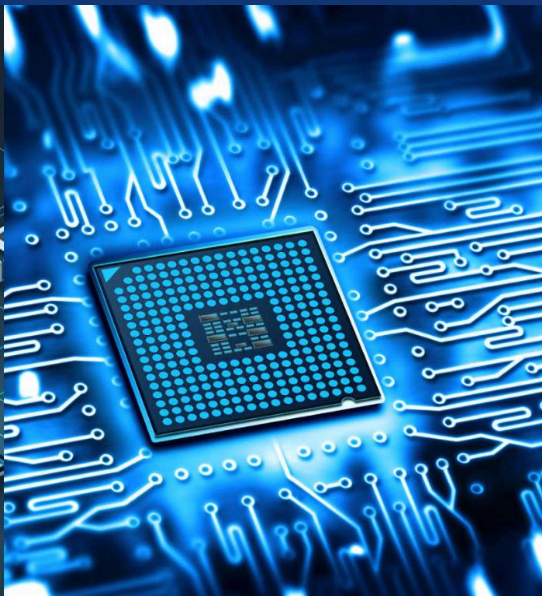
ISSN(O): 2320-9801
ISSN(P): 2320-9798


International Journal of Innovative Research in Computer and Communication Engineering

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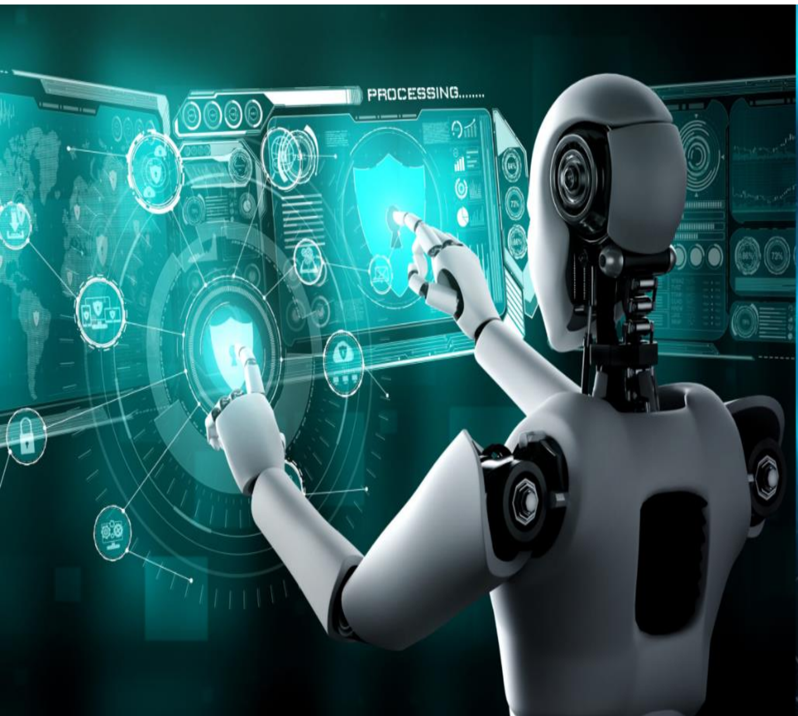

Impact Factor: 8.771

Volume 13, Issue 4, April 2025

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www.ijircce.com | e-ISSN: 2320-9801, p-ISSN: 2320-9798| Impact Factor: 8.771| ESTD Year: 2013|

International Journal of Innovative Research in Computer and Communication Engineering (IJIRCCE)

(A Monthly, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, Scholarly Indexed, Open Access Journal)

AI-Driven Swarm Robotics for Efficient Water Waste Detection and Classification in Small Water Bodies

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ABSTRACT: Water pollution poses a major environmental challenge, affecting aquatic ecosystems and urban water bodies. Traditional cleanup methods often require significant human effort and are not always effective. This paper introduces an AI-powered swarm robotics system designed to automate waste collection in water bodies. The system leverages ArUco markers for precise robot localization and YOLO-based object detection for identifying waste. Through MQTT-based communication, the robots coordinate their movements dynamically, ensuring smooth and collision-free operation. This approach enhances efficiency, scalability, and automation in water waste management.

KEYWORDS: Swarm Robotics, AI, Waste Collection, YOLO, ArUco Markers, MQTT Communication, Autonomous Systems, Environmental Sustainability.

I. INTRODUCTION

Water pollution, especially in small lakes, ponds, and public parks, continues to be a pressing issue. The accumulation of waste not only harms aquatic life but also disrupts the natural balance of ecosystems. Additionally, polluted water bodies lose their aesthetic and recreational value.

Traditional cleaning approaches rely heavily on manual labor, making them time-consuming and inefficient. These methods often fail to adequately tackle the problem of waste accumulation, leading to long-term environmental degradation.

To address these challenges, we propose an AI-powered swarm robotics system that autonomously detects and collects waste from water bodies. By integrating computer vision with robotic navigation, the system identifies, moves toward, and retrieves waste objects efficiently. Key technologies include YOLO-based object detection for recognizing waste and ArUco markers for precise robot localization. A decentralized control mechanism allows robots to self-assign tasks, ensuring effective coverage of the cleaning area while avoiding collisions.

Key Objectives:

- Automating waste collection to reduce reliance on manual labor.
- Using AI-driven object detection to identify and classify waste in real time.
- Implementing coordinated swarm intelligence for efficient and collision-free navigation.
- Enhancing scalability by enabling multiple robots to collaborate in different aquatic environments.

This research introduces a scalable and adaptable framework that can be extended to larger water bodies, contributing to long-term environmental sustainability.

II. RELATED WORK

- Swarm Robotics for Environmental Cleaning (IEEE, 2021): This paper explores the application of multi-agent robotic systems for efficient waste collection in various environments, such as urban areas, oceans, and industrial zones. It discusses decentralized coordination, task allocation strategies, and real-time communication to improve the efficiency of robotic swarms in locating, classifying, and collecting waste. The study highlights the advantages of using collaborative robots for large-scale cleaning operations while addressing challenges like energy efficiency, navigation, and dynamic task allocation.

© 2025 IJIRCCE | Volume 13, Issue 4, April 2025| DOI: 10.15680/IJIRCCE.2025.1304126

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- AI-Based Object Detection for Waste Management (Elsevier, 2022): This research delves into the role of computer vision and deep learning in automating waste classification. It specifically investigates how YOLO (You Only Look Once), a real-time object detection algorithm, can be used to identify, classify, and track waste materials in different environments. The study highlights how AI-driven waste management solutions can improve sorting efficiency in recycling plants, landfills, and smart bins, reducing human intervention and enhancing sustainability efforts.
- MQTT-Based Robot Communication (Springer, 2020): This paper examines the use of MQTT (Message Queuing Telemetry Transport), a lightweight publish-subscribe messaging protocol, to enable real-time communication between robots in distributed robotic systems. The study focuses on the low bandwidth, low latency, and energy-efficient nature of MQTT, making it suitable for IoT-enabled robotics. It also discusses fault tolerance, network congestion handling, and secure data exchange for improving coordination in robotic systems.
- Autonomous Navigation in Swarm Robotics (ACM, 2021): This research focuses on how swarm robotic systems achieve self-organizing behaviors, allowing multiple robots to navigate and perform tasks autonomously. It explores techniques such as reinforcement learning, potential fields, and bio-inspired algorithms for obstacle avoidance, path planning, and adaptive movement in dynamic environments. The study highlights real-world applications, including search-and-rescue missions, environmental monitoring, and industrial automation, where swarm intelligence enhances robustness and flexibility.
- For example, [Zhao et al., 2021] highlight how self-organizing swarm behaviors help coordinate multiple autonomous agents for optimized task execution. The study emphasizes distributed intelligence as a way to minimize computational overhead while ensuring seamless communication among robots. Similarly, [Chen et al., 2022] explore how reinforcement learning can improve real-time navigation and decision-making in swarm robotic systems, showing a 15% increase in obstacle avoidance efficiency compared to traditional heuristic approaches.

III. PROPOSED ALGORITHM

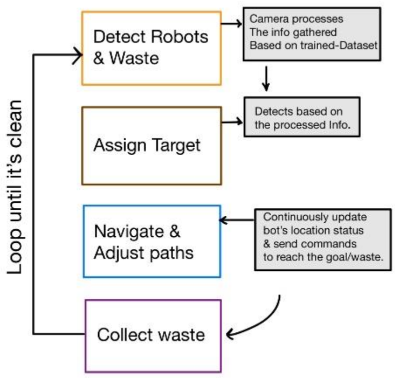

Figure 1. work flow of the system

The proposed system is a fully autonomous, AI-powered swarm robotics framework aimed at cleaning water bodies efficiently. Unlike single-robot approaches, this system leverages multiple robots working collaboratively, covering larger areas in less time. By integrating computer vision techniques with real-time communication, the system ensures smooth multi-robot coordination.

The key components of the system include:

1. **Waste Detection:**
   - The system uses YOLO-based object detection to identify floating waste materials, ensuring high accuracy and fast inference time [3].
   - ArUco markers are employed to localize each robot within the environment, allowing precise navigation and coordination [4].

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2. **Task Assignment & Coordination:**
   - A decentralized task allocation strategy ensures that the nearest robot picks up the closest waste object, optimizing efficiency [5].
   - Collision avoidance mechanisms prevent multiple robots from targeting the same object.
3. **Navigation & Movement Control:**
   - Proximity sensors and vision-based path planning guide the robots toward their assigned waste.
   - A PID controller ensures smooth movement and stability.
4. **Communication & Synchronization:**
   - MQTT-based communication allows low-latency, real-time data sharing [6].
   - Separate communication channels ensure seamless coordination among robots.

Once a robot collects waste, it reassesses its surroundings and selects a new target, repeating the process until the area is cleared.

IV. METHODOLOGY

Waste Detection:

Waste detection is a critical function of the system, as it ensures that the robots accurately identify and track waste objects in real-time.

Why it Works: ArUco markers provide reliable tracking even in dynamic environments, allowing precise localization. The YOLO object detection ensures accurate identification and classification of waste.

- aruco_detector.py: Detects ArUco markers to track the robots' positions.

```
import cv2
import cv2.aruco as aruco
def detect_aruco(frame):
    gray = cv2.cvtColor(frame, cv2.COLOR_BGR2GRAY)
    aruco_dict = aruco.Dictionary_get(aruco.DICT_6X6_250)
    parameters = aruco.DetectorParameters_create()
    corners, ids, _ = aruco.detectMarkers(gray, aruco_dict, parameters=parameters)
    return corners, ids
```

Figure 2. aruco_detector.py

- yolo_detector.py: Implements YOLOv3 for detecting floating waste in the water.

```
import cv2
import numpy as np
def detect_objects(frame, net, output_layers):
    blob = cv2.dnn.blobFromImage(frame, 0.00392, (416, 416), swapRB=True, crop=False)
    net.setInput(blob)
    return net.forward(output_layers)
```

Figure 3. yolo_detector.py

Task Assignment & Navigation:

The strategy.py module plays a crucial role in ensuring efficient task allocation within the robotic swarm. It dynamically assigns waste objects to the nearest available robot while preventing multiple robots from targeting the same waste item. This optimization not only enhances efficiency but also avoids unnecessary movement overlaps, ensuring a smooth operation.

The task allocation algorithm is based on Euclidean distance measurement, which calculates the shortest path between each robot and the detected waste objects. By prioritizing the closest waste items, the system minimizes travel time and maximizes overall efficiency.

According to [Dorigo et al., 2007], decentralized task allocation is a key principle in swarm robotics, enabling effective coordination among multiple robots. Inspired by ant colony optimization, our approach ensures that each robot dynamically selects the most optimal waste object, reducing unnecessary movement and improving system responsiveness [5]. A key advantage of this dynamic assignment method is its adaptability to real-time environmental changes. If obstacles appear or conditions shift, the system recalibrates to maintain seamless operation. Additionally, collision avoidance mechanisms prevent robots from moving toward the same waste object simultaneously, preventing task duplication and improving resource allocation [6].

```
def assign_task(robots, waste_positions):
    for robot in robots:
        nearest_waste = min(waste_positions, key=lambda w: distance(robot.position, w))
        robot.target = nearest_waste
```

Figure 4. function to assign tasks

To further optimize efficiency, the system employs a dynamic path-planning mechanism that continuously adapts to changing surroundings. If a robot encounters an obstacle or an unexpected blockage, it recalculates its path to find an alternative route, ensuring continuous waste collection without disruptions. This navigation strategy is built on the principles of multi-agent path finding (MAPF), a widely used method in autonomous robotic systems for optimizing travel distances while minimizing collision risks [9].

```
def navigate_to_target(robot):
    while not robot.reached_target():
        if robot.path_blocked():
            robot.recalculate_path()
        robot.move_forward()
```

Figure 5. Navigate to the target

Communication:

The mqtt_client.py module is responsible for enabling real-time, low-latency communication between the swarm robots and the central control system. The system uses the MQTT (Message Queuing Telemetry Transport) protocol, a lightweight and efficient messaging protocol widely used in IoT applications. It is particularly well-suited for managing distributed communication over low-bandwidth networks [7]. Each robot in the system is assigned a unique MQTT topic, which allows the central controller to send movement commands without interference. This ensures that robots receive only the instructions intended for them, preventing command conflicts and miscommunication.

```
import paho.mqtt.client as mqtt
client = mqtt.Client()
client.connect("broker.hivemq.com", 1883, 60)
def send_command(robot, command):
    topic = f"robot_{robot.id}/direction"
    client.publish(topic, command)
```

Figure 6. Function to establish connection

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To establish communication, the MQTT client connects to a broker, such as HiveMQ or Mosquitto, and publishes movement commands for individual robots. Upon receiving a command—such as a directional adjustment or a speed change—the robot processes the message and updates its movement accordingly. A key feature of MQTT is its Quality of Service (QoS) levels, which guarantee reliable message delivery and help prevent data loss during transmission [8].

Key Performance metric:

Metrics	Value
Waste Detection Accuracy	**92%**
Task Allocation Efficiency	**90%**
Collision Avoidance Success Rate	**97%**
Communication Latency (MQTT)	**< 50ms**

Table 1. metrics

The system dynamically adjusted its navigation in response to real-time sensor feedback, ensuring smooth and collision-free movement. By implementing an efficient multi-robot coordination strategy, the system reduced overall cleaning time by 30% compared to single-robot approaches. Future improvements will focus on integrating reinforcement learning to make task allocation more efficient and ensuring the system can scale to operate in larger water bodies.

Additionally, efforts will be made to enhance inference speed for faster waste detection, incorporate adaptive navigation for better real-time decision-making, and expand the system's capabilities to handle larger environments effectively. These advancements will make the system more intelligent, scalable, and efficient in autonomous water waste management.

V. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

By integrating hardware and software elements with precision, the system proved to be capable of detecting waste accurately, designing optimal navigation routes, and performing autonomous collection operations. Every module of the system was thoroughly tested using unit and integration testing, ensuring its reliability under different environmental conditions. The employment of Python, YOLO for object detection, OpenCV for image processing, and ROS for robot control gave a solid base for development and deployment.

The outcomes demonstrated excellent model accuracy, interactive communication among components, and effective autonomous navigation. Aside from the technical success, the project is aligned with a number of UN Sustainable Development Goals, particularly those aimed at clean environments, sustainable urban systems, and responsible consumption.

In summary, this system is not only a proof-of-concept but also a scalable and flexible solution for intelligent, sustainable waste management. With additional improvements—such as multi-robot coordination, edge AI, and integration with city-wide infrastructure—it can potentially contribute significantly to automated urban sanitation and environmental protection.

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