Underwater Surveillance and Rescue Drone

Bilon Noby, Asst. Prof. Jaison Joseph, Joffel Babu, Donny Davis, George Yabin Antony

Abstract

Under water exploration presents numerous challenges, from inaccessible depths to limited visibility. This project proposes a novel solution: an underwater drone equipped with a camera and powered by a Raspberry Pi, leveraging the capabilities of Blue OS. The primary objective of this project is to create a versatile and cost- effective under water exploration tool capable of capturing high-quality images and videos in challenging aquatic environments. The underwater drone is constructed using lightweight and durable materials to ensure buoyancy and maneuverability under water. A waterproof enclosure houses the Raspberry Pi, camera module, and necessary electronic components, safeguarding them from water damage. The Raspberry Pi serves as the central processing unit, running custom-coded software developed using Python programming language. Blue OS, a robust open-source operating system tailored for under water applications, is integrated into the Raspberry Pi to facilitate seamless communication and control of the underwater drone. This platform offers a user- friendly interface and a suite of tools for configuring and monitoring the drone's behavior remotely. The camera module is strategically mounted on the drone to provide a wide field of view and capture high-resolution images and videos in real-time. Advanced image processing algorithms are implemented to enhance the clarity and visibility of underwater scenes, allowing researchers and explorers to study marine life, under water structures, and geological formations with precision. Additionally, the drone features a robust propulsion system powered by electric motors, enabling it to navigate through water with agility and stability.

Keywords: *Search and Rescue; Raspberry Pi; High-Resolution Imaging; Remote Operation; Aquatic Navigation*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the vast and mysterious world beneath the waves, where human exploration is limited by the challenges of pressure, darkness, and vast distances, underwater drones emerge as invaluable tools for unlocking the secrets of the deep. Our underwater drone project represents a pioneering endeavor to design and develop a cutting-edge autonomous vehicle equipped with advanced sensors, a robust body, and unparalleled maneuverability, poised to revolutionize underwater exploration and research. Equipped with high-resolution cameras and sensors, the underwater drone can capture clear images and data from underwater environments, providing valuable insights for scientific research and underwater inspections. Its robust design allows it to withstand the challenging conditions of deep-sea exploration while maintaining stable operation. With its maneuverability and agility, the underwater drone can navigate through underwater obstacles with ease, making it suitable for a wide range of applications including marine research, environmental monitoring, and underwater infrastructure inspection.

To operate efficiently, the drone requires specialized hardware including powerful thrusters for propulsion, high-capacity batteries for extended mission durations, and advanced control systems for precise maneuvering in underwater environments. These features make the drone a versatile and essential tool for underwater exploration and surveillance missions. The underwater drone utilizes Raspberry Pi and Pixhawk as its primary hardware components, showcasing the integration of versatile and widely-used technologies into its design. The Raspberry Pi serves as the central processing unit, providing computational power for data processing, control algorithms, and communication protocols. With its flexibility and community support, Raspberry Pi enables the implementation of custom software solutions tailored to the specific needs of underwater exploration and surveillance missions.

2. OBJECTIVES AND VISION

2.1. Aim of the Project

The primary aim of this project is to develop an innovative underwater drone that combines cost-effectiveness, versatility, and reliability. This device is intended to operate efficiently in aquatic environments for tasks like exploration, monitoring, and rescue. The design prioritizes accessibility, enabling users from various domains to deploy it with ease.

2.2. Project Vision

The project envisions revolutionizing underwater operations by providing a robust platform capable of enhancing safety, efficiency, and data collection. By utilizing open-source technologies and durable materials, this drone seeks to contribute to environmental conservation efforts and advance scientific research in inaccessible regions.

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3. DESIGN CRITERIA

3.1. Structural Features

The design of the underwater drone incorporates biomimetic principles, taking inspiration from marine organisms such as fish and cetaceans. These forms enhance hydrodynamic efficiency, reducing drag and enabling smooth, agile movements underwater. Robust materials, including corrosion-resistant alloys and high-grade plastics, ensure durability in harsh aquatic conditions.

3.2. Performance Enhancements

Key features include neutral buoyancy to maintain stability at various depths and advanced propulsion systems for precise navigation. The drone is designed to operate in both shallow waters and deeper zones, adapting to different operational requirements.

3.3. Modularity and Scalability

A modular design allows users to customize the drone for specific applications. Additional sensors, tools, or systems can be easily integrated, making the drone adaptable to a wide range of underwater tasks.

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4. CORE DESIGN FEATURES

4.1. Key Hardware Components

The drone's control system is powered by a Raspberry Pi 4 and a Pixhawk flight controller. The Raspberry Pi serves as the computational hub, running software for data processing and communication. The Pixhawk provides precise navigation and stability, ensuring smooth and efficient operation.

High-resolution cameras are mounted strategically to capture clear visuals, even in low-light conditions. These cameras are complemented by advanced sensors, including pressure sensors and sonar, to provide comprehensive environmental data.

4.2. Software Systems

Blue OS, an open-source operating system tailored for underwater applications, manages the drone’s core functionalities. It ensures seamless integration of hardware components and provides a user-friendly interface for remote operation. QGroundControl software, operating on the surface, facilitates real-time monitoring, allowing operators to control the drone effectively.

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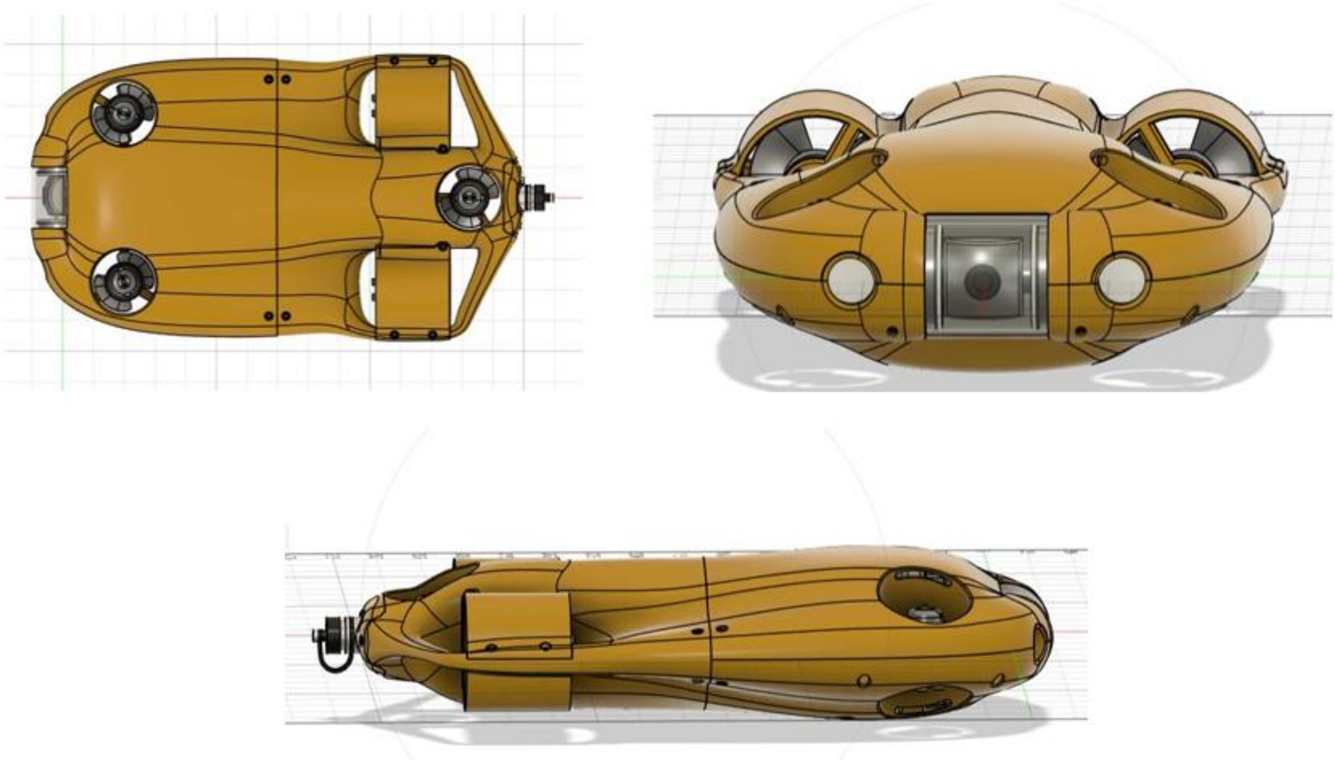
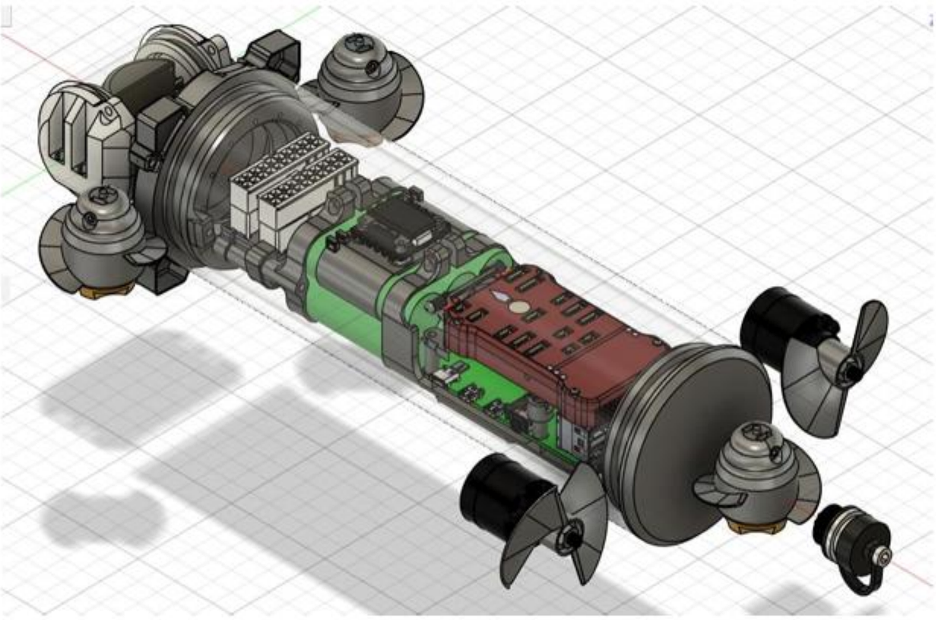
6. CAD MODEL



(a) exterior



(b) interior

Figure1: CAD Model of the project using Fusion 360.

5. WORKING PRINCIPLE

5.1. Control and Navigation

The drone’s central processing unit, the Raspberry Pi, runs software that controls various subsystems, including the camera, sensors, and communication modules. The Pixhawk flight controller integrates sensor inputs to ensure precise movement and stability, even in challenging underwater environments.

5.2. Propulsion and Sensor Integration

Five electric motors, managed by electronic speed controllers (ESCs), provide the thrust needed for agile and stable navigation. Pressure sensors enable accurate depth control, while sonar and cameras offer a real-time understanding of the underwater environment.

5.3. Operational Workflow

The drone can operate autonomously or under remote control. A tether connects it to a surface station, ensuring uninterrupted data transmission. LED indicators and visual feedback mechanisms provide operators with real-time system updates, including battery life and connectivity status.

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6. CALCULATIONS AND PERFORMANCE

6.1. Buoyancy and Stability

The drone's design ensures neutral buoyancy, achieved through precise calculations of its volume and weight. This feature allows it to remain stable at varying depths, enhancing its maneuverability and data collection efficiency.

6.2. Thrust and Propulsion

Electric motors generate sufficient thrust to navigate through strong currents and complex terrains. With dedicated motors for vertical and horizontal movements, the drone can perform precise maneuvers, making it suitable for intricate tasks like inspecting underwater structures.

6.3. Energy Efficiency

A high-capacity lithium-ion battery system powers the drone, optimized for extended operational durations. Advanced energy management systems regulate power usage, ensuring consistent performance throughout the mission.

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7. APPLICATIONS

7.1. Marine Research and Monitoring

Underwater drones are vital for studying marine ecosystems, tracking aquatic species, and analyzing geological formations. By capturing high-resolution images and videos, they provide invaluable data for environmental studies and conservation efforts.

7.2. Rescue Operations

In emergency situations, such as maritime accidents or natural disasters, underwater drones serve as the first responders. Equipped with cameras and sonar, they locate victims, debris, and hazards quickly, aiding rescue teams in planning and executing interventions.

7.3. Infrastructure Inspection

From inspecting underwater pipelines to monitoring the structural integrity of dams and bridges, these drones offer a safer and more cost-effective alternative to traditional methods. Their ability to operate in confined or hazardous environments makes them indispensable for infrastructure management.

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8. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

8.1. Summary of Achievements

The "Underwater Drone" project has successfully addressed the challenges of underwater exploration by integrating innovative technologies and robust design principles. Its ability to operate reliably in diverse aquatic environments highlights the potential of accessible, adaptable robotics.

8.2. Future Directions

Future iterations of the drone could incorporate advanced autonomous navigation systems, reducing the need for manual intervention. Improvements in energy storage and efficiency will further enhance its operational range and duration. Additionally, expanding its application scope to include defense, offshore industries, and educational tools will maximize its impact.

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