

birdnetTools: An R package for working with BirdNET output

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Summary

birdnetTools is an R package for post-processing outputs from BirdNET, an open-source neural network developed by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and Chemnitz University of Technology for detecting and identifying bird species from audio recordings (Kahl et al., 2021). The birdnetTools package streamlines workflows for cleaning and combining multiple BirdNET selection tables, filtering detections by species, confidence, or date/time, visualizing temporal and spatial patterns, and validating results using an interactive Shiny app. It also supports species-specific and universal confidence thresholds, enabling reproducible threshold-setting workflows.

Statement of need

Automated acoustic monitoring is increasingly used in ecology and conservation, with BirdNET, created with python, being one of the most widely adopted tools for bird sound identification. While the birdnetR (Kahl & BirdNET Team, 2025) package allows R users to run BirdNET classifications, there is no dedicated framework for post-processing these outputs within R.

The birdnetTools package fills this gap by providing functions to clean and wrangle BirdNET detections, apply species-specific or universal confidence thresholds, visualize results, and validate predictions through an interactive Shiny app. Its design is based on workflows commonly used in published studies (e.g., Tseng et al. (2024)) and incorporates methods for threshold setting and validation developed in recent research (i.e., Tseng et al. (2025); Wood & Kahl (2024)). By consolidating these tools, birdnetTools streamlines analysis and lowers barriers for ecologists and conservation practitioners adopting BirdNET in large-scale monitoring projects.

Key functionalities

Functions in birdnetTools fall into three categories: data import, data exploration, and detection validation (Figure 1).

1. Data import: `birdnet_combine()` integrates BirdNET outputs into R, supporting formats from the BirdNET GUI, Raven Pro, and the birdnetR package.
2. Data exploration: `birdnet_filter()` enables filtering by species, threshold, or date/time; `birdnet_add_time()` extracts temporal metadata; and `birdnet_heatmap()` visualizes activity patterns.

37 3. Detection validation: an R ShinyApp was developed, implementing threshold-setting
38 approaches, including the precision-based method of Tseng et al. (2025) and the
39 probability-based method of Wood & Kahl (2024).

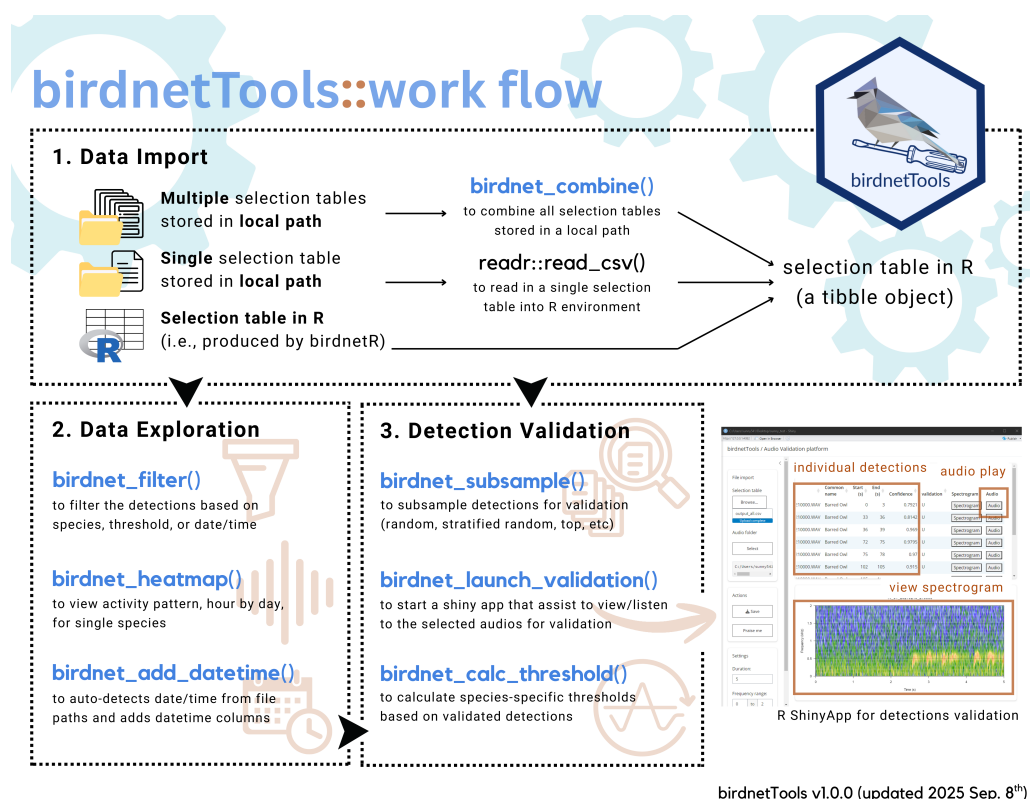


Figure 1: Workflow of the birdnetTools R package.

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