud et al. (1993), is needed to establish the best retention rates for juveniles throughout time.

We found no significant differences in location quality or time between animals shortly after release and later during tracking, despite not testing for instrument effects. After releasing two tagged turtles (60589, 60591), we saw them eating at the study location within 24 to 48 hours, indicating minor tag impact. Watson & Granger (1998) discovered that a carapace-mounted satellite transmitter increased drag by 27-30% and decreased swimming speed by 11% in a model juvenile green turtle. Our investigation found that adolescent green turtles were eating and moving slowly, suggesting that their movements were not as significantly altered as indicated by Watson & Granger (1998).

Previous satellite telemetry studies examining young greens' migration outside of Florida support these conclusions. According to Godley et al. (2003), two of the four youngsters tagged in coastal seas off Brazil behaved similarly to Everglades turtles, staying at the capture/release site for lengthy periods. Three turtles (A, B, and C) in the research were about the same size as ours, although two were followed for longer periods (96 and 197 days). In a study by Pelletier et al. (2003), two wild-caught green turtles in the Indian Ocean showed comparable size and release site fidelity as Recent McClellan & Read (2009) findings of juvenile greens in the Everglades matched our data in size, tracking duration, and net distances travelled per individual (Table 1).

McClellan & Read (2009) found that summertime utilisation distributions (UDs) for North Carolina greens were 84.6 ± 48.3 km² using satellite monitoring.

Our estimate lies between the mean 50% core usage area (22.5 ± 22.1 km²) and the mean general use area (95% KDE; 154.4 ± 136.1 km²). The similarities in seasonal home ranges between mangrove (current research) and salt marsh (McClellan & Read 2009) habitats may indicate constraints for this size class of green turtles.

However, the short monitoring length in this research raises doubts about seasonal fluctuations in turtle habitat utilisation in ENP. Assess if summer tropical storms and hurricanes affect juvenile green turtle habitat-use patterns in this region. Storms may alter coastal morphology, cover, marine algae, and microhabitat characteristics due to high wave and wind energy.

The combined 2007 and 2008 50% core usage regions (Fig. 3) have comparable geographic locations, indicating that the site's microhabitat traits may make it ideal for young greens as a foraging or refuge site. An acoustic monitoring investigation using fixed receivers along the coastline might provide extended tracking periods for individual turtles, revealing their seasonal use patterns. Future studies should investigate seasonal variations in habitat usage, particularly in locations where CERP initiatives are planned. Our study found no significant differences in juvenile green turtle habitat use between coastal and deeper water habitats. However, satellite telemetry may have prevented us from capturing finer movements reported by Ogden et al. (1983) and Mendonça (1983) in their studies of behaviour and ecology at other shallow-water neritic areas. Ogden et al. (1983) studied young greens' diel feeding habits in St. Croix, US Virgin Islands, using observations and acoustic tracking.

In Florida, Mendonça (1983) found that green turtles ate seagrass flats in the morning and afternoon, then slept in deeper water throughout the day. Turtles in the Everglades may find food and resting spots in shallow coastal areas, while bigger predators like sharks await them in deeper habitats.

Green turtles on the east coast of the US have been found to have small springtime home ranges, with individuals residing in the same coastal embayments or tidal creeks on consecutive days (Mendonça 1983, McClellan & Read 2009). Mendonça (1983) found that turtles monitored in an east coast Florida lagoon returned to their previous night's resting locations within 3 meters. Our findings indicate that Everglades juvenile greens exhibit strong site fidelity, particularly to tidal creeks and embankments along the mangrove coastline, regardless of daytime or nighttime satellite location distributions according to distance to shore.

Animals commonly conduct area-restricted searches in locations with rich prey or resources, reducing travel pace and increasing turning frequency and angle (Turchin 1991). In contrast, animals in inappropriate habitats exhibit high transit speeds and minimal turning angles (Turchin 1991). We observed small core activity areas, site fidelity, and overlap across juvenile sizes and years. Turtles also had slow travel speeds, similar to Seminoff & Jones (2006) (0.18 to 0.64 km h⁻¹). This research suggests that adolescent green turtles exhibit area-restricted search patterns and behaviour similar to resident turtles. Our research found young green turtles using habitat in southwest Florida mangroves, previously unrecognised as vital for this endangered species. This work contributes to the worldwide data gap on young green sea turtles by identifying potential refuges and developmental habitats in the USA. Long-term surveillance of turtle residency habits over many years may clarify the significance of this research location for other young greens.

Our research highlights the need of considering the effects of Everglades restoration on young green turtles and their environment. Restoration of huge coastal regions near the Everglades may impact green turtles' utilisation of coastal seagrass and marine algal resources downstream of construction operations. Marine turtle aggregations in the coastal zone may be affected by restoration activities. This will help determine how changes in hydrology impact juvenile green turtles and their food sources, such as seagrass and marine algae. This research might educate

decision-makers about the impact of freshwater release patterns on the coastal zone and give valuable data for the Atlantic Green Turtle Recovery Plan (NMFS & USFWS 1991). The US Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service recognise the importance of identifying *Chelonia mydas* distribution and seasonal movements in the marine environment for protecting the US Atlantic green turtle population (NMFS & USFWS 1991). Restoring coastal regions of the Everglades, which might be vital habitats for adolescent green turtles, should include the impact on foraging supplies. Conservation of sea turtles requires understanding their spatial patterns of habitat use and how they change between life stages.

5. Conclusion

The proposed methodology for chelonian species detection integrates advanced image processing and machine learning techniques, enhancing accuracy and efficiency. Through a comprehensive pipeline, the process begins with image acquisition via UAVs equipped with thermal and RGB sensors, ensuring high-resolution data collection across diverse environments. Preprocessing methods standardize images by addressing noise, illumination variability, and geometric distortions, ensuring consistent input quality. Feature extraction is a critical step, capturing key characteristics like shape descriptors (perimeter, area, circularity), texture features (using GLCM), and thermal patterns. These extracted features serve as a foundation for species classification. The Bayesian Inference model leverages probabilistic reasoning to accurately classify chelonian species by calculating the posterior probability of each class. This statistical approach ensures robustness by incorporating prior knowledge and observed feature likelihoods. For object detection, the YOLO algorithm provides real-time identification and localization of chelonians, outputting bounding box coordinates and confidence scores. YOLO's efficiency and speed make it ideal for processing large datasets from UAV imagery. This multi-faceted approach improves species recognition and allows for dynamic monitoring of chelonian populations. The proposed framework's primary advantages include enhanced classification accuracy, real-time detection capabilities, and adaptability to different environmental conditions. However, limitations include reliance on UAVs for data collection and potential challenges in detecting submerged or camouflaged turtles. Future work could explore deep learning models for improved feature extraction, integration of multi-sensor data fusion, and real-time deployment in marine conservation efforts. This methodology represents a significant advancement in automated wildlife monitoring, supporting ecological research and conservation initiatives.

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