

Towards animal conversation analysis: machine learning strategies

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Abstract

It seems that machine learning will soon be able to decode or generate almost any type of data. How close are we to decoding animal vocal interactions? This remains non-trivial, even though algorithms can now identify bird species from sound at scale. In this seminar I will discuss both sides of this gap. I will introduce our work developing machine-learning algorithms for robust classification and transcription of animal sounds. I will also contextualise it in the longer-term goal to decode animal communication, and how this relates to the recent successes of LLMs, arguing for two specific gaps which are yet to be crossed.