# Package 'skytrackr'

October 8, 2025

```
Type Package
Title A Sky Illuminance Location Tracker
Version 1.0
Maintainer Koen Hufkens < koen.hufkens@gmail.com>
Description Calculate geolocations by light using template matching.
     The routine uses a calibration free optimization of a sky illuminance model to
     determine locations robustly using a template matching approach,
     as described by Ekstrom (2004) <a href="https://nipr.repo.nii.ac.jp/records/2496">https://nipr.repo.nii.ac.jp/records/2496</a>,
     and behaviourly informed constraints (step-selection).
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BugReports https://github.com/bluegreen-labs/skytrackr/issues
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```

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# Description

Demo data for a single day of Common swift light logger data as read from a Migrate Technology Ltd .lux file using stk\_read\_lux().

## Usage

cc876

#### **Format**

DataFrame

logger ID

date date

date\_time date and time

hour decimal hour

lux light levels in lux

#### **Details**

The format is consistent with what is required by the skytrackr() routine.

land 3

land	Land area polygon	

## Description

Vector polygon of world land areas to constrain model optimization.

## Usage

land

#### **Format**

sf

MULTIPOLYGON sf multipolygon

	likelihood	Log likelihood cost function	
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# Description

Main cost function used during optimization, combining both the fit of the illuminance data with the step-selection function.

# Usage

```
likelihood(par, data, model, loc, roi, step_selection, ...)
```

# Arguments

par	A vector of parameter values, including one for the uncertainty on the target values.
data	A nested data structure with validation data included.
model	A model to run with data and par settings.
loc	The previous modeled step location.
roi	A region of interest with valid sampling locations.
$step\_selection$	A step selection function on the distance of a proposed move.
	extra arguments to pass to the function

## Value

The single log-likelihood cost of a proposed parameter set.

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log\_lux

Simulate illuminance value

## Description

Calculates log(lux) values for a give location, date, time and sky conditions.

## Usage

```
log_lux(par, data, ...)
```

## Arguments

par Three parameters specifying the illuminance model.

data A data frame with the required drivers for the illuminance model.

... optional other parameters to forward

#### Value

Sky illuminance as log(lux).

read\_deg\_lux

Read lux and deg files

## **Description**

This function is wrapped by the 'stk\_read\_lux()' function.

## Usage

```
read_deg_lux(file, verbose = TRUE)
```

## Arguments

file A lux or deg file.

verbose provide detailed feedback

#### Value

A skytrackr data frame with logger data.

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skytrackr

Sky (illuminance) location estimation routine

#### **Description**

Skytrack compares geolocator based light measurements in lux with those modelled by the sky illuminance model of Janiczek and DeYoung (1987).

#### Usage

```
skytrackr(
  data,
  start_location,
  tolerance = 1500,
  range = c(0.09, 148),
  scale = log(c(1e-05, 50)),
  control = list(sampler = "DEzs", settings = list(burnin = 250, iterations = 3000,
      message = FALSE)),
  mask,
  step_selection,
  plot = TRUE,
  verbose = TRUE
)
```

#### **Arguments**

data

	-										
${\tt start\_location}$	A start lo	cation of	logging	as a	vecto	r of	latitu	de	and	longi	tude
_			_	_			_	-	_		

A skytrackr data frame.

tolerance Tolerance distance on the search window for optimization, given in km (left/right,

top/bottom). Sets a hard limit on the search window regardless of the step selec-

tion function used.

range Range of values to consider during processing, should be provided in lux c(min,

max) or the equivalent if non-calibrated.

scale Scale / sky condition factor, by default covering the skylight() range of 1-10

(from clear sky to extensive cloud coverage) but can be extended for more flexibility to account for coverage by plumage, note that in case of non-physical accurate lux measurements values can have a range starting at 0.0001 (a multiplier instead of a divider). Values need to be provided on a log scale (default =

 $\log(c(0.00001,\,50)))$ 

control Control settings for the Bayesian optimization, generally should not be altered

(defaults to a Monte Carlo method). For detailed information I refer to the

BayesianTools package documentation.

mask Mask to constrain positions to land

step\_selection A step selection function on the distance of a proposed move, step selection is

specified on distance (in km) basis.

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plot Plot a map during location estimation (updated every seven days)
verbose Give feedback including a progress bar (TRUE or FALSE)

#### **Details**

Model fits are applied by default to values up to sunrise or after sunset only as most critical to the model fit (capturing daylength, i.e. latitude and the location of the diurnal pattern - longitudinal displacement).

#### Value

A data frame with location estimate, their uncertainties, and ancillary model parameters useful in quality control.

## **Examples**

```
# define land mask with a bounding box
\# and an off-shore buffer (in km), in addition
# you can specify the resolution of the resulting raster
mask <- stk_mask(</pre>
 bbox = c(-20, -40, 60, 60), #xmin, ymin, xmax, ymax
 buffer = 150, # in km
 resolution = 0.5 # map grid in degrees
 )
 # define a step selection distribution/function
 ssf \leftarrow function(x, shape = 0.9, scale = 100, tolerance = 1500){}
 norm <- sum(stats::dgamma(1:tolerance, shape = shape, scale = scale))</pre>
 prob <- stats::dgamma(x, shape = shape, scale = scale) / norm</pre>
# estimate locations
locations <- cc876 |> skytrackr(
 plot = TRUE,
 mask = mask,
 step_selection = ssf,
 start_location = c(50, 4),
      control = list(
        sampler = 'DEzs',
        settings = list(
        iterations = 10, # change iterations
         message = FALSE
        )
      )
 )
```

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stk_cluster	Cluster geolocator co-variates	
stk_cluster	Cluster geolocator co-variates	

## Description

Uses k-means and hierarchical clustering to group geolocator covariates into consistent groups for visual analysis

#### Usage

```
stk_cluster(df, k = 2, method = "kmeans")
```

# Arguments

df A skytrackr data frame.

k The number of k-means/hierarchical clusters to consider.
method The method to use, "kmeans" (default), "hclust" can be set.

#### Value

The original data frame with attached cluster labels.

stk_fit	Fit illuminance (lux) profile	

## **Description**

Fits a simulated lux profile to observed light logger data to estimate locations (parameters).

## Usage

```
stk_fit(data, roi, loc, scale, control, step_selection)
```

## **Arguments**

data	A skytrackr data frame
roi	A region of interest defined by a dynamic bounding box (set via the tolerance value and relative to the previous step)
loc	The location of the previous step
scale	Scale / sky condition factor covering the skylight() range of 1-10 (from clear sky to extensive cloud coverage) but can be extended for more flexibility to account for coverage by plumage, note that in case of non-physical accurate lux measurements values can have a range starting at 0.0001 (a multiplier instead of a divider).

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control Control settings for the Bayesian optimization, generally should not be altered

(defaults to a Monte Carlo method). For detailed information I refer to the

BayesianTools package documentation.

step\_selection A step selection function on the distance of a proposed move, step selection is

specified on distance (in km) basis.

#### Value

An estimated illuminance based location (and its uncertainties).

stk\_map Plot skytrackr results

#### **Description**

Create a map of estimated locations as a static or dynamic map.

## Usage

```
stk_map(df, bbox, start_location, roi, dynamic = FALSE)
```

#### **Arguments**

df A data frame with locations produced with the skytrackr() function

bbox A geographic bounding box provided as a vector with the format xmin, ymin,

xmax, ymax.

start\_location A start location as lat/lon to indicate the starting position of the track (optional)

roi A region of interest under consideration, only used in plots during optimization

dynamic Option to create a dynamic interactive graph rather than a static plot. Both

the path as the locations are shown. The size of the points is proportional to the latitudinal uncertainty, while equinox windows are marked with red points.

(default = FALSE)

#### Value

A ggplot map of tracked locations or mapview dynamic overview.

#### **Examples**

```
# define land mask with a bounding box
# and an off-shore buffer (in km), in addition
# you can specify the resolution of the resulting raster
mask <- stk_mask(
   bbox = c(-20, -40, 60, 60), #xmin, ymin, xmax, ymax
   buffer = 150, # in km
   resolution = 0.5 # map grid in degrees</pre>
```

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```
# define a step selection distribution/function
 ssf \leftarrow function(x, shape = 0.9, scale = 100, tolerance = 1500){}
 norm <- sum(stats::dgamma(1:tolerance, shape = shape, scale = scale))</pre>
 prob <- stats::dgamma(x, shape = shape, scale = scale) / norm</pre>
}
# estimate locations
locations <- cc876 |> skytrackr(
 plot = TRUE,
 mask = mask,
 step_selection = ssf,
 start_location = c(50, 4),
      control = list(
        sampler = 'DEzs',
        settings = list(
        iterations = 10, # change iterations
         message = FALSE
        )
 )
#---- actual plotting routines ----
# static plot, with required bounding box
locations |> stk_map(bbox = c(-20, -40, 60, 60))
# dynamic plot
locations |> stk_map(dynamic = TRUE)
```

stk\_mask

Generate a land surface mask

#### **Description**

Returns a (buffered) land mask to constrain potential model results.

#### Usage

```
stk_mask(buffer = 0, resolution = 1, bbox, sf = FALSE)
```

#### **Arguments**

buffer The buffer distance from land areas (in km, default = 0 excluding all water

bodies).

resolution The resolution of the spatial grid in degrees, when exporting as a terra Spa-

tRaster (default = 1).

bbox A bounding box of the mask to constrain the estimated location parameter space.

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sf

Return the land mask as an 'sf' polygon, not a rasterized map for. use in map plotting, not used for processing (default = FALSE)

#### Value

A buffered land mask as an 'sf' or 'terra' map object.

## **Examples**

```
# define land mask with a bounding box
# and an off-shore buffer (in km), in addition
# you can specifiy the resolution of the resulting raster
mask <- stk_mask(
  bbox = c(-20, -40, 60, 60), #xmin, ymin, xmax, ymax
  buffer = 150, # in km
  resolution = 0.5 # map grid in degrees
  )</pre>
```

stk\_profile

Plot seasonal profiles

#### **Description**

Provides static or dynamic (plotly) seasonal profile plot

#### Usage

```
stk_profile(data, logger, range = c(0, 1e+05), center = "day", plotly = FALSE)
```

## **Arguments**

data A skytrackr compatible data frame.

logger The logger to plot.
range The light range to plot.

center Set the data to center data on "day" or "night" (default = "day").

Logical, convert to dynamic plotly plot or not (default = FALSE)

#### Value

A static or dynamic graph of light levels for a given logger.

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stk\_read\_glf

Read Swiss Ornithology institute GLF files

#### **Description**

Read Swiss Ornithology institute files in the '.glf' and re-formats them to a skytrackr compatible format.

## Usage

```
stk_read_glf(files, verbose = TRUE)
```

## Arguments

files A '.glf' file or list of '.glf' files with light level values.

verbose provide detailed feedback

#### Value

A skytrackr compatible data frame for use in further location estimation.

#### **Examples**

```
## Not run:
df <- stk_read_glf("your_SOI_glf_file.glf")
## End(Not run)</pre>
```

stk\_read\_lux

Read Migrate Technology .lux files

## Description

Read Migrate Technology Ltd. '.lux' files and re-formats them to a skytrackr compatible format.

#### Usage

```
stk_read_lux(files, verbose = TRUE)
```

# **Arguments**

files A '.lux' file or list of '.lux' files with light level values

verbose provide detailed feedback

## Value

A skytrackr compatible data frame for use in further location estimation.

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#### **Examples**

```
# read in the demo lux file
df <- stk_read_lux(
  system.file("extdata/cc876.lux", package="skytrackr")
)</pre>
```

stk\_screen\_twl

Twilight screening routine

#### Description

Removes poor quality data based on twilight heuristics. Allows for quick screening of data containing "false" twilight values.

#### Usage

```
stk_screen_twl(df, threshold = 1.5, dips = 3, step = 100, filter = TRUE)
```

## **Arguments**

df A skytrackr data frame.

threshold A twilight threshold (default = 1.5).

dips The allowed number of interruptions during a daylight profile below the twilight

threshold before flagging as a poor quality "suspect" day.

step A threshold of the allowed step change in illuminance values between the twi-

light value and the preceding one. Large jumps and the lack of a smooth transition suggest a false twilight (bird leaving a dark nest site long after or long

before dawn or dusk).

filter Logical if to return data pre-filtered, removing all poor quality days or false

twilight ones (default = TRUE)

#### Value

A skytrackr data frame with poor twilight quality days removed and dusk and dawn timings marked (data is returned as a long format, not a wide format).

#### **Examples**

```
# set demo values artificially low as a demonstration
library(dplyr)
df <- cc876 |>
    mutate(
    value = ifelse(
        date_time > "2021-08-15 05:00:00" & date_time < "2021-08-15 12:00:00",
        0.1,
        value)
)</pre>
```

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```
# screen values and remove them (filter = TRUE)
df <- df |> stk_screen_twl(filter = TRUE)
```

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