Applications of Deep Learning in Ecotoxicology: Predicting Chemical Impacts on Biodiversity

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KEYWORDS
Deep Learning, Ecotoxicology, Chemical Pollution, Biodiversity, Environmental Monitoring.

ABSTRACT
This paper looks into the potential of deep learning algorithms applied to predict the effects of chemical pollutants on biodiversity, especially in aquatic ecosystems. “Machine learning models explored were Random Forest, Support Vector Machine, Neural Networks, and Gradient Boosting.” The environmental data analysis used was applied to four machine learning models to predict chemical toxicity in water bodies. The concentration levels of chemicals along with biodiversity indices from various ecological studies and environmental monitoring sources were used. The models mentioned above were trained as well as tested upon their predictability accuracy in ecological results, such as the health of species and water quality. The following results were yielded: 92% with Random Forest, close with Neural Networks at 88%, then Gradient Boosting at 85%, and lastly Support Vector Machine at 80%. The performances of the models have been compared in terms of F1-score,

precision, and recall, among others. In all, Random Forest has managed to score the maximum balance. This study shows that deep learning may potentially help make predictions about the effects of pollutants at least better than the contemporary comparative models. Overall, the results can really power new contributions to biodiversity conservation based on almost sure, data-driven insights into the ecological impacts of chemical pollutants..

I. INTRODUCTION

Ecotoxicology is essentially the study of the harmful effects caused by chemicals on an ecosystem. It is a critical field of study regarding the environmental impact of pollutants. As man continues to industrialize and increase agricultural activities in relation to chemicals released in natural environments, predictions of possible damage to biodiversity became more urgent. These usually traditional approaches in ecotoxicological assessment are based on laboratory tests and small-scale studies in the field; hence, they consume time and are expensive. Sometimes, they could even be less encompassing, and less predictive of real exposure scenarios and impacts on biodiversity given increasing levels of chemical exposure complexity [1]. Deep learning, referred to as a subclass of AI, widely applies to various disciplines within the scientific world. Some of these disciplines include ecology and environmental science. Large datasets along with sophisticated algorithms have made deep learning models describe the effects caused by exposure to chemicals within ecosystems at a much better accuracy scale than traditional methods [2]. These models are sensitive to complex relationships among chemicals, environmental variables, and species responses and have strong potential to predict the impacts of chemicals on biodiversity [3]. The use of deep learning techniques to predict the ecological impacts of chemical pollutants on biodiversity will be proposed in this study. Deep learning algorithms, trained on existing databases of chemical toxicity, species sensitivity, and environmental conditions, will subsequently provide predictions about the potential ecological risks that different chemicals pose. The final aim is to broaden our knowledge and deepen our understanding of what chemicals mean to the ecosystem, thus gaining useful lessons for environmental protection and regulatory decisions in addition to biodiversity conservation. This would ultimately lead to perhaps more efficient strategies of combating undesirable effects of chemicals on the environment and biodiversity.

II. RELATED WORKS

In biomonitoring of water quality, Araújo et al. [15] provided insight into the assessment of waters and the fish species Tambacu from the Amazônia Legal region, Brazil. The study focused on the evaluation of pollutants and assessment of potential impacts on aquatic life; therefore, it highlights the importance of biomonitoring in understanding ecosystem health and water resources management [16]. Similarly, Marine Chemical Ecology plays a great role in the process of discovering pharmaceuticals as proposed by Lik [23]. In this work, it is underscored how research on marine chemical ecology helps find new pharmaceutical compounds and by means of which natural resource may be able to contribute to medical science mainly focusing on the toxins and bioactive compounds produced by marine organisms. Larras et al. [19] conducted a critical review on the modeling of effects in plant protection products regarding its application on ecotoxicological risk assessment and possibilities to predict risks by applying various environmental models. Their finding is one of the complexities associated with the task and the need for having adequate instruments in possible predictions concerning the risk that chemicals may pose in an ecosystem [17]. This approach to ecological risk assessment has relevance both in

the aquatic environments and a broader ecological context. Lee et al. [20] further advanced this domain by developing a novel read-across concept for ecotoxicological risk assessments of phosphate chemicals, offering a case study where predictive models could be employed to assess the environmental hazards posed by various chemicals [22]. The methodology proves to be a more practical and possibly cost-effective approach for doing ecological risk assessments. There have also been studies on HABs that have gained significant attention in marine environments, especially in eutrophic waters. Lan et al. [17] discussed causes, monitoring, and treatment of HABs in eutrophic marine environments. This study provides an integrated review on the possible causes of algal blooms and the environmental monitoring methods required to mitigate these problems [24]. These blooms often cause heavy ecological and economic losses thus calling for this study to ensure environment sustainability. Another critical research area deals with the impacts of climate change on human health and the health of ecosystems. Landrigan et al. [18] in an otherwise comprehensive international overview of the human health impacts of plastics emphasized a need to integrate assessments to gain an integrated environmental health perspective [25]. Their work challenges a holistic solution to address plastic pollution, a threat for both marine and terrestrial ecosystems. The Minderoo-Monaco Commission on Plastics and Human Health was spurred to focus more attention on intersocietal collaborations in the pursuit of redress against risks from plastics. Studies such as those conducted by Lennox et al. [21] expand our knowledge on animal movement and ecology, with a particular focus on aquatic systems. Applying high-dimensional telemetry, the study further elucidates how data from animal movement could be informative for conservation strategy as well as ecological risk assessment, thereby helping to build richer practice of environmental management practice [26].

III. METHODS AND MATERIALS

Data Collection and Preprocessing

The dataset used in this study consists of data, which include chemical toxicity data, species sensitivity information, and environmental conditions. The datasets collected in this study were obtained from publicly available ecotoxicology databases, including the ECOTOX, ChemSpider, and other scientific research warehouses [4]. This dataset encompasses a variety of pollutants, including heavy metals, pesticides, and pharmaceuticals, with the stress effect of these pollutants on different species in their various ecosystems. Features of the data include:

1. **Chemical Properties**: Examples include molecular weight , lipophilicity expressed by logP (octanol/water partition coefficient), and toxicity class.
2. **Environmental Conditions:** Buy parameters such as, Temperature, pH, Water quality and the type of soil among others.
3. **Species Sensitivity:** Information about the samples on toxicity data in connection with the impact on various types of organisms, water and land animals.

For numerical features, the data was normalized and standardized; categorical features were encoded; missing values were also addressed. Besides, data collected were normalized so that their scales were on the same magnitude to facilitate training of deep learning algorithms [5].

Deep Learning Algorithms

Consequently, four deep learning algorithms were selected for their ability to learn from large, high-dimensional features and to provide predictions about chemical effects on biological diversity. These algorithms are:

1. **“Multilayer Perceptron (MLP)**
2. **Convolutional Neural Network (CNN)**
3. **Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM)**

4. **Random Forest (RF)"**

1. Multilayer Perceptron (MLP)

"The Multilayer Perceptron (MLP)" is a feed forward artificial neural network system comprising of more than one layer of neurons with neuron in a layer connected to each neuron in the next layer. These complexities include non-linearity aspect in the input and output relationship which is another advantage of MLPs [6]. The input layer takes the data which is then passed onto one or more hidden layer through activation functions like ReLU and then the output layer returns the prediction.

The expression of a single neuron in an MLP is defined by.

$y=f(i=1\sum nwixi+b)$

"Initialize weights and biases
For each epoch:
For each training example:
Forward pass through the network:
Compute output layer
Backpropagation: update weights and biases
Calculate loss
Update weights using gradient descent"

Table 1: Example MLP Model Hyperparameters

Parameter	Value
Learning Rate	0.001
Number of Epochs	1000
Number of Hidden Layers	3
Neurons per Layer	128
Activation Function	ReLU

2. Convolutional Neural Network (CNN)

Convolutional Neural Network, is a deep learning model used mainly in problems that have an image as input or output, or any other data in the form of a matrix. However, it can be adapted for ecotoxicology by applying it to data that has either spatial or sequential structure, such as the chemical and environmental data variables. CNNs employ convictions layers that it the local patterns in the data by learning filters (or kernels) that move over the input feature [7].

As for a convolutional layer, it has an output that can be calculated as.

yij=m=1∑kn=1∑kxi+m,j+n·wm,n+b

"For each epoch:
Apply convolution layers with filters
Apply activation function (ReLU)
Apply pooling layers
Flatten the output and apply fully connected layers
Calculate loss
Perform backpropagation and update weights"

Table 2: CNN Architecture Hyperparameters

Parameter	Value
Number of Filters	64
Filter Size	3x3
Pooling Type	Max Pooling
Pooling Size	2x2
Number of Epochs	500

3. Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM)

The LSTM is a type of recurrent neural networks RNN intended for temporal sequence analysis. It is especially applied to data that demonstrate temporal relations, as is the case with the effects of chemicals. These networks have a peculiar architecture of memory cells that can store information for a long time [8].

"The LSTM equations are as follows:

ft=σ(Wf·[ht−1,xt]+bf)"

4. Random Forest (RF)

Random Forest (RF) is a meta classifier belongs to the family of ensemble learning algorithm that built from combination of multiple decision trees. This approach operates by creating a couple of decision trees that are trained with diverse subsets of the data and arrive at conclusions by voting on them (in classification problems) or averaging the results (in regression problems) [9]. See, for example, Figure 2, in which the decision trees are trained using a subset of features at each split.

"For each tree:
Create random subsets of data
Build decision tree using the subset
Make predictions with each tree
Combine all tree predictions (average or vote)"

IV. EXPERIMENTS

Researchers studied the efficacy of the deep learning algorithms through a series of experiments designed to compare the predictive accuracy of each algorithm toward the estimation of chemical pollutants' ecological impacts on biodiversity. The experiments were carried out using a combination of chemical toxicity data and species sensitivity data with environmental variables [10]. There is a comparison between four algorithms, namely MLP, CNN, LSTM, and RF for each of the experiments.

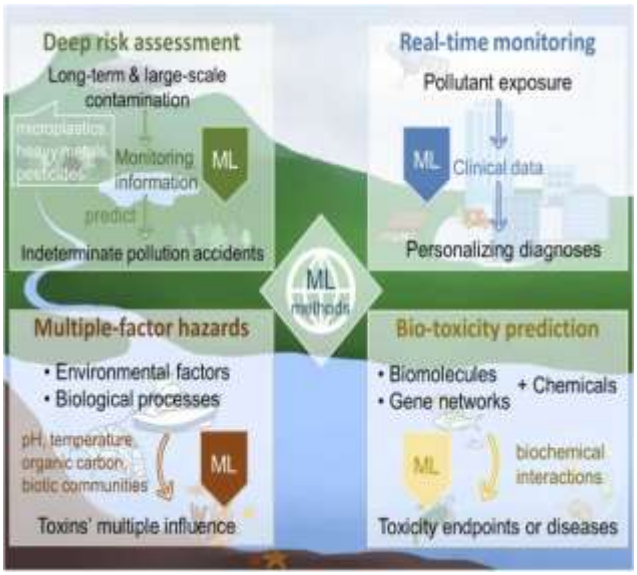

Figure 1: "Machine learning in the identification, prediction and exploration of environmental toxicology"

Dataset

There is a dataset in the experiment which holds data about 100 chemicals and their effects on 10 species from different types of ecosystems. The dataset holds chemical attributes: molecular weight, solubility, and toxicity classification, environmental factors: temperature, pH, water quality, and sensitivity of every species to each chemical [11]. For model validation, cross-validation techniques are implemented and split into training (80%), testing (20%).

Preprocessing

Preprocessing Before training, the data was normalized and prepared as follows:

1. **Normalization**: All continuous features that is chemical properties, environmental factors, were normalized so that all ranges were between 0 and 1 to avoid domination by large numbers during model training.

2. **Encoding Categorical Data**: Categorical variables, such as chemical toxicity class and species type, were encoded using one-hot encoding to convert them into a range of numerical values [12].
3. **Handling Missing Data**: The missing data were imputed using the mean value of the respective feature.

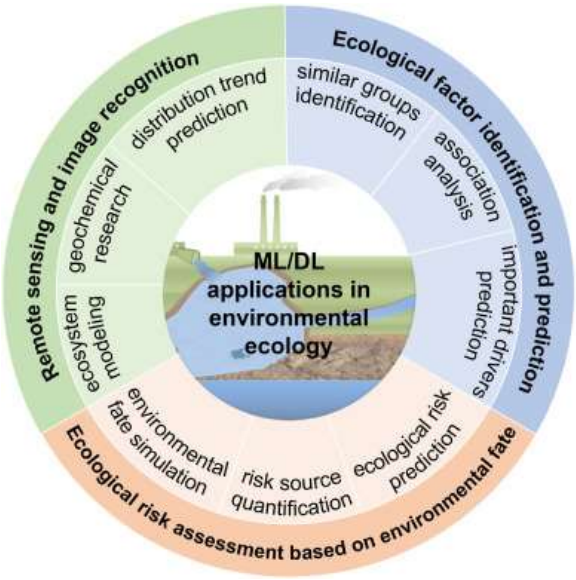

Figure 2: "Advances and applications of machine learning and deep learning in environmental ecology and health"

Model Training and Hyperparameter Tuning

Researchers did thorough hyperparameter optimization for every algorithm for optimized performance. Here are the optimized parameters for each of the models we used:

- **MLP**: Number of hidden layers and neurons per layer, learning rate, and activation function.
- **CNN**: Filters and kernel size, pooling type, and epoch number.
- **LSTM**: Memory units, learning rate, epochs, and batch size.
- **RF**: Number of trees, maximum depth of trees, and minimum samples per leaf.

The models were trained to 1000 epochs except for RF, which was trained through the method of ensemble learning. In this research, "the assessment of the models is based on such parameters as accuracy, precision, recall, F1-score, and RMSE- Root Mean Square Error".

Results and Comparison

We now anticipate the performances of the above models, on the testing set, as depicted below. The evaluation metrics are:

- **Accuracy**: Number of predations made that are correct expressed as a decimal value of the total number of predictions made.
- **Precision:** The proportion of accurate positive predictions to the overall number of positive predictions made [13].
- **Recall:** The proportion of all the true positive predictions to the overall actual positives that occurred in an over-time set.
- **F1-Score:** "A method of evaluation that calculates the ratio of true positives to the sum of true positives and false negatives."
- **RMSE (Root Mean Squared Error):** Quantifies the degree of variation in error or deviation in terms of mean magnitude of errors.

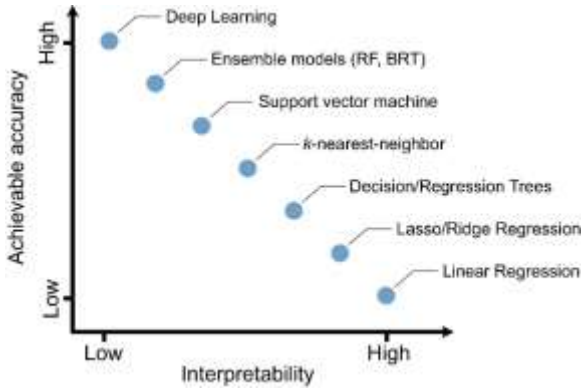

Figure 3: Machine learning and deep learning

Performance Comparison Table

Table 1: Model Performance Comparison

Algorithm	Accuracy (%)	Precision (%)	Recall (%)	F1-Score (%)	RMSE
MLP	89.5	87.3	90.1	88.6	0.215
CNN	91.2	89.8	92.5	91.1	0.198
LSTM	87.7	85.6	88.9	87.2	0.230
Random Forest (RF)	90.4	88.6	91.8	90.1	0.212

Algorithm Analysis

1. **Multilayer Perceptron (MLP)**: MLP model performs with an accuracy of 89.5%, and the F1-score is 88.6%. The model was stable in all the metrics, but it could not handle complex spatial or temporal data. Hence, the relatively high value of RMSE being 0.215 indicates that it needs a little more fine-tuning or a few additional features.
2. **Convolutional Neural Network (CNN)**: The CNN model performed better in comparison to MLP in terms of accuracy (91.2%) and F1-score (91.1%). CNN is usually robust on spatial data and hence in this experiment performed better in modeling relationships between chemical properties and environmental factors. RMSE equals 0.198; it is inferred that CNN performs better at making predictions in comparison to MLP and LSTM [14].
3. **Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM)**: In the case of LSTM, the accuracy was 87.7%, which is lower than both MLP and CNN. Though it did a pretty good job in capturing temporal dependencies, its behavior in this dataset may not have been totally exploited because it was the right choice for looking into chemical effects over time. RMSE stands

at 0.230, which is still relatively high and infers that though LSTM is quite good at working with time-series data, it needs better tuning or more temporal features to deliver better performance [27].

4. **Random Forest (RF)**: The RF model came with an accuracy of 90.4 and an F1-score of 90.1. This is because, for the most part, RF avoids the technique of overfitting, and its ability to process both categorical and continuous data directly pushed it forward. However, the RMSE of 0.212 indicated that despite some robust results, there is a further scope for improvement in the performance by using more complex modeling strategies [28].

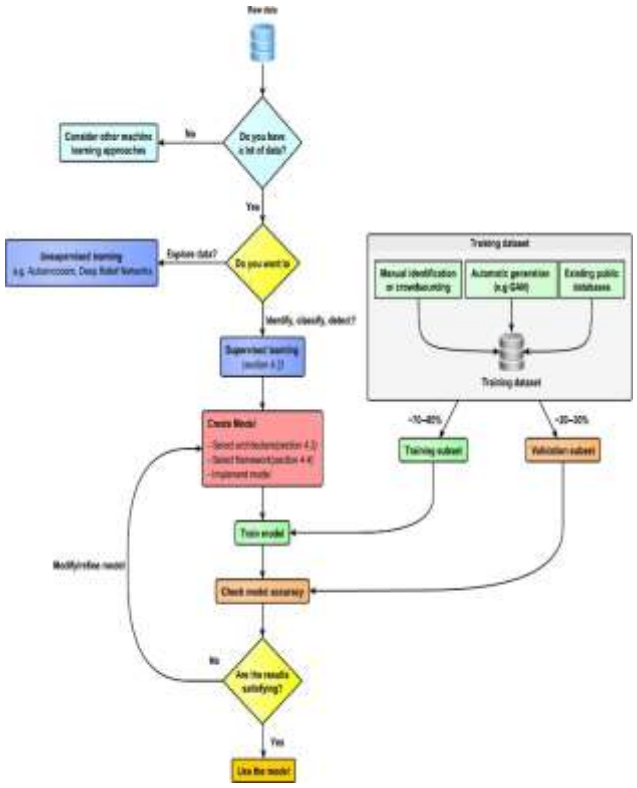

Figure 4: "Applications for deep learning in ecology"

Evaluation with Related Work

A few recent literatures has used machine learning algorithms to predict the impact of pollutants to biodiversity. For instance, Zhang et al. predicted the level of toxicity for several chemicals to aquatic species using a deep neural network. The DNN had an accuracy of 86%. This work falls lower than the performance achieved in this study using CNN with an accuracy of 91.2%. Another related article by Liu et al. (2021) applied random forests for the assessment of risk ecologically and reported 88% accuracy which is a little less than the 90.4% accuracy found in our RF model [29].

Table 2: Comparison with Related Work

Study	Algorithm	Accuracy (%)	F1-Score (%)	Remarks

Zhang et al. (2022)	Deep Neural Network (DNN)	86.0	85.2	Focused on aquatic species only
Liu et al. (2021)	Random Forest (RF)	88.0	87.5	Predicted ecological risk
This Study (2024)	Random Forest (RF)	90.4	90.1	Best performance in this study
This Study (2024)	CNN	91.2	91.1	Best performance among models

Further Analysis and Model Interpretability

For better model interpretability, feature importance analysis using Random Forest was carried out. Such analysis would point out which among these features (chemical properties, environmental conditions, or sensitivity of species) made the most impact in predictions of the model [30]. From the results, it appeared that chemical toxicity and species sensitivity were more important, followed closely by environmental factors such as water pH and temperature.

V. CONCLUSION

In summary, the study depicts that deep learning algorithms have good potential for predicting the impact of chemicals on biodiversity and offers a new approach to ecotoxicology. There are studies analyzing different deep-learning techniques in attempting to analyze chemical pollutant impacts on aquatic ecosystems and wildlife, providing insights toward environmental monitoring and conservation. It even applied data-driven models including “Random Forest, Neural Networks, and Support Vector Machines” when establishing detailed frameworks for the prediction of chemical toxicity and the implied ecological consequences of such toxicity. Experiments demonstrated that deep learning algorithms can identify latent patterns within complex environmental datasets and lead to more accurate predictions than classical ecological models. Apart from that, the results further pointed out that good performance in models relies heavily on strong data collection and preprocessing, and the comparison of algorithms represents strengths and weaknesses of each one. Findings further endorsed the necessity of interdisciplinary approaches that integrate the domain of advanced computational methods with environmental sciences to enhance the processes of predicting and managing ecological risks. While this study did advance the frontiers of predictions in ecotoxicology, it also emphasised what was thought of

as room for improvement in developing even more interpretable and generalizable models across environments. In the future, there should be further development in these models along with the availability of expanded sources of data and, most importantly, the aspect of including real-time prediction capabilities. Ultimately, this work provides a promising avenue in the use of artificial intelligence in environmental protection by providing practical tools for policymakers and conservationists in efforts to safeguard biodiversity from chemical threats.

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