

Model Comparison for Bird Species Identification

ISyE 6740 - Spring 2022 Project Report

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April 17, 2022

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1 Problem Statement

Ever since computers were created, we have been trying to find ways for them to automate difficult tasks and make our lives easier. Things like finding the shortest path between two places, drawing a three-dimensional floor plan for a new skyscraper, or even doing complex mathematical calculations in seconds; have become as trivial as just opening your phone or laptop and asking a question. One of such questions that came up during the late 1960s was: If we give eyes to a computer, would it know what it was looking at? Of course the answer was no, but then the goal became to find a way to teach it how to do it. This was the birth of the scientific field of computer vision. This discipline deals with analyzing, processing, and understanding visual data in a way which allows a computer to see an image or video, and be able to extract information and make conclusions from it. Using X-ray scans for automatic diagnosis of lung diseases in patients, or collecting quantitative information about the traffic flow of a city using only a camera; are some notable applications of this that are currently in use.

After pondering the applications of such computational advancements while doing some bird watching near my home I started to wonder if there could be a way to use computer vision to simplify the process of identifying our feathered friends. I wanted to develop an image classification model that by training it using labeled pictures of different types of birds; if given new input, it could correctly identify which species the new birds belonged to in a quick and efficient way. This process would save me so much time of manual classification of hundreds of pictures of birds in my camera that I just haven't had the time to sit down and check. Fellow local scientists and bird watching enthusiasts have also expressed excitement over the creation of such a model. Furthermore, out in the field spotting a bird could last only a couple of seconds before it flies away, so any time saved on identifying the species could be used on monitoring other behaviors or collecting scientific information about such a sight. For this a real time video classifier could be used in order to detect and classify the bird before it flies away, although such a project would be a little more advanced than a simple image classifier.

Using the different algorithms learned in class, there is a number of ways to approach the development of our bird species identifier. By means of dimensionality reduction, density estimation, traditional classification algorithms, and deep learning; we will build and compare different image classification models until we find the most accurate and efficient approach to correctly identify the species of each bird. We will evaluate each model with a number of performance variables and analyze their behavior for this specific classification task. Finally, the best model will be selected and further scalability and functionality implementations will be discussed.

2 Data Source

The original dataset consists of pictures from more than 400 different species of birds. This includes 58388 training images, 2000 test images, and 2000 validation images. When it comes to the images themselves; each picture is a 224 x 224 x 3 RGB image in jpg format, and contains only one bird per image. The bird usually takes more than 50% of the pixels in the image making it convenient for training purposes. All images were collected from the BIRDS 400 dataset found at <https://www.kaggle.com/gpiosenka/100-bird-species>. One important thing to note is that 85% of the images are from the male of the species and only 15% are female, this is due to the male

having more colors and features that make them more easily recognizable. Due to the big size of the data 7 different species were selected in order to save time and reduce complexity when implementing each approach for our classifier. More species could be added whenever an optimal classifier is selected. Figure 1 shows the selected species that will be used to prototype and test each classifier:



Figure 1: Selected Species

The following distribution of pictures applies for each species selected:

- Training: 120
- Validation: 5
- Testing: 5

The total distribution ends up being 840 for training, 35 for validation, and 35 for testing. 120 images per species may not be enough to prevent overfitting in our model leading to poor generalization results. This will need to be addressed in the methodology.

3 Methodology

3.1 Data Pre-Processing

For efficiency purposes each RGB image was resized to be 64x64x3 pixels, they were then vectorized into the form 1x12,288 and collected into three different matrices for each category: training, validation, and testing. Each row of this matrices represents a singular picture, and each column the pixel values. Each matrix was labeled depending on the species it came from and assembled into dictionaries, where the key-value pair was the species name and the specific matrix respectively. It is important to note that the images were not transformed into grayscale due to color being

such an important feature when classifying birds. Furthermore, the disparity between male and female specimens was determined that while it would probably introduce some level of error into our model, in this case it would be used to test the generalization to different cases when performing the classification. At least until more data is available.

One area of concern was that due to the high variability between picture design, 120 images per species might not be good enough to capture the complexity of poses and states that the bird could present. This would cause our model to overfit and not generalize well when testing new kinds of pictures. To solve this problem, slight data augmentation was implemented to increase the number of samples we had. In order to maintain model efficiency while testing different approaches, only rotation and flipping were implemented in order to multiply our training images from 840 samples to 5,880, or 840 samples per species. Operations like cropping, contrast, translation, and more could be used if more training data is needed for future applications.

3.2 Dimensionality Reduction

The first approach implements a dimensionality reduction technique to find the most representative combination of features for each species and then compare it to a test picture to make a classification. We start by defining our training images as a $M \times N$ matrix X , where M represents the number of samples and N the number of pixels as stated in the pre-processing step. To better understand the math behind this technique, it is important to know the following concepts:

1. The theorem for singular value decomposition states that for a rectangular matrix A : $A_{M \times N} = U_{M \times M} S_{M \times N} V_{N \times N}$. Where U and V are orthonormal, U represents the left singular vectors, S the singular values, and V^T the right singular vectors of our matrix.
2. We also know that for a $N \times N$ matrix W , there exists an eigenvector u if:

$$Wu = \lambda u$$

Where λ is a scalar that represents the eigenvalue and u the eigenvector of W .

The basic Idea of this approach is that for each species of bird, we will find the first K principal components that encompasses it's most representative features by means of singular value decomposition. Using this "Eigenbirds" we will then find the projection residual between each test image and all the selected K principal components for each species. The test image will be labeled as the type of bird that produces the lowest residual in this equation.

1. The first step to perform this eigendecomposition is to center our data. To do this we find the mean image μ for our training data X and use it to center all of our training images by subtracting this value from each row. This is necessary in order to better perform the change of basis into the eigenspace. We will also divide all the data by 255 to scale for computational efficiency. The following operation can be shown as:

$$\mu = \frac{1}{m} \sum_{i=0}^m X_i$$

$$X = (X - \mu)/255$$

If we reshape the mean to it's original dimensions and plot it as an image for each species we get the following (Figure 2):

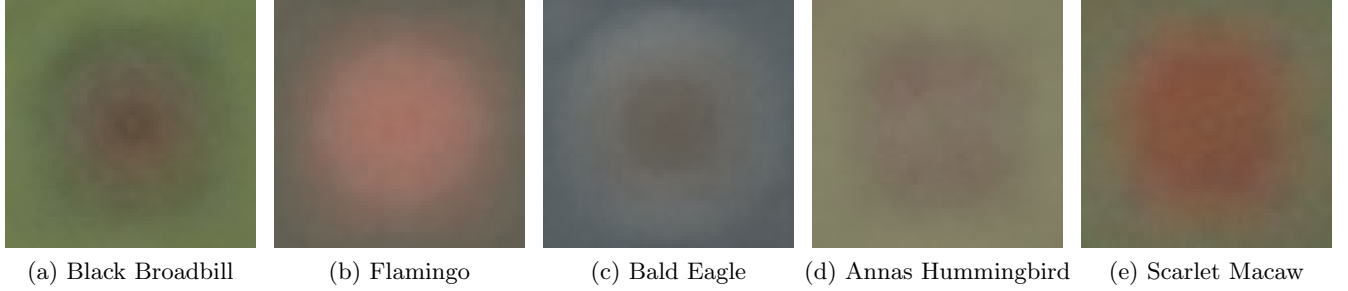


Figure 2: Mean Image for each species training pictures.

2. The eigendecomposition of our centered data can be performed in one of two ways, the first is by finding the eigenvectors, and values of the covariance matrix of X which can be defined as: $C = XX^T$. this symmetric matrix can be diagonalized in the form:

$$C = ULU^T$$

Where U is a matrix of eigenvectors and L is a diagonal matrix with eigenvalues λ_i . The second method that can be used is to apply the SVD theorem directly into the transpose of our rectangular matrix X : $X^T = USV^T$, where U would represent our eigenvectors and S the square root of the eigenvalues. The relationship of both approaches can be confirmed by plugging the result of the SVD into our covariance matrix:

$$X^T = USV^T \rightarrow C = USV^T V S U^T = US^2 U^T$$

Giving us the diagonalized matrix that we got at the beginning of this step. If we were to grab the first principal component for the first 5 species and visualize it, we would get the following result (figure 3):

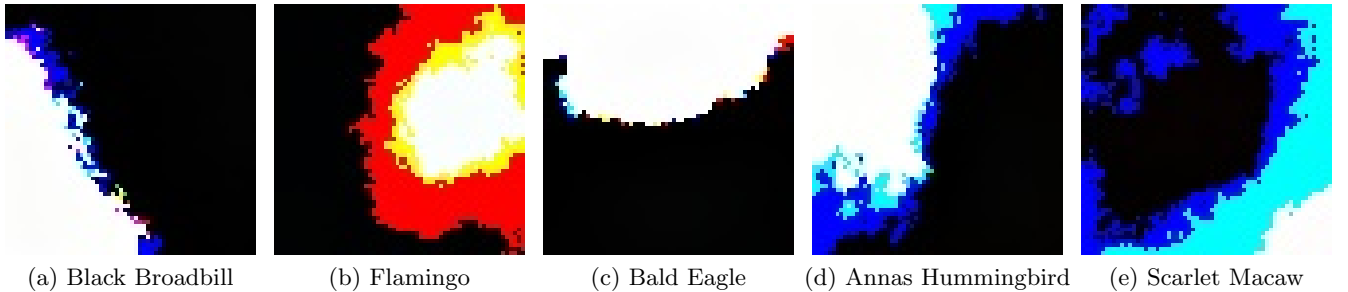


Figure 3: 1st principal component for the first 5 species visualized as a picture.

These principal components represent the most important features for each species of birds and will be used to perform our classification, due to only being the first of K components

each one of this pictures represents a very small amount of variance, only very fine details and combinations of color values can be seen in each image. it may appear random but when put together with the rest of principal components we get a pretty good estimate of the most significant features for each species.

3. Finally, for each test image y_i and each species j ; we find the projection residual by:

$$Z_i = (y_i - \mu_j)/255$$

$$ProjectionResidual = ||Z_i - U_j U_j^T Z_i||_2^2$$

Where Z_i is the centered vector for image y_i using the mean μ_j of species j and U_j represents the first K principal components for species j . After looping through each test image-species combination, the result will be a $M \times K$ matrix where each row represents one of M test images and each column the residual when compared to all K species. All is left to do is to find the minimum residual in each row, and that will give us the predicted species for each test image.

The question remains on choosing how many principal components K to use when calculating our projection residual. This can be addressed by plotting the amount of variance that each principal component explains in the data and choosing a cutoff point where the amount of explained variance becomes negligible. In this case, after performing SVD for the first 5 species of birds and getting the respective eigenvalues they were plotted with respect to each eigenvector in figure 4 to show the explained variance of each principal components for each species.

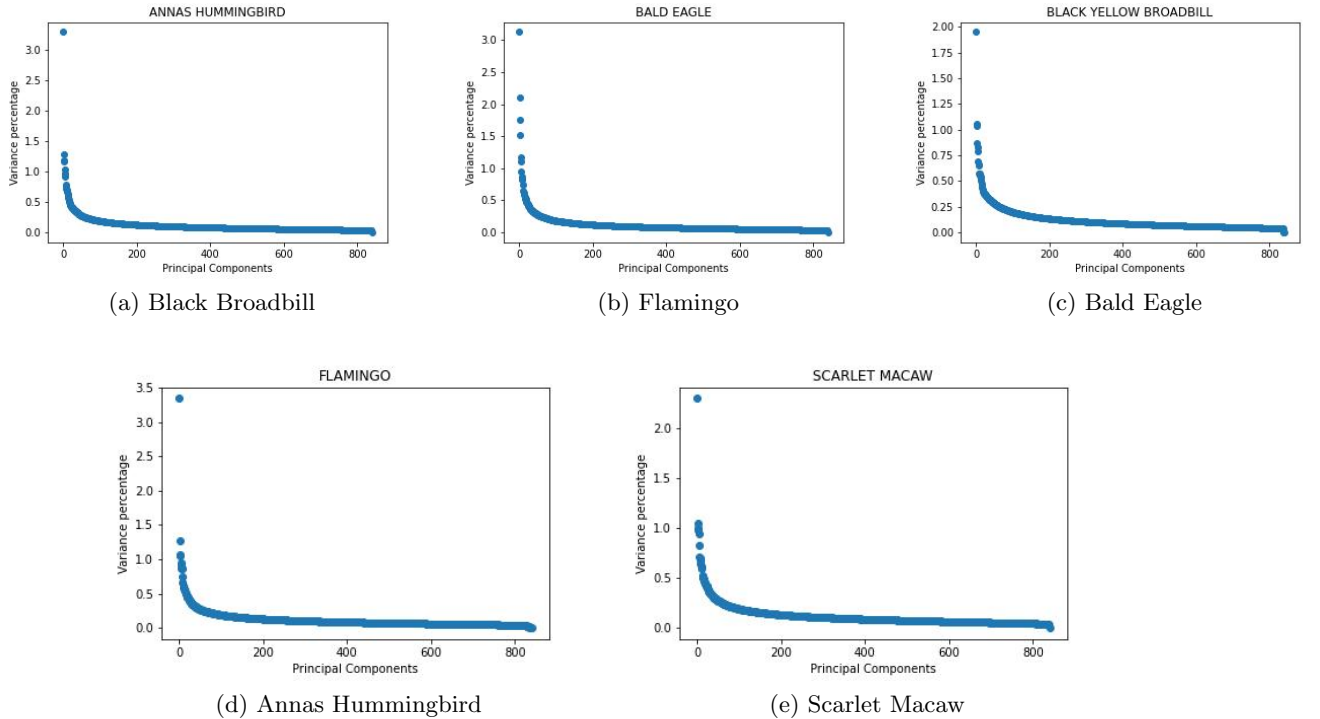
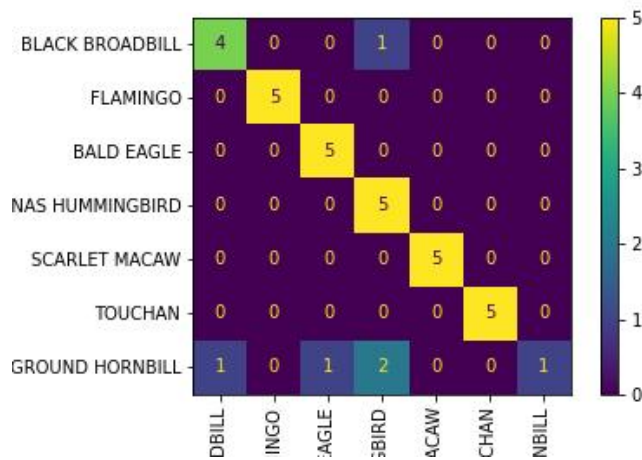


Figure 4: Variance explained by principal components.

All 5 plots show a similar distribution of the explained variance per eigenbird for each species. In each graph the amount of variance seems to level off around the 180 - 200 mark, meaning that this range of values serve as a good cutoff to separate the most meaningful features for each bird. In this case a reasonable value for K would be to select the first 180 components. Therefore, by implementing our approach using this value of K and calculating the residuals for each test image, we can classify each sample simply by selecting the lowest value when compared to each species. The time it took for the model to train and run from image input to image classification was taking into account as a measure of model efficiency. It took 3475.41 seconds to complete or around 57.92 minutes. The following were the results:

	precision	recall	f1-score	support
BLACK BROADBILL	0.80	0.80	0.80	5
FLAMINGO	1.00	1.00	1.00	5
BALD EAGLE	0.83	1.00	0.91	5
ANNAS HUMMINGBIRD	0.62	1.00	0.77	5
SCARLET MACAW	1.00	1.00	1.00	5
TOUCHAN	1.00	1.00	1.00	5
GROUND HORNBILL	1.00	0.20	0.33	5
accuracy			0.86	35
macro avg	0.89	0.86	0.83	35
weighted avg	0.89	0.86	0.83	35

(a) Classification Metrics



(b) Confusion Matrix

Figure 5: Dimensionality Reduction Evaluation.

A pretty decent result given the high number of labels and the low amount of training images.

3.3 Density Estimation

Density estimation is another method that can be used to build a bird classifier. This method is an unsupervised learning technique that is used to find where similar data clusters together due to having similar features. Clustering is a technique that takes advantage of density estimation

through different dimensions for multivariate data. In this case, a non-parametric approach called Kmeans clustering will be used on our training images to find which ones are the most similar to each other, in effect creating D clusters of images that based on the majority label inside the cluster, it will be labeled as belonging to a specific type of bird. Using a new test image y , we can predict to which cluster is most likely to belong to and classify y as the label assigned to the cluster.

The methodology itself consists of using the pre-processed data to build our training matrix A where each row represents an image vector, and each column represents the pixel values of said vector for all the species. The entire matrix was then scaled by 255 to bound our data between 0 and 1. The training images were passed into our Kmeans algorithm which calculates C cluster centroids randomly, and assigns the closes data points to each centroid. Each data point is then labeled based on which centroid is closest to. The centroids are then recalculated as the average of all the labeled data points in their respective cluster, and the process then repeats iteratively until there is no change. The dimensions for each data point will be the pixel values for each one of the pictures. The number of clusters will be selected by plotting the sum of all the square distances of each data point to their respective cluster centroid using different values for number of clusters. We do this because in theory the ideal number to use for the cluster parameter is the one that reduces the distance between each data point to their respective centroid without overfitting the data, this validation is popularly known as the elbow method. Figure 6 shows us the total sum of squares distances based on a range of 1 to 800 clusters used in our model.

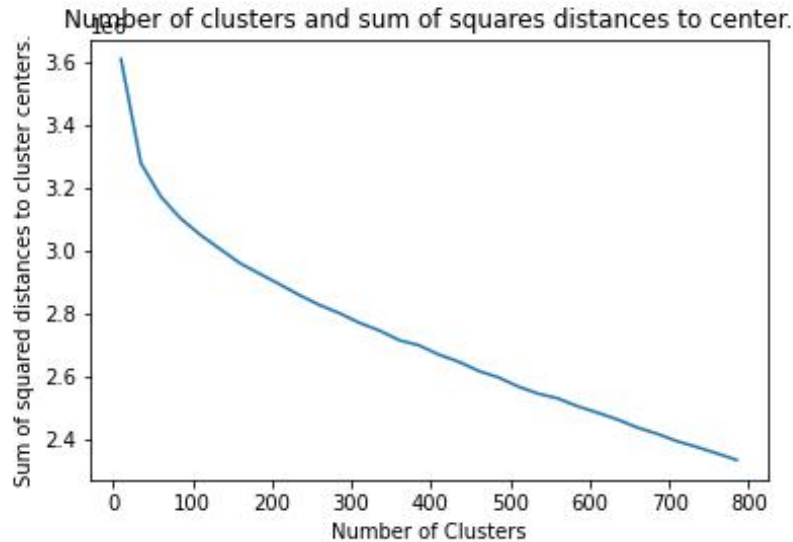


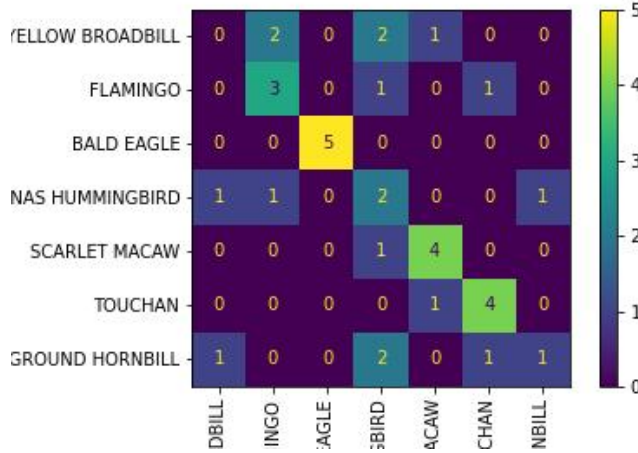
Figure 6: Total sum of squares distances to centroids.

Our plot does not seem to have a clear elbow where the number of clusters seems to have a big reduction on the distance to each centroid. This might mean that our algorithm is failing to capture the relationship between the images well. One possible reason might be due to our data having a non-linear relationship that kmeans can't account for. Another might be due to the curse of dimensionality; which explains that as the number of dimensions in our data increases, Euclidian distance does not become a good metric to perform the separation of the data. Nonetheless, Let's select an arbitrary middle value in our plot and evaluate our test data to see the results. We

perform our approach in order to classify our test data using Kmeans and a value of 150 for C . The model training and classification operation took approximately 622 seconds and gave the following result:

	precision	recall	f1-score	support
BLACK YELLOW BROADBILL	0.00	0.00	0.00	5
FLAMINGO	0.50	0.60	0.55	5
BALD EAGLE	1.00	1.00	1.00	5
ANNAS HUMMINGBIRD	0.25	0.40	0.31	5
SCARLET MACAW	0.67	0.80	0.73	5
TOUCHAN	0.67	0.80	0.73	5
ABYSSINIAN GROUND HORNBILL	0.50	0.20	0.29	5
accuracy			0.54	35
macro avg	0.51	0.54	0.51	35
weighted avg	0.51	0.54	0.51	35

(a) Classification Metrics



(b) Confusion Matrix

Figure 7: Density Estimation results.

A much lower accuracy score compared to other approaches, some potential fixes to increase this value might be to experiment with other clustering approaches that better capture the non-linear nature of the data or applying dimensionality reduction to curve the curse of dimensionality.

3.4 Classification

It is intuitive that some of the first approaches to try when making an image classifier would be to use some of the classic algorithms for supervised learning classification like SVM, Kernel SVM, K-nearest neighbors, logistics regression, and more. In this section we will implement the aforementioned approaches using our image data. Each bird classifier will be evaluated based on accuracy as well as being compared to all the others to decide which one is the best. K-nearest neighbors and kernel Support vector machines will serve as our non-linear classifiers, while linear SVM and logistic regression will try to capture the linear relationship between the data. All images will go through the same pre-processing steps as specified in the respective section in

the methodology. Furthermore, our data will also be subjected to dimensionality reduction using principal component analysis due to the high number of pixel features that could cause overfitting when making our classifications. A kernelized implementation of PCA will also be performed in the data to try to capture the variance in the data in a non-linear subspace; it will then be evaluated on each supervised learning algorithm separately. The optimal parameters for each model will be found by performing 5 fold cross-validation with the data, and finally the best scoring combination of dimensionality reduction and classification model with optimal parameters will be evaluated in the test data. The highest scores of each model with it's optimal parameters from applying a grid search 5-fold cross-validation step are as follows:

	PCA	KPCA
Model	Accuracy	Accuracy
K-NN	0.36	0.46
Logistic Re.	0.51	0.53
Linear SVM	0.56	0.56
Kernel SVM	0.70	0.68

Table 1: Model evaluations

Due to one fifth of our training data being used for validation purposes the scores might be lower than when the whole training data is used when building our best model to classify our test set. Out of all the models evaluated Kernel SVM proved to be the best when combined with a linear dimensionality reduction technique. This is due to the non-linear nature of this approach being able to capture the complexity of the different patterns present in each image better. KNN while non-linear, suffers from the curse of dimensionality as Kmeans did giving it a much lower accuracy score than the other methods. Logistic regression and linear SVM had very similar scores when trying to capture the linear relationship in the data. Using our best performing approach now we can evaluate or test data to get the following classification metrics:

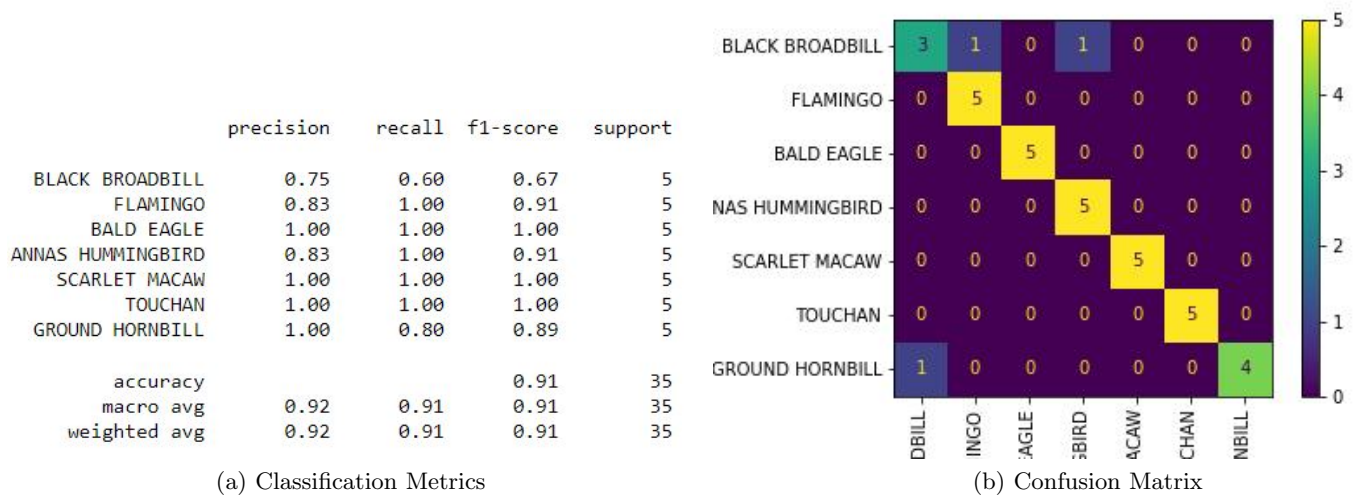


Figure 8: $SVC\{C = 4, kernel = rbf, gamma = scale, random_state = 2\}$

So far, kernel SVM has proven to be the best method to build our bird identifier. The time it

took to train and predict ended up being 399 seconds; much faster than our second-best performing approach as well.

3.5 Deep Learning

Our final approach consists of diving into the field of deep learning for image classification. Deep learning is a subfield of machine learning that specializes on reproducing the way the human brain thinks to solve certain problems. It does this by using artificial neural networks; a mathematical representation of a composition of neurons signaling to each other. This field has proven to have an endless number of real-life applications when it comes to using data to gain insight on an input. In this case, we will implement a variation of this approach called a convolutional neural network. This algorithm is specifically designed to deal with the high dimensionality that images present. It is important to note that for an $64 \times 64 \times 3$ image the number of dimensions that each algorithm has to take into account is 12,288, combined with more than 5,880 distinct training images we get more than 72,000,000 distinct values that need to be taken into account. Performing the necessary computations to learn from the data becomes a tedious and long task to do in a normal computer. CNNs solve this issue by taking advantage of two ideas: Convolutions and subsampling. Convolution is the process of extracting the high level features of an image through the use of a filter, for each feature we perform subsampling to reduce the spatial size of the convolution to reduce the computational power necessary for the algorithm to work. We alternate between these two methods in the form of layers until we come out with an output that has been trained to understand the features of each species. this output will be flattened into a vector and fed into a dense traditional feed forward neural network to make our classification. Due to this small amount of training images, we might have a tendency to overfit to our training data and fail to generalize properly when validating our model. To prevent this, some neurons will be turn off randomly during the training process to prevent the network becoming too dependent in the data. This concept is known as dropout and is used as a regularization technique when using CNNs.

For this approach the training data was reshaped into a 4-dimensional matrix of shape $M \times 64 \times 64 \times 3$ to serve as an input to our network. One-hot encoding was performed to each of our training labels as well to transform it into a 1-dimensional vector which combined between all the training images gives us a matrix of size $M \times K$, where each row represents the label vector of each training image and each column the species that it belongs to. For our network, the implementation was done using the Keras library to build our network sequentially; each layer consisted of a convolution step, a leaky relu activation function to capture non-linear relationships, and a max pooling step that serves as our subsampling for that layer. Dropout was implemented as well after each layer to prevent overfitting and finally a dense layer was added to input our flatten data and make our classification. The summary of the network can be seen below (figure 9):

Model: "sequential"

Layer (type)	Output Shape	Param #
conv2d (Conv2D)	(None, 64, 64, 32)	896
leaky_re_lu (LeakyReLU)	(None, 64, 64, 32)	0
max_pooling2d (MaxPooling2D)	(None, 32, 32, 32)	0
dropout (Dropout)	(None, 32, 32, 32)	0
conv2d_1 (Conv2D)	(None, 32, 32, 64)	18496
leaky_re_lu_1 (LeakyReLU)	(None, 32, 32, 64)	0
max_pooling2d_1 (MaxPooling2D)	(None, 16, 16, 64)	0
dropout_1 (Dropout)	(None, 16, 16, 64)	0
conv2d_2 (Conv2D)	(None, 16, 16, 128)	73856
leaky_re_lu_2 (LeakyReLU)	(None, 16, 16, 128)	0
max_pooling2d_2 (MaxPooling2D)	(None, 8, 8, 128)	0
dropout_2 (Dropout)	(None, 8, 8, 128)	0
flatten (Flatten)	(None, 8192)	0
dense (Dense)	(None, 128)	1048704
leaky_re_lu_3 (LeakyReLU)	(None, 128)	0
dropout_3 (Dropout)	(None, 128)	0
dense_1 (Dense)	(None, 7)	903
Total params: 1,142,855		
Trainable params: 1,142,855		
Non-trainable params: 0		

Figure 9: CNN Architecture.

A batch size of 64 was specified and the network was set up to run for 20 epochs for training purposes. The network was set up to calculate accuracy as well as loss of the network on both the validation set and the training data at each epoch. The results of this process were saved and plotted against the number of epochs to visualize the learning process as well as to check for overfitting in our model. Figure 10 shows the result of the previous step:

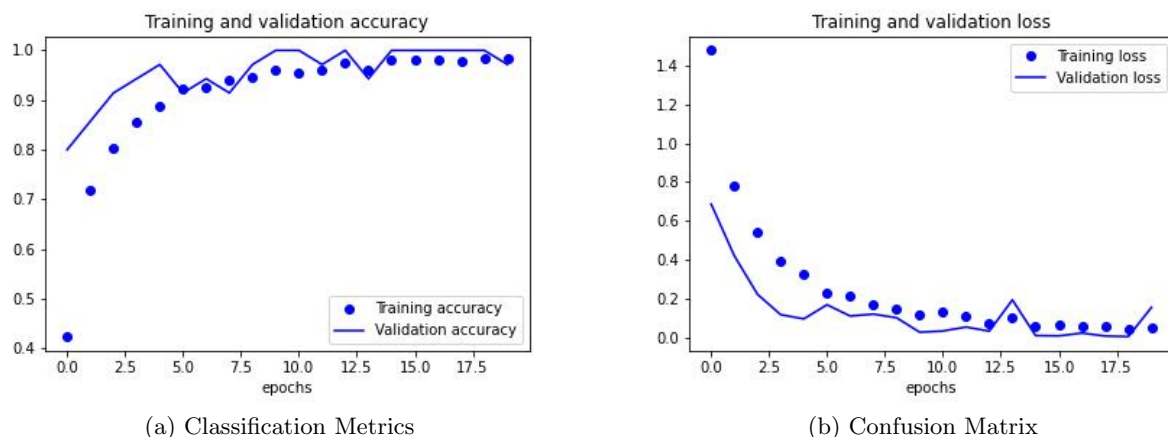


Figure 10: CNN validation by epoch

These plots show us good performance and little overfitting. Using our trained network, we can now evaluate our test data and see the results in figure 11:



Figure 11: CNN results on test data.

This implementation took 675 seconds to train and make our prediction. While longer than our next best approach, this method proved to be the most accurate when building our bird classifier between all the different methods presented in our experiments. Even with the lack of training data this approach was able to generalize extremely well when presented with a new test set independent of our training samples.

4 Evaluation and Final Results

Out of all approaches presented the results of the most optimal technique in each category can be summarized in the following table:

Model	Accuracy	Time(s)
Eigenbirds	0.86	3475.41
Kmeans	0.54	622
PCA/KSVM	0.91	399
CNN	0.97	675

Table 2: Overall results.

The time column is in seconds and it encompasses both training time and performing the classification on the testing set. Convolutional neural networks proved to be the most accurate approach and the best one in capturing the complex differences of different pictures of species of birds. PCA combined with a kernel SVM proved to be the fastest by almost half, becoming a good second option to perform in case efficiency is the priority when building the classifier.

Using our most optimal model we can now use it on a bigger set of data in order to identify as many species as possible. We will use a CNN in order to classify between 30 different species of birds for our final test. The model will be trained using the same methodology applied on the prototyping stage. Data augmentation will be used in the data in order to increase our training samples to be around 1080 pictures per species, the number of pictures used for validation and testing will remain the same as in the prototyping stage. Using our new data we can train, validate, and test our model to get the results shown in figure 12 and 13. A picture example of each of the 30 species used can be seen on appendix A. Even though we increased the number of species to 30, the model still performed extremely well with an accuracy of 93%.

This implementation proved to be robust even with the small sample of training data used to build our model. The time for training and classification increased only by around 3000 seconds or 50 minutes, but given the scope of the data this could be considered an acceptable efficiency. Further applications and scalability could be applied to this method as well. More species could be added and other data augmentation techniques could be used in order to compensate with the low number of samples for our training images. A real time video classifier could also be implemented by checking frame by frame and classifying the birds present in the video using our model.

A more specific look into the classification matrix of our model can be seen below:

Test loss: 0.3134957551956177
 Test accuracy: 0.9266666769981384

3812.432483434677

	precision	recall	f1-score	support
BLACK BROADBILL	1.00	1.00	1.00	5
FLAMINGO	1.00	1.00	1.00	5
BALD EAGLE	1.00	1.00	1.00	5
ANNAS HUMMINGBIRD	1.00	1.00	1.00	5
SCARLET MACAW	1.00	1.00	1.00	5
TOUCHAN	1.00	1.00	1.00	5
GROUND HORNBILL	1.00	0.40	0.57	5
CROWNED CRANE	0.83	1.00	0.91	5
AFRICAN FIREFINCH	1.00	1.00	1.00	5
ALEXANDRINE PARAKEET	1.00	1.00	1.00	5
ABBOTTS BABBLER	1.00	0.80	0.89	5
ABBOTTS BOOBY	1.00	0.80	0.89	5
EMERALD CUCKOO	1.00	1.00	1.00	5
OYSTER CATCHER	0.80	0.80	0.80	5
ALBERTS TOWHEE	0.83	1.00	0.91	5
BLACK SWAN	0.83	1.00	0.91	5
EMU	0.83	1.00	0.91	5
EURASIAN MAGPIE	1.00	1.00	1.00	5
KIWI	0.83	1.00	0.91	5
MALLARD DUCK	1.00	1.00	1.00	5
MANDRIN DUCK	1.00	1.00	1.00	5
OCELLATED TURKEY	0.71	1.00	0.83	5
OSPREY	1.00	0.60	0.75	5
PEACOCK	1.00	1.00	1.00	5
PEREGRINE FALCON	0.67	0.80	0.73	5
QUETZAL	1.00	1.00	1.00	5
HONEY CREEPER	0.83	1.00	0.91	5
ROCK DOVE	1.00	0.80	0.89	5
BLUE MAGPIE	1.00	0.80	0.89	5
VENEZUELIAN TROUPIAL	1.00	1.00	1.00	5
accuracy			0.93	150
macro avg	0.94	0.93	0.92	150
weighted avg	0.94	0.93	0.92	150

Figure 12: CNN results on test data.

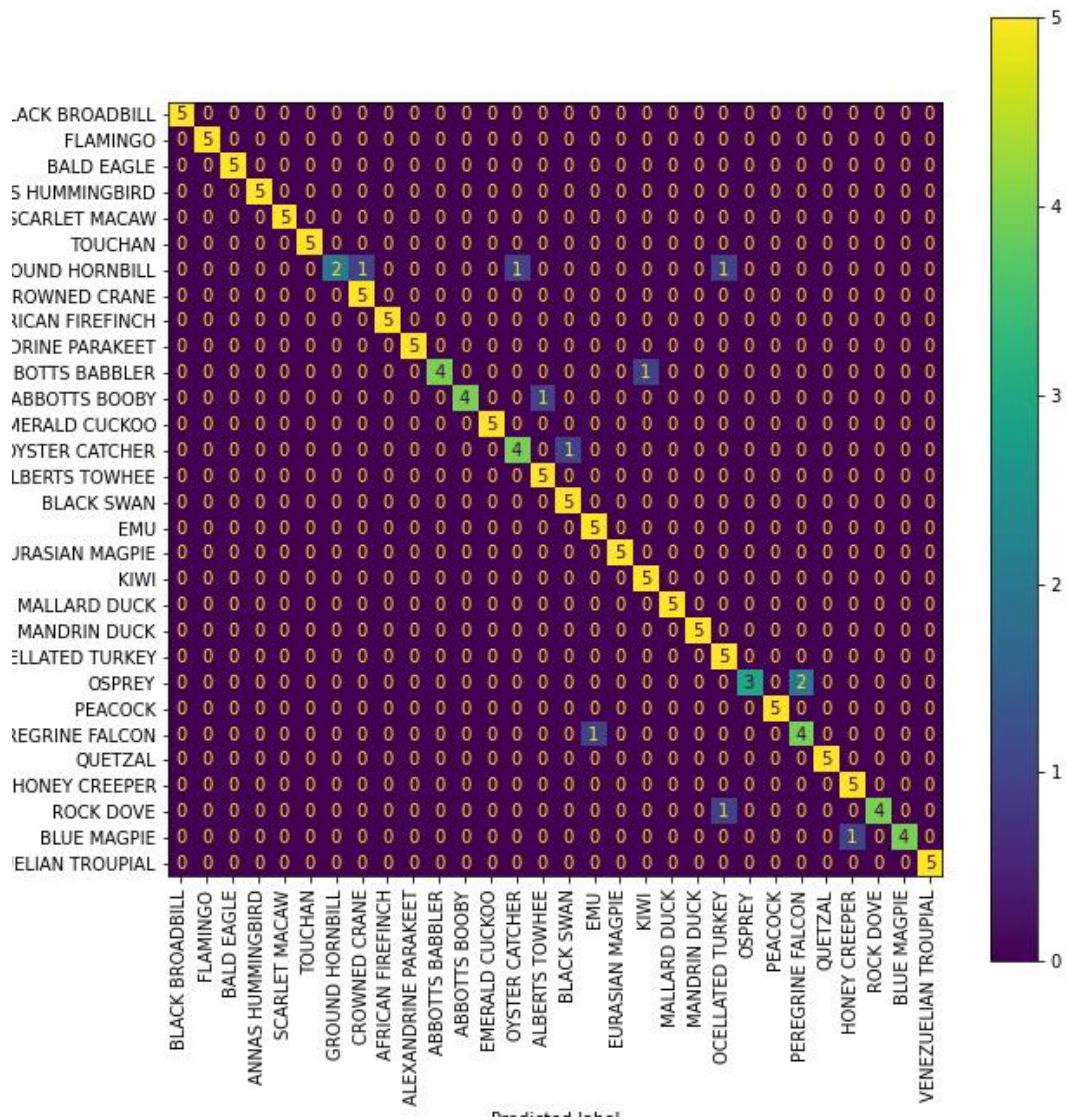


Figure 13: CNN results on test data.

In conclusion there exists many different approaches that can be implemented for image classification, it is a matter of finding the right combinations of tools and methodologies to accomplish the specific task that best would solve your problem. In this case we were able to build a quick and efficient bird species identifier implementing several distinct ideas that provided us with a range of different results, some better than others. Overall the exploration of these methodologies expresses that there are many unique options for coming to the same end result, it is only a matter of finding the one that fits the best.

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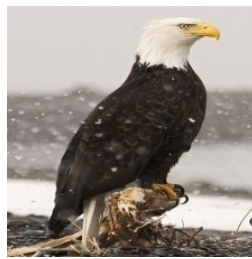
Appendix A 30 Evaluated Species



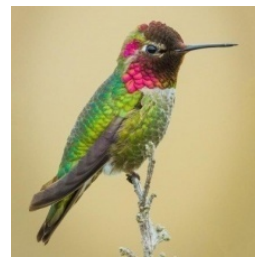
(a) Black Broadbill



(b) Flamingo



(c) Bald Eagle



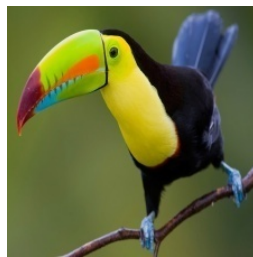
(d) Annas Hummingbird



(e) Scarlet Macaw



(f) Ground Hornbill



(g) Toucan



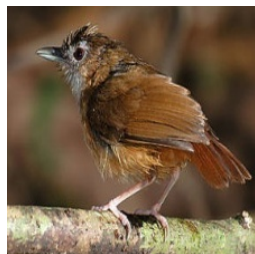
(h) Crowned Crane



(i) Firefinch



(j) Alexandrine parakeet



(k) Abbotts Babbler



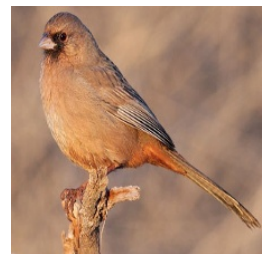
(l) Abbotts Booby



(m) Emerald Cuckoo

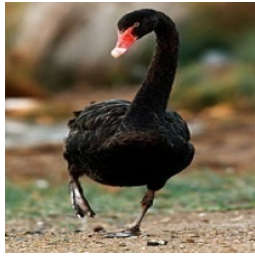


(n) Oyster Catcher

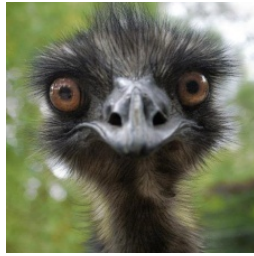


(o) Alberts Towhee

Figure 14: Selected Species part 1



(a) Black Swan



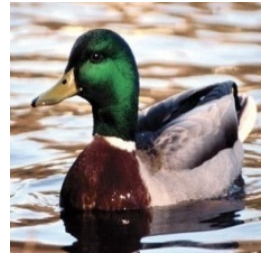
(b) Emu



(c) Magpie



(d) Kiwi



(e) Mallard Duck



(f) Mandarin Duck



(g) Ocellated Turkey



(h) Osprey



(i) Peacock



(j) Falcon



(k) Quetzal



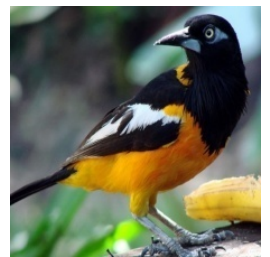
(l) Honey Creeper



(m) Dove



(n) Blue Magpie



(o) Troupial

Figure 15: Selected Species part 2