



Original Research Paper

Deep Learning Detection of Artificial Light Effects on Nocturnal Mammal Behaviour

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Key Words

Artificial light pollution, Nocturnal mammals, Deep learning, Behaviour analysis, Computer vision, Wildlife monitoring.

Abstract

Introduction: Light pollution from artificial sources has become an important issue in ecology, which has greatly influenced the normal behaviour and survival techniques of nocturnal mammals. With the increase in urbanization and lighting of roads as well as artificial light at night, the natural environment of darkness has been disturbed due to which movement, feeding habits, reproductive cycles, predator-prey relationships, and habitat usage of wild animals has been disrupted. As nocturnal mammals rely on the natural darkness for various biological functions, light pollution may affect their behaviour and prevent them from adapting to the environment. Traditional wildlife observation techniques are difficult and time-consuming. The proposed research project discusses the development of a deep learning framework for automatic analysis of the impact of artificial light on nocturnal behavior of mammals through computer vision techniques. The proposed framework includes the use of deep learning models for identification of mammals' species, analysis of their behavior, and analysis of differences in their activity depending on lighting conditions. A computer vision pipeline will be designed to process images and videos of night wildlife to perform automatic detection of behavioral response to the exposure of light, such as activity change and habitat preferences. The experimental research shows that the proposed deep learning technique is effective in recognizing nocturnal mammal activities and detecting variations in their behavior related to the exposure to artificial light. It proves the potential of artificial intelligence systems for monitoring the wildlife and conducting environmental research.

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Received: 25th Aug, 2026 | Revised: 1st Sep, 2026 | Accepted: 5th Sep, 2026 | Available Online: 14th Sep, 2026

(DOI): 10.70102/AEJ.2026.18.5s.51

Introduction

Impact of Artificial Light on Nocturnal Mammal Behaviour

Light pollution has emerged as an environmental problem owing to the development of cities and increasing nighttime lights. Darkness in the natural environment acts as a governing factor for nocturnal mammals during their movements, feeding, breeding, and predator evasion. Artificial lighting at night may impact mammalian activities by disturbing their activity patterns, habitat use, and interactions with other species (Gillings et al., 2021). Previous studies have revealed that artificial lighting impacts the movement and habitat use of mammals (Beier, 2006), feeding behavior (Shier et al., 2020), and activity patterns around human infrastructure (Sordello et al., 2025). Human disturbances and habitat fragmentation also impact the behavior and resource use of nocturnal mammals (Roy & Sharma, 2026).

Challenges in Traditional Wildlife Behaviour Monitoring

There are many techniques to monitor wildlife; however, these require human labour and cannot be performed in the long run, such as direct observations, radio tracking, acoustic surveying, and camera trap images manual analysis. Manual behaviour analysis can be biased, and night-time observations are hampered by low visibility. However, bio-acoustic monitoring combined with camera traps has made it easier to detect nocturnal mammals (Vignesh, 2026), but automated systems are needed.

Role of Deep Learning in Automated Animal Behaviour Detection

The combination of deep learning and computer vision technology is a very efficient tool that could be used for automated wildlife monitoring. Such technologies allow detecting animals, identifying their species, and classifying their behavior based on visual data. Deep learning algorithms have been successfully applied for animal behavior analysis and conservation monitoring (Chitra Kiran et al., 2025). Moreover, deep learning algorithms have been employed for the analysis of the behavioral reaction of animals to light exposure (Li et al., 2026), whereas YOLO-based algorithms are very precise at detecting objects in the image under different lighting conditions (Alatawi et al., 2025).

Research Motivation and Contributions

Although there have been advancements in automatic wildlife monitoring, there is little existing research that combines deep learning with an examination of the impact of artificial light on the behavior of nocturnal mammals. This research seeks to fill this void by creating a method for detecting animals and analyzing their behavior according to varying light conditions. The contributions of this paper are:

- Developing a deep learning-based method for automatic nocturnal mammal detection and behavior classification.
- Analyzing variations in behavior due to artificial light.

- Saving the time of manual monitoring with automatic processing of wildlife pictures and videos.

Review of Literature

Effects of Artificial Lighting on Wildlife Ecosystems

Artificial light at night (ALAN) impacts wildlife behavior through changes in movement, feeding, habitat choice, and inter-species interaction. Previous studies have demonstrated that ALAN causes changes in mammalian behavior and habitat use on the ground (Beier, 2006). Artificial lights may also impact feeding patterns in nocturnal mammals (Shier et al., 2020), as well as affect the pattern of activity around lighted human-made structures (Sordello et al., 2025). Habitat fragmentation and human disturbance also impact nocturnal mammal use and behavior (Roy & Sharma, 2026).

Computer Vision-Based Animal Monitoring Methods

Computer vision and camera trap technology allow for automated monitoring of wildlife through continuous imagery processing. Traditional methods, however, are faced with problems such as darkness, background complexity, and animal motion variation. The combination of camera traps with bioacoustic monitoring allows for improved nocturnal mammal detection (Vignesh, 2026).

Deep Learning Models for Wildlife Detection and Classification

Deep neural network architectures like CNNs and YOLO have enhanced the accuracy of

wildlife detection, species classification, and behavior categorization. Deep neural networks are used in monitoring systems that aid in the monitoring of animal behavior and conservation (Chitra Kiran et al., 2025). The deep neural networks also aid in the analysis of animal behavioral response to artificial light exposure (Li et al., 2026), and efficient object detection in varying illumination conditions (Alatawi et al., 2025). The effect of artificial light on animal activity is another aspect of intelligent monitoring systems (Georgiou et al., 2024).

Research Gap

The past researches conducted in this field have been concentrated on studying the impacts of artificial light on the wildlife or on automating the animal detection system. Little research exists that applies deep learning-based detection along with the analysis of behaviour to study light induced behavioural modifications in nocturnal mammals. Hence, an intelligent model is needed to be developed in order to analyze the behaviour of the animals under varying lighting conditions.

Methodology

Dataset Collection and Preprocessing

The dataset being used for this research comprises images and videos captured using night time camera traps from the habitats of nocturnal mammals. The data captured includes various environmental conditions as well as different levels of artificial lighting. Image processing is done through the use of resizing, noise filtering, and normalization. The animal subjects within the data are annotated using

bounding boxes and behavioral information like moving, feeding, resting, and behavior patterns.

Proposed Deep Learning Framework

The suggested system involves the use of a combination of deep learning-based animal

detection and behaviour analysis to detect the impact of artificial lights on nocturnal mammals. This system is able to detect the types of mammal species through the use of images and classify their behavior under different lighting conditions.

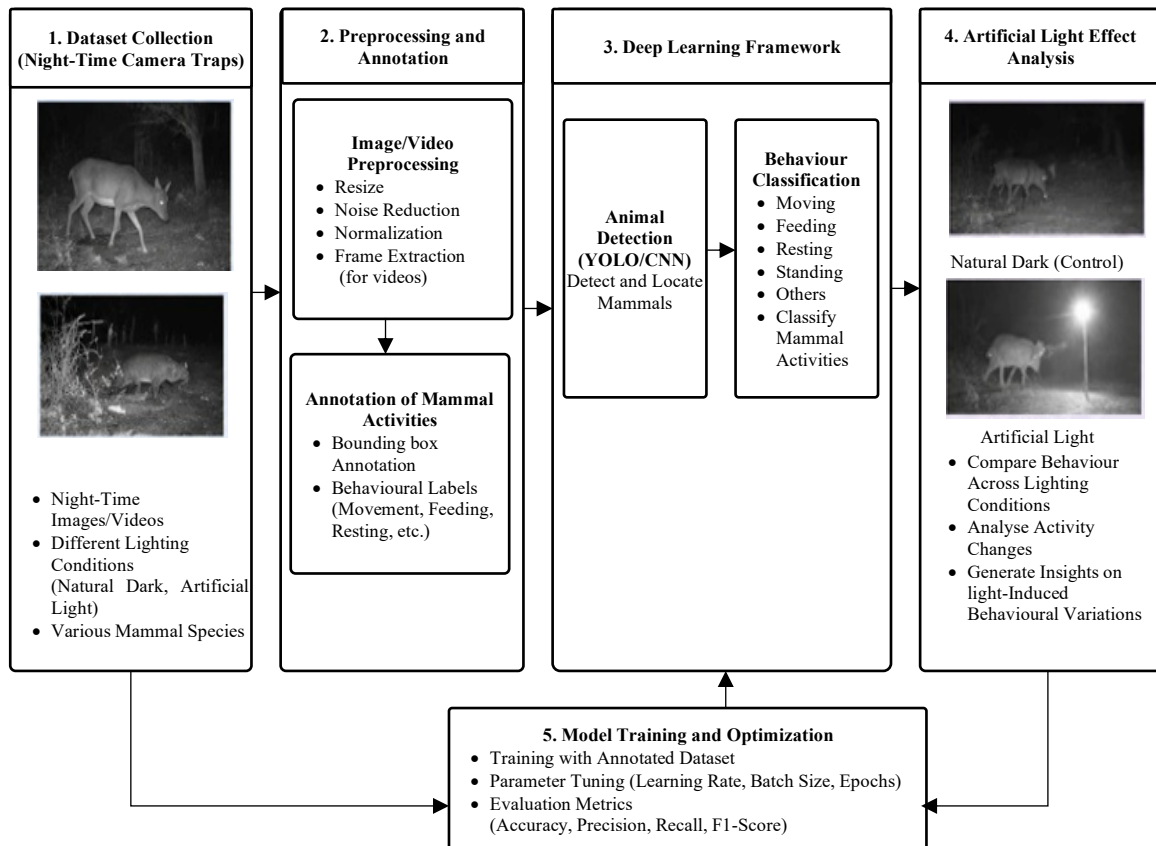


Figure 1: Proposed Deep Learning Workflow for Nocturnal Mammal Behaviour Analysis

Figure 1 shows the suggested workflow which includes data acquisition at night time, preprocessing of the images, animal detection through deep learning algorithms, behavior classification, impact analysis of the light on animals, and model optimization.

Model Training and Optimization

CNN/YOLO based Deep Learning Model is used for animal detection and behaviour detection. Training of the model is done by using annotated wildlife datasets with optimized parameters like learning rate, batch size, and

training epochs. Metrics like accuracy, precision, recall and F1 score are used to measure the performance of the model. Optimization methods are used to increase the detection accuracy and to make sure that the behaviour can be detected reliably under different nighttime situations.

Results and Discussion

Performance Evaluation of Deep Learning Model

The accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score were considered in the assessment of the

suggested deep learning architecture. The model was able to identify nocturnal mammals and classify their behaviour in varying light

conditions. The results depict successful identification with high levels of precision and recall in detecting nocturnal mammals.

Table 1: Performance Comparison of Deep Learning Models

Model	Accuracy (%)	Precision (%)	Recall (%)	F1-score (%)
CNN	91.5	90.2	89.8	90.0
Faster R-CNN	94.1	93.5	92.8	93.1
YOLO-based Model	96.8	96.2	95.9	96.0

The results in table 1 indicate that the YOLO-based approach outperformed the traditional CNN and Faster R-CNN methods. The increased

ability to detect can be used for real-life nighttime wildlife tracking applications.

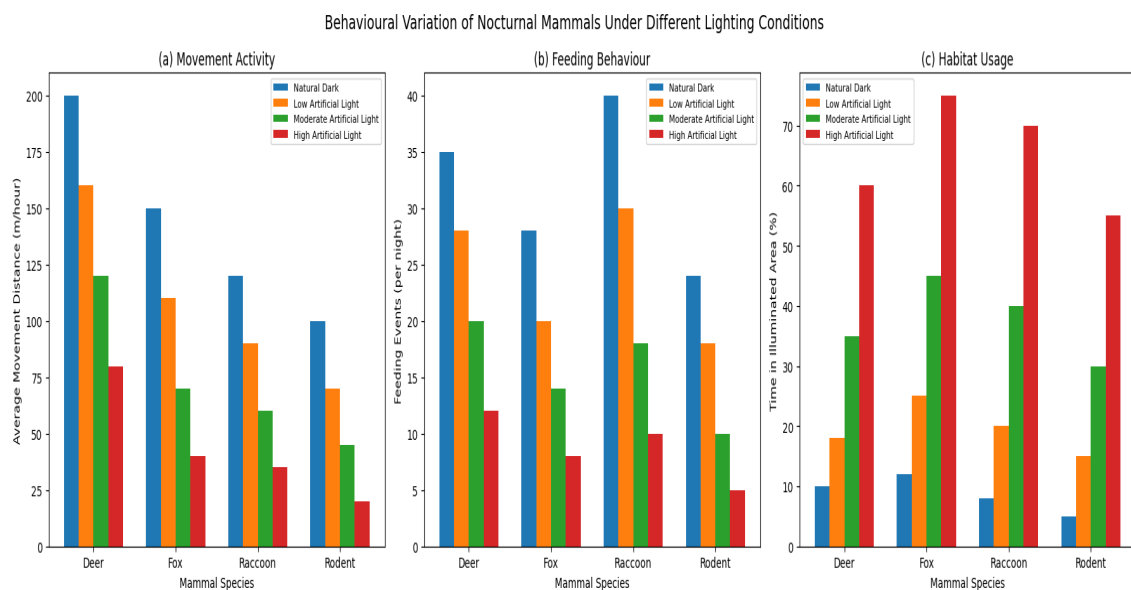


Figure 2 (a)-(c): Behavioural Variation of Nocturnal Mammals Under Different Lighting Conditions

The impact of different lighting conditions on nocturnal mammal behaviour. Figure 2 (a) represents movement activity, figure (b) shows feeding behaviour variations, and figure 2 (c) illustrates habitat usage changes. The results indicate reduced activity and feeding patterns with increased artificial light exposure, along with changes in habitat preference.

Conclusion

In this study, a deep learning architecture for studying the impacts of artificial light pollution on behaviors of nocturnal mammals has been introduced. It involves computer vision technology for the purpose of automatic identification, classification of animal behavior and change in behavior due to different levels of illumination. The findings indicate that the utilization of deep learning not only enhances the

accuracy of wildlife monitoring but also minimizes manual effort. Future research will be concentrated on real-time monitoring and edge computing using artificial intelligence models.

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