



## Application of Deep Learning Techniques (DLT) for Oil Spillage Detection using Sar Images

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DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.18890970

Submission Date: 15 Jan. 2026 | Published Date: 06 March 2026

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### Abstract

Since edge detection is known to drastically reduce the amount of data and filter out irrelevant information in a picture, it is one area of image processing that receives a lot of attention. Edges typically define an image's boundaries and help to maintain the image's crucial structural characteristics. Color picture edge detection is common in color image segmentation because color is an inescapable quality that makes description, object recognition, and extraction from a scene easier. Typically, edge detection offers abrupt changes in color intensity inside a picture. These changes are typical of the margins of objects. Other processing tasks, like region segmentation, text discovery, and object recognition, are made simpler and feasible once an object's edges have been identified. Marine ecosystems, fisheries, and communities along coastal regions are seriously threatened by oil spill discharges from operational maritime activities such as ships, oil rigs, and other structures, leaking pipelines, and natural hydrocarbon seepage. An innovative microwave tool for monitoring oil spills in the ocean that is independent of weather and sunlight is satellite synthetic aperture radar (SAR).

**Keywords:** Oil Spill Monitoring, Deep Learning Techniques, Sar Images, Faster Detection, Future Directions, Recommendations.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The coastal area is known to be home to oil explorations and exploitations. Oil spill incidents are common along the Niger Delta Coastal Area. The main sources of oil spills in the Niger Delta are vandalization of the oil pipelines by the local inhabitants, aging of the pipelines, oil blowouts from the flow stations, cleaning of oil tankers on the high seas, and disposal of used oil into the drains by the roadside mechanics. By far the most serious source of oil spills is through the vandalization of pipelines, either as a result of civil disaffection with the political process or as a criminal activity [1]. Major oil spills heavily contaminate coastal shorelines, causing severe localized ecological damage to the near-shore community. Oil spills and the resultant degradation of the surrounding environment have caused significant tension between the people living in the region (Niger Delta) and the multinational oil companies operating there. Spills have also necessitated the complete resettlement of some communities. Loss of agricultural land, for example, translates into loss of livelihood for farmers; social problems associated with displacements include loss of ancestral homes. A large area of the mangrove ecosystem has been destroyed, which was a major source of wood for the indigenous people. Health-wise Oil that is spilled and not recovered will have an impact on the local environment, spreading over a wide area and affecting both terrestrial and marine resources. Actions can make the situation worse; the development of the region has led to the degradation of some sites, reducing their value and use. Furthermore, while past statistical assessments identified tankers as the main marine polluters with crude oil (by releasing oily mixtures in ballast water or

in cargo tank washings). To comply with marine legislation and the efficient surveillance and need for protection of coastal environments, the detection and tracking of oil spills and illegal oil discharges is of fundamental importance. In synthetic aperture radar (SAR) images, dark spots can be caused by a variety of phenomena, such as algae, low-wind areas, coastal areas, and oil spills. The three main challenges for oil spill detection in SAR images are:

- i. Speckle noise: Speckle noise is a random, granular pattern that is present in all SAR images. It can make it difficult to distinguish between oil spills and lookalikes.
- ii. Similar appearance: Oil spills and lookalikes can have similar appearances in SAR images. This can make it difficult to distinguish between them using traditional methods.
- iii. Lack of automatic methods: There are currently few automatic methods for filtering speckle noise or for distinguishing between oil spills and lookalikes in SAR images.

To address these challenges in this research we propose:

- i. Using a combination of features, this research proposes to use a combination of features, including wind speed, physical appearance, and geometrical and geographical parameters, to distinguish between oil spills and lookalikes.
- ii. Developing automatic algorithms using deep learning: This research proposes to develop automatic algorithms using deep learning (CNN) for filtering speckle noise and for distinguishing between oil spills and lookalikes. The research aims to develop automatic algorithms and classification methods to distinguish between oil spills and lookalikes in SAR images, as well as to reduce speckle noise in the images. The proposed approaches are expected to make oil spill detection faster, more accurate, and more cost-effective.

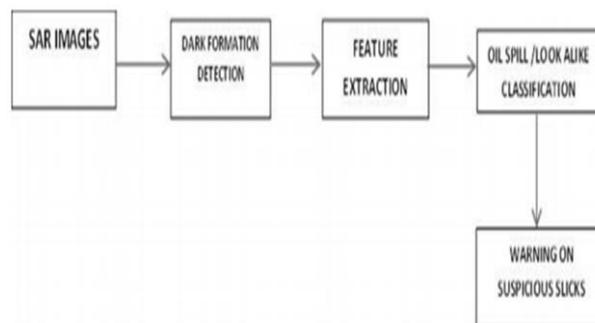
## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The construction of a cost-effective remote sensing processing system has been the subject of research and development for approximately two decades (Bern et al. 1992, Skøelv and Wahl 1993, Wahl et al. 1994, Solberg et al. 2003). Microwaves are commonly used for ocean pollution monitoring by remote sensing. They are often preferred to optical sensors due to the all-weather and all-day capabilities. Among the available remote sensing satellite data, spaceborne Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) imagery is the most efficient and superior satellite sensor for oil spill detection. It captures two-dimensional images, and its image brightness is a reflection of the microwave backscattering properties of the surface [2]. SAR is considered an important tool in oil spill monitoring due to its wide area coverage and day and night all-weather capabilities. It is worth noting that airborne is another possibility for oil spill detection, but airborne surveillance is limited by the high costs and is less efficient for wide-area surveillance due to its limited coverage. As an example, the Side-Looking Airborne Radar (SLAR) is an older but less expensive technology than SAR but suffers from low range and resolution (Fingas & Brown, 1997). Friedman et al. (2002) compare a RADARSAT-1 SAR image with a corresponding Sea-viewing Wide Field-of-view Sensor (SeaWiFS, visible sensor) image. SeaWiFS measures high levels of chlorophyll for areas with algal bloom, while the SAR images have low backscatter levels in these regions. A drawback of the SeaWiFS sensor is its coarse spatial resolution of ~1 km. Hu et al. (2003) demonstrate the possibility of oil spill monitoring by the Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectroradiometer (MODIS) instrument, carried onboard the NASA satellites Terra and Aqua, by an example from Lake Maracaibo, Venezuela. The MODIS instrument has moderate resolution bands of 250 m and 500 m and a wide spectral range, which allows it to provide images of daylight-reflected solar radiation and day/night time thermal emissions. The MODIS instrument was originally designed for land imaging, and with medium resolution, it also shows potential for daily monitoring of the coastal zones looking for oil spills. However, as with all optical sensors, with the availability of cloud cover and the lack of sunlight, its use is limited. Hyperspectral sensors used for oil spill monitoring provide detailed identification of materials (slicks produced by algal blooms from oil spills) and better estimation (spectral signature of oil to distinguish between different oil types). This in turn eliminates the false alarm rate of ocean features that have the same color and appearance as oil. Salem and Kafatos (2001) found that a signature matching method based on airborne hyperspectral imaging (looking at chemical composition) is more accurate than the conventional techniques, where analysis is based on visual interpretation of the oil's color and its appearance in the satellite image. The NASA EO-1 Hyperion hyperspectral sensor is an example of a spaceborne technology demonstrator but suffers a major drawback from its small swath width of only 7.5100 km and is currently not a commercial spaceborne hyperspectral sensor in orbit. Oil absorbs solar radiation and re-emits a portion of this energy as thermal energy. Tseng and Chiu examined the use and capability of the visible and IR sensors for early detection and monitoring of oil spills. IR sensors observe thick oil slicks as hot and intermediate thicknesses of oil as cool, while thin oil is not possible to detect (Fingas & Brown, 1997). At night a thick spill can appear cooler than the water since it releases heat quicker than its surrounding water (Tseng & Chiu, 1994). Thick and thin oil layers and the boundary between water and oil were possible to detect by the IR channel, but the oil spills may not have a significantly different temperature signature from the surrounding water at night. Thus, making oil spills detectable in the visible images only under highly favorable lighting and sea conditions. UV technology can be used to detect oil spills, as the spill displays high reflectivity of UV radiation even at thin layers. The UV instrument is not usable at night, and wind slicks, sun glints, and biogenic material can cause false alarms in the UV data. These interferences are often different from those for IR, and a combination of IR and UV can provide a more reliable indication of oil and can be used for

estimating oil thickness (Fingas & Brown, 1997). A microwave radiometer (MWR) is another passive sensor. The instrument looks at the microwave radiation in the wavelength cm to mm range that the ocean emits and therefore is almost weather independent (Trieschmann et al., 2003). Oil slicks emit stronger microwave radiation than the water and appear as bright objects on a darker sea. According to Robinson (1994), oil slicks can have strong surface-emissivity signatures, but as a spatial resolution of tens to hundreds of meters is desirable for the determination of oil slicks, this type of sensor for oil spill thickness monitoring is most appropriately pursued by aircraft sensors. Zhifu et al. (2002) did some experiments using airborne (AMR-OS) and shipborne (K-band) MWRs looking at various oil types and thicknesses. They found that MWRs are useful tools for measuring the thickness and estimating the volume of the spills, but the resolution is not fine enough to give accurate results. Fingas and Brown (1997) summarize studies done on this field and conclude that the potential of radiometers as a reliable device for measuring slick thickness is uncertain. In summary, SAR is still the most efficient and superior satellite sensor for oil spill detection, though it does not have capabilities for oil spill thickness estimation and oil type recognition. SAR is useful, particularly for searching large areas and observing oceans at night and in cloudy weather conditions. In view of this Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) being the most notable deep learning descriptor, it has attracted researchers' attention in recent years [12, 32–39] and yielded some of the best results in image classification problems. Therefore, this work proposes using a fully convolutional neural network for classification of SAR images.

### III. METHODOLOGY

Recently, deep neural networks (DNNs) are becoming popular due to the principal advantage in their ability to learn arbitrarily complicated decision surfaces. A deep neural network is one that has a large number of layers and may contain hundreds or thousands of nodes, allowing for richer exploitation of the input data, while more layers allow for more intricate decision surfaces. A typical framework for an oil spill detection algorithm is as shown in figure 1. This work proposes a deep feature learning approach based on the Fully Convolutional Neural Networks (FCNNs) that perform speckle filtering, extract spatial contextual features, and classify SAR images for oil spill detection. CNN is a neural network where the individual neurons are tiled in such a way that they respond to overlapping regions in the visual field. It typically involves alternating convolutional layers and pooling layers, where convolutional layers extract features and pooling layers generalize features.



**Figure 1:** block diagram of Oil Spillage detection framework

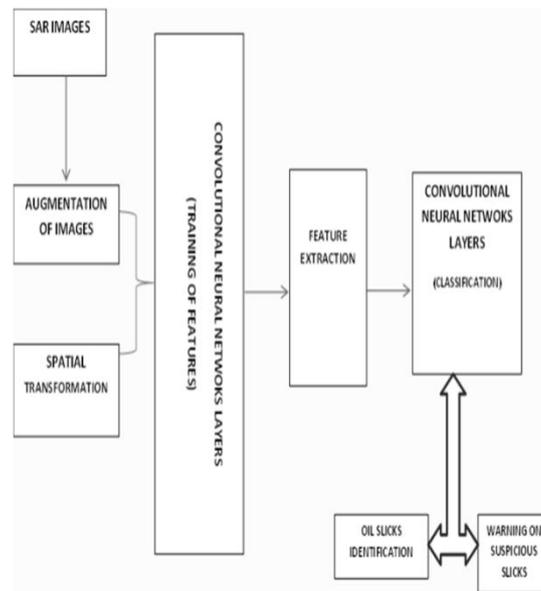
This work will focus on:

- i. The design, analysis, and evaluation of a CNN classifier for speckle reduction and classification.
- ii. To compare the performance of the proposed FCNN speckle filter and classifier against previous speckle filter and classification methods.

To solve this problem, we implement a self-supervised learning method to learn the deep neural network from unlabeled hyperspectral data for oil spill detection, which consists of three parts:

- i. data augmentation
- ii. unsupervised deep feature learning,
- iii. and oil spill detection network.

First, the original image is augmented with spectral and spatial transformation to improve robustness of the self-supervised model as shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2:** block diagram of Proposed Oil Spillage detection framework using Deep Learning

Then, the deep neural networks are trained on the augmented data without label information to produce the high-level semantic features. Finally, the pre-trained parameters are transferred to establish a neural network classifier to obtain the detection result, where a contrastive loss is developed to fine-tune the learned parameters so as to improve the generalization ability of the implemented method.

#### IV. RESULTS

Deep learning (DL) techniques, particularly Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) and U-Net, applied to SAR images for oil spill detection yield highly accurate, automated, and rapid results [12]. These techniques achieve high classification accuracy (often >90%) and precision in identifying oil slicks, while effectively differentiating them from "lookalikes" like sea ice or calm water, even with complex background interference.

##### Key Results and Performance Metrics:

- i. **High Accuracy:** Studies report accuracies ranging from 89% to over 99% for identifying oil spills.
- ii. **Precision/Recall:** Models like U-Net and CNNs have achieved precision rates around 84-89% and improved Dice scores (approximately 0.8 to 0.85) for segmentation.
- iii. **Superior to Traditional Methods:** Deep learning models, such as DBN and SAE, outperform conventional machine learning methods, especially with small datasets.
- iv. **Real-time/Automated Detection:** These methods provide fast, end-to-end detection suitable for operational surveillance.
- v. **Handling Complex Scenes:** Advanced models like OSDTAU-Net show superior ability in reducing speckle noise and identifying both large and fragmented oil patches, improving boundary delineation.

#### V. CONCLUSION

Traditional SAR oil spill detection methods are often complex, require large and balanced datasets, and are slow to detect spills. To address these limitations, a new deep learning-based method is implemented to solve these problems by:

##### Other commonly used techniques are:

- i. **CNNs and U-Net:** Commonly used for segmentation.
- ii. **DeepLabv3+:** Known for high precision in segmenting complex SAR images.
- iii. **DBN (Deep Belief Networks):** Used for distinguishing oil from lookalikes.

##### Key Takeaways:

- i. **Automation:** Reduces the need for manual, subjective, and time-consuming manual analysis.
- ii. **Data Source:** Primarily uses Sentinel-1 SAR imagery for cost-effective, routine monitoring.
- iii. **Performance Drivers:** The success of these techniques lies in their ability to automatically learn, extract, and classify features, even in complex marine environments.

Future directions for deep learning (DL) in SAR-based oil spill detection focus on enhancing precision by integrating physical, polarimetric, and contextual features into models like CNNs, U-Net, and Transformers to distinguish spills from look-alikes. Key recommendations include using multi-sensor data fusion, developing lightweight, real-time algorithms, and creating robust, balanced datasets to overcome high-noise, small-sample, and false-positive issues.

### Future Research Directions

- i. **Physical-Informative Neural Networks:** Integrating SAR, physical, and polarization information directly into network training to enhance model interpretability, physical consistency, and distinguish spills from "look-alikes" (e.g., low-wind areas, algae).
- ii. **Advanced Network Architectures:** Shifting toward sophisticated models like transformers and hybrid architectures (e.g., GSCAT-UNET) that improve segmentation accuracy, as seen with improvements in IoU to 93.7%.
- iii. **Lightweight & Real-time Processing:** Developing lightweight models (e.g., replacing backbones with MobileNetV2) to enable rapid, on-board detection for real-time disaster management and operational monitoring.
- iv. **Multimodal Sensor Fusion:** Combining SAR with optical or sonar data for comprehensive, 24/7 monitoring, reducing reliance on single-source data.

### Recommendations for Improvements

- i. **Addressing Dataset Imbalance:** Utilizing techniques such as data augmentation, synthetic data generation, and weighted loss functions (e.g., Focal Loss, Generalized Dice Loss) to handle the limited, highly imbalanced nature of oil spill data.
- ii. **Improving Noise Reduction:** Implementing specialized, edge-aware modules like spatial and channel squeeze and excitation (scSE) or attention mechanisms to effectively reduce speckled noise.
- iii. **Standardization of Benchmarks:** Creating large-scale, publicly available, annotated datasets to allow for better benchmarking of models across varied environmental conditions.
- iv. **Operational Validation:** Moving beyond controlled testing to validate algorithms in diverse, real-world, and complex ocean conditions.

### SPONSOR

This research was sponsored by the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TetFund) under the Institution-Based Research (IBR) 2025 intervention.

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## CITATION

Hussain, U. H., Aikawa, I. U., Dansharif, A. R., Naisa, A. H. K., Dansharif, S. R., & Lawan, H. (2026). Application of Deep Learning Techniques (DLT) for Oil Spillage Detection using Sar Images. In Global Journal of Research in Engineering & Computer Sciences (Vol. 6, Number 2, pp. 1–5). <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18890970>



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