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Regular Papers:

Detection of Uneaten Fish Food Pellets in Underwater Images for Aquaculture

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Abstract: The waste of fish food has always been a serious problem in aquaculture. On one hand, the leftover fish food spawns a big economic loss in the industry because feedstuff accounts for a large proportion of the investment. On the other hand, the left over fish food may pollute the water and worsen the living environment of aquatic products. In this paper, we develop an adaptive thresholding method for detecting uneaten fish food in underwater images. To deal with non-uniform illumination in underwater environments, we focus on analyzing the local histogram of intensities in a mask for each pixel. The Expectation-maximization-guided Gaussian mixture is used to fit the histogram to figure out its type, and then an adaptive threshold to generate the binary detection result. Experimental results show that the proposed method obtains desirable detection of leftover fish food in many underwater environments with different water turbidity levels and with different extent of unevenness of illumination. In the four test underwater environments, the lowest True Positive Rate of the proposed method are no higher than 2.7%.

Keywords: fish food detection; aquaculture; image segmentation; Gaussian Mixture Model; EM algorithm; non-uniform illumination

1. Introduction

With the growing demand of aquatic products, aquaculture today has been punching above its weight in human food production. Due to the lack of feedback information from actual consumption, waste of feedstuff has been a common and disturbing problem for workers in traditional aquaculture. On one hand, the leftover fish food spawns a big economic loss in the aquaculture industry because feedstuff accounts for a large proportion of the investment. Feed makes up as much as 82% and 70% of total costs for tilapia farming in ponds and cages respectively, more than 50% for milk fish, see-bass cage culture as well as for shrimp pond culture [1]. The energy use of feed production also takes up the majority of the total energy use in Atlantic salmon production, currently making up about 50% of total cost [2]. Thus, improving feed efficiency in industrial aquaculture systems is already a priority [3]. On the other hand, the leftover fish food may lead to eutrophication of water and worsen the aquatic environment. The most common sign of an environmental problem caused by nutrient discharges in aquaculture is the accumulation of organic

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