

Surveillance Drones to Combat Illegal Fishing in Australia

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ABC Australia (04/15/2024), Janel Shorthouse

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-04-16/long-range-drone-fighting-illegal-fishing-great-barrier-reef/103685532>

Summary

- A new “virtually undetectable” drone has been deployed to combat illegal fishing in Queensland
- The drone has been successful in helping authorities enforce compliance with local laws
- The drone will now target hotspots known for illegal fishing in the Great Barrier Reef

Ethical Decision Making Process

1. Describe the ethical issues

- a. The primary ethical dilemma at hand is privacy infringement. The use of drones that operate beyond visual line of sight means observing individuals without their consent, regardless of whether they are illegally or legally fishing. This raises concerns about data collection, storage, and potential drone misuse

2. Stakeholders and their desired outcomes

- a. Illegal fishers - prefer no surveillance to avoid detection
- b. Legal fishers and regular public - desire privacy and minimal interference
- c. Environmental Agencies - effective enforcement against illicit fishing
- d. Government - wishes to enforce laws while respecting their citizens' rights

Ethical Decision Making Process

3. Propose three solutions and choose one

Solution A: Full Surveillance

Best Case: Enforcement with minimal privacy complaints

Worst Case: Public backlash and major privacy invasion

Tolerance: Intolerable due to high privacy risks

Solution B: No Surveillance

Best Case: Preservation of privacy, but illegal activities undetected

Worst Case: Increase in illicit fishing practices and environmental harm

Tolerance: Intolerable due to environmental risks

Solution C: Limited, Targeted Surveillance

Best Case: Effective enforcement with limited privacy impact

Worst Case: Limited surveillance could miss some illegal activity

Tolerance: This is the most balanced, tolerable option

I would choose option C for my solution

Ethical Decision Making Process

4. **Would everyone be permitted to use your solution?**

Yes, it satisfies the highest amount of people. Minimized intrusion respects individuals as ends

5. **Accordance with natural law**

Limited surveillance aligns with the purpose of conservation without excessive intrusion. It is a balanced solution, still aiming for conservation

6. **Would it be a popular solution?**

Limited surveillance is likely to gain broader public support. This solution also achieves environmental goals with respect for privacy, maximizing public good.

7. **Solution Commitment**

I am committed to this solution as it has the best chance of preventing illicit fishing practices while maintaining minimal intrusion into the lives of the general public

8. **Belief System**

I believe this solution falls under utilitarianism. Utilitarianism seeks the greatest good for the greatest number of people. Limited surveillance balances environmental protection with respect for individual privacy, producing an ethically sound solution

ACM Code of Ethics

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1. **Contribute to Society and Human Wellbeing**
 - a. Drone use can contribute to environmental conservation, which is beneficial to society and future generations. Conservation efforts help preserve biodiversity, aligning with the wellbeing of society.
2. **Avoid Harm to Others**
 - a. Surveillance harms privacy, especially for lawful fishers and tourists. Implementing strict limits on data usage and storage can help mitigate these risks
3. **Be Honest and Trustworthy**
 - a. Full transparency regarding the drone is crucial. Authorities should communicate clearly with the public on how the drones will be used.
4. **Be Fair and Take Action Not to Discriminate**
 - a. Surveillance must be applied consistently, not targeting specific groups or areas without cause.
5. **Honor Property Rights**
 - a. The rights of ownership and intellectual property of the technology providers must be respected, as well as those of relevant stakeholders

ACM Code of Ethics

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6. Give Proper Credit for Intellectual Property

- a. The contributions of companies and researchers that helped implement this drone should be recognized

7. Respect the Property of Others

- a. Surveillance should be conducted without infringing on the rights of lawful fishers and people around the waters. Data collection should not conflict with individuals' privacy or property unnecessarily

8. Honor Confidentiality

- a. Data collected should be handled with absolute confidentiality. Privacy protections should be in place to ensure that recorded legal activities are kept secure and not disclosed without consent or legal necessity

Thanks for Watching!

- Questions?