

**PUFF: The Autonomous Agent  
For EEL 5666  
Intelligent Machine Design Lab**

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## **Abstract**

This document is a basic summary of a project completed for EEL 5666: Intelligent Machine Design Lab (IMDL). The project required for this course was the design, testing, and implementation of an autonomous agent. This agent must utilize four basic sensors to perform a variety of behaviors. These requirements are left simple and vague, to promote creativity and allow undergraduates like myself to participate in this unique class.

## **Executive Summary**

For the completion of this project an autonomous agent must be designed and implemented. The agent must have four sensors, and one of these sensors must be of the student's design. Also, the agent must perform at least four different functions.

The project discussed in this document contains one basic robot platform with basic sensor suite. Using this sensor suite the robot will be able to "sense" its environment. However, two algorithms will be used to simulate two different agents. One agent will be a predator who will seek out a prey. On the other hand, there will be a prey who will avoid the predator agent. After both algorithms have been designed and implemented, they will hopefully interact with each other in a similar relationship found in nature.

## **Introduction**

This document contains the information obtained through the design and implementation of the autonomous agent to be developed for IMDL. The scope of this paper is confined to the basic robot platform and the algorithms to be used. The paper discusses the integrated system and the individual sensors used to perceive the agent's environment. This document also discusses the variety of behaviors that were performed with the basic sensor suite. Finally, the paper closes with a summary of work accomplished and discusses the limitations of the work performed. Future work on this project is also mentioned in the conclusion.

## Integrated System

The goal of this project was to design an autonomous agent with a variety of functions and behaviors. Specifically, this agent could simulate predator and prey behaviors depending on the arbitrator process imbed in the machine's code. Mekatronix's Talrik Junior was the platform for this robot's design. A M68HC11 microprocessor is the heart of the TJ. The TJ is also has two types of sensors, and the modified design in this project adds two additional sensors. Using all of these sensors, the microprocessor is able to sense some characteristics about its environment and behavior accordingly. The figure below shows the sensors as inputs to the microprocessor which uses this to perform the associated behaviors.

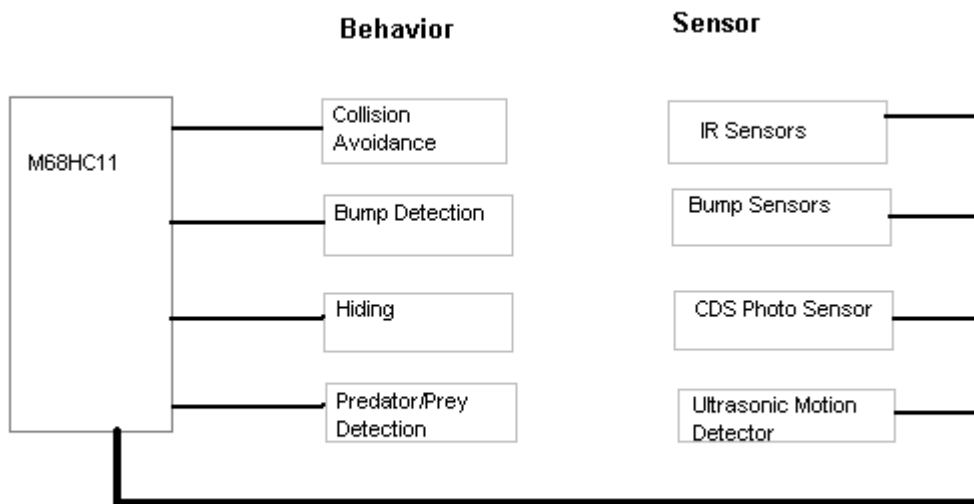


Figure 1: Fuctional Block Diagram of system

## Mobile Platform

The platform used is Mekatronix Talrik Jr shown below in Figure 2. This robot has a very compact design making it agile and very maneuverable. In fact, the wheels are placed in a manner allowing the agent to spin on its center. The TJ has a single chip computer board (Novasoft MSCC11), and a battery supply located beneath its topside. For this project the TJ platform was modified with two additional sensors. The modified TJ platform is shown in Figure 3 below.

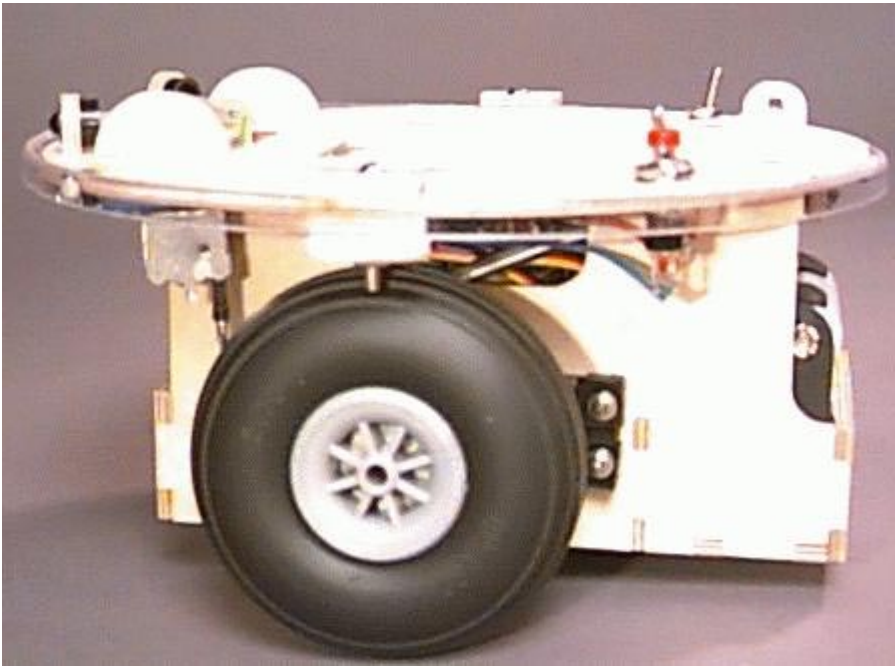


Figure 2b

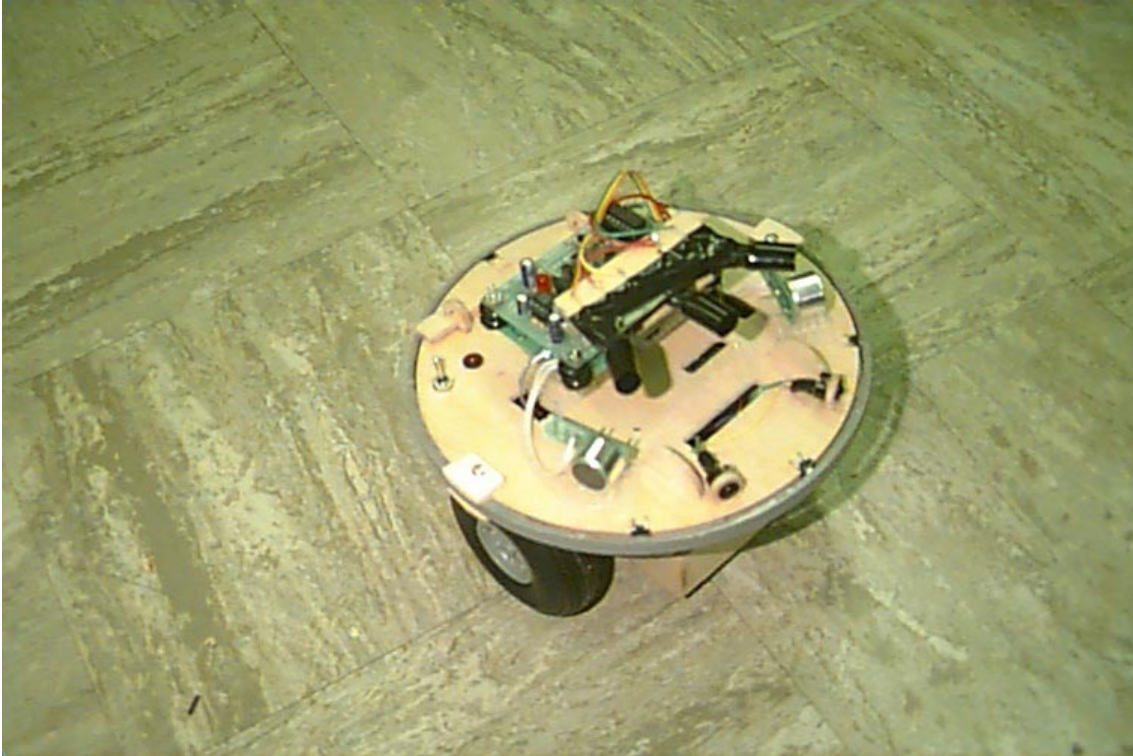


Figure 3: Modified TJ Platform

## Actuation

The robot is driven by two independent servo motors. These servos act essentially as DC motors with feedback circuitry. A 50Hz signal is used to drive the servos in a given direction. Depending on the duty cycle of this signal the servos will drive the wheels at a given speed. The servos are the only type of actuation in the system. The software for the motor drivers can be found in the TJ application package from Novasoft.

## Sensors

### **IR Emitters and Detectors:**

The TJ also detect infrared light, or IR. Two infrared IR emitters are used to project 40kHz IR light. Moreover, there are two IR detectors which can detect this projected light. There are one of these detectors mounted on the right side of the robot and another sensor mounted on the left side. In this arrangement, the TJ can detect which direction the light is coming from. Furthermore, the IR detectors (Sharp GP1U58) are



modified to give an analog voltage corresponding to the amount of IR received. The nominal value for these IR detectors is 88 (decimal) on the A/D port and the saturation value is about 130. The left sensor and right sensors are connected to the A/D converter on pins PE6 and PE7 respectively. Software to modulated the IR emitters correctly can be found in the TJ applications package from Novasoft.

Using the analog output from the IR detectors the direction and intensity of incoming light can be measured. If the TJ approaches an object at close range the IR from the emitters is reflected off the object and back to the IR detectors. As a result, an object can be detected and avoided through arbitration of the motors. One of the major drawback to this sensor is its occasional problems sensing its environment. For example, if the object is of the dark in color less light will be reflected. It is almost impossible to determine range without complex algorithms. Moreover, the TJ has problems detecting some shapes such as skinny or round due to lack of reflected light. It is important to leave the TJ in a non-complex environment for reliable interaction.

#### **Bump Detectors:**

The bump detectors are the simplest sensor located on the TJ. There are three forward facing bump switches and one on the rear. Each sensor is simple a switch that is either closed or open. The forward looking bump switches are all interconnected with a pull down resistor and then connect to the PC5 of the microprocessor. Therefore, if the switch becomes closed at any time the signal becomes high on the input pin.

A bumper is placed around the outside of the TJ over these bumper switches, so that collisions can be detected from other areas besides the switches themselves. It is important to have a properly placed bumper, so that if a collision does occur the bumper returns to its original position after the TJ has separated itself from the object. This sensor has the most priority over the other sensors in this project. If I collision is detected by the switches the TJ immediately backs up before returning to its original function.

#### **Ultrasonic Motion Detector:**

This sensor is a modified version of a electronics kit provided from Jameco Electronics. The part number for this motion detector kit is 125090 and can be purchased by calling the vendor at 1-800-831-

4242. The kit itself contains a matched pair of ceramic transducers which convert movement to electrical energy and vice versa. Through some modification, the basic functionality inherent to these transducers will be used in a way for one robot to detect the direction and range of another robot. Furthermore, this will allow them the robots to interact in a specific algorithm chosen.

#### JAMECO'S ULTRASONIC MOVEMENT DETECTOR:

The kit provided by Jameco provides two ultrasonic transducers advertised to detect motion from 4-7m away. A crystal provides an operation frequency of 40kHz to the two transducers. The kit also provides a variety of additional characteristics. First, an LED provides visual evidence that movement has been sensed. Second, there is a PCB-mounted switch which can be used to switch between an automatic reset about 0.3 seconds after the detector has been triggered or to stay latched on. Finally, the unit provides pads which allow for additional circuits such as buzzers or lights.

The transmitter circuit consists of a crystal-locked cmos gate oscillator feeding a 40kHz square wave to a cmos driver. This in turn drives the transmitter in anti-phase to get the maximum output. The transmitter circuit is shown below in Figure 4.

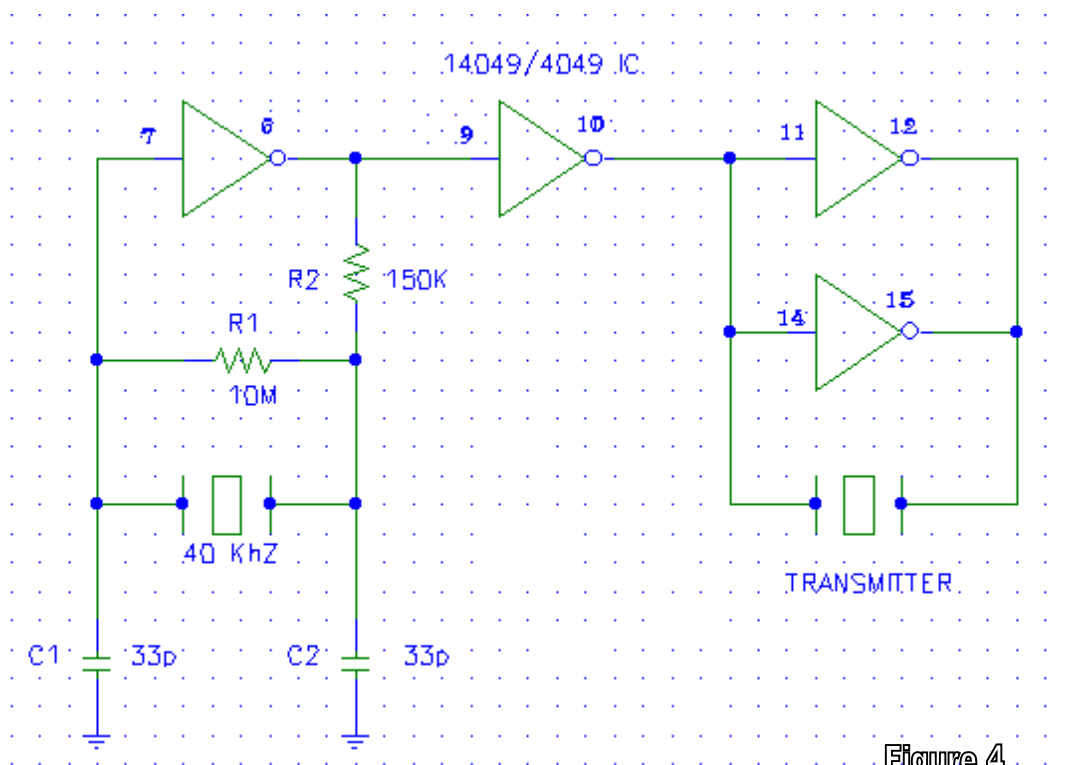


Figure 4



turn the motors in the direction of the strongest signal, rather than avoiding this. The predator will "listen" for the signal that the prey will transmit.

**PERFORMANCE AND OBSERVATION OF SENSOR CHARACTERISTICS:**

An experiment was used to determine some of the characteristics of this ultrasonic motion detector. The Jameco kit provides a LED which lights up every time the device is triggered by movement, and provided an easy method of testing the limitations of the sensor.

IR sensors have a limitation when searching for a reflected signal. For example, a stronger IR signal can be measured off a light surface than a dark surface. However, these ultrasonic transducers do not have this same limitation. Sound waves are not effected by the color of a reflecting surface. However, they are effected by the shape. A concave object will provide a stronger reflected signal than a flat object. Moreover, a flat object will reflect a stronger signal than a convex object.

The receiver circuit's sensitivity can be adjusted by the potentiometer. Varying the sensitivity of the device, a flat and concave object were used to determine the greatest distance that could be detected.

The following data was obtained,

RESISTANCE(OHMS)	DISTANCE OF FLAT OBJECT(FT)	DISTANCE OF CONCAVE OBJECT(FT)
100	4	6
2.5K	4.5	6.5
5K	5	7.25
7.5K	6	8
10K	7	9.5

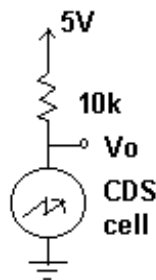
This data shows one of the limitations of the sensor. For if used for collision avoidance, a robot would not easily detect some objects due to shape. Moreover, if this sensor was used to range object error should be expected. The receiver circuit is very sensitive, and would result in greater range errors with greater distances.

This motion detector sensor is the most elaborate sensor found in this project. Modifications must be made from the current design however. Through implementation of this sensor with the robot a problem has been observed. The A/D converter samples at a given rate which is much slower than oscillating signal given from the receiver circuitry. The output waveform would probably be readily usable if a low pass

filter was used on the current output waveform. Despite this problem, the TJ can detect motion consistently. Range and directions problems will hopefully be rendered at a later date.

### **CDS Photo Resistor:**

The CDS photo resistor sensor is very simple. The sensor itself is a simple voltage divider as shown in Figure 6. The value of the resistor can be adjusted to give a variety of sensitivities to different types of light. For example, a 1k and 100k resistor force the circuit to be sensitive to bright and dark light respectively.



The voltage over the CDS cell is taken to the A/D converter on the microprocessor. There are three of these sensors placed on the robot, and they all vary in their direction.

## **Behaviors**

### **Collision Avoidance:**

Collision Avoidance is accomplished with the IR system. The IR detectors are connected to the analog port of the microprocessor. When a tolerance is exceeded on one of the detectors the system's arbitrator "senses" an object and sends the proper speed and direction outputs to the motors. For example, if the left IR detector give a value above a certain tolerance the arbitrator tells the robot to turn right, or away from the object.

One of the biggest problems with this behavior is called the "Braitenburg Trap." This situation occurs when both the right and left detectors sense a value above threshold. The system's arbitrator wants to go both direction, so when implemented the robot just seems to shake back and forth. To solve this problem the arbitrator looks to see when this situation happens and then tells the motors to back up for a set amount of time (see source code in ARBIT\_SR).

**Bump Detection:**

This behavior depends on the bump switches located around the outside of the TJ. If they are triggered the arbitrator simply backs up for a set amount of time. In fact, this behavior has the highest priority in the system.

**Hiding/Searching:**

This behavior can either be seen as hiding or searching depending on if the algorithm being used is that of the prey or predator respectively. In either case, the system uses the CDS cells to search for the darkest part of the room. Once all three CDS sensors register a dark reading, then the robot knows it has reached its destination. In the prey's case, it now hides until a predator robot comes. In contrast, when the predator robot reaches its destination it will poke around searching for the prey who should have left by then.

**Predator/Prey Detection:**

The ultrasonic motion receivers are used for this behavior. The prey uses this sensor when it is hiding. Once it detects a prey in its vicinity it begins to run away. Similarly, the predator uses this sensor to detect the prey. However, with a better output signal from the motion detector the predator should be able to chase the prey with this same signal.

Similar to the IR system, there are two receivers placed on opposite sides of the robot. This should give the arbitrator some sense of direction. However, due to the fact the receiver circuit is too sensitive or the A/D converter does not sample fast enough this sensor can only be used to detect motion.

## **Conclusion**

The goals of this project have been achieved for the most part. The final robot platform has a great sensor suite which has many possible functions. However, the M68HC11E2 only has 2K EEPROM and 256 bytes of RAM, so the memory capacity is limited. With a bigger memory, the entire sensor suite could be utilized to perform elaborate and more “intelligent” behaviors. Moreover, modification still needs to be done on the ultrasonic sensor. This sensor has some advantages over using IR for collision avoidance or object chasing. If the output of this sensor was passed through a low pass filter the signal may actually be used for a more useful function. Eventually, both the prey and predator algorithms will be completed, and both designs will be implemented together to hopefully simulate some behaviors found in nature.

## Appendix

Source code in assembly:

\*Steve McKinnon

\*IMDL

\*12/1/97

\*shell v1.4 collision avoidance WITH BUMP DETECTION (FINAL)

\*\*\*\*\*

```
EEPROM      EQU   $B600
RAM         EQU   $0000
RAMEND      EQU   $01FF
REGS       EQU   $1000
OPTION      EQU   $1039
ADCTL      EQU   $1030
ADR1       EQU   $1031
ADR2       EQU   $1032
ADR3       EQU   $1033
ADR4       EQU   $1034
TMSK1      EQU   $1022
TMSK2      EQU   $1024
TFLG2      EQU   $1025
PACTL      EQU   $1026
PORTC      EQU   $1003
*          Constants
NSAMP      EQU   100
BIT0       EQU   %00000001
BIT1       EQU   %00000010
BIT6       EQU   %01000000   ;LEFT SENSOR
BIT7       EQU   %10000000   ;RIGHT SENSOR
INV6       EQU   %10111111
STSIZE     EQU   20
```

\*\*\*\*\* DATA \*\*\*\*\*

```
          ORG   $00
PID      RMB   1   ;PROCESS ID
SP1      RMB   2   ;STACK POINTER FOR IR READ
SP2      RMB   2   ;STACK POINTER FOR SONIC READ
SP3      RMB   2   ;STACK POINTER FOR PHOTO READ
SP4      RMB   2   ;STACK POINTER FOR ARBITRATOR
SP5      RMB   2   ;STACK POINTER FOR MOTOR ROUTINE
STACK1   RMB   STSIZE
STACK2   RMB   STSIZE
STACK3   RMB   STSIZE
STACK4   RMB   STSIZE
STACK5   RMB   STSIZE
BUMP     RMB   1
IR_LEFT  RMB   1
IR_RIGHT RMB   1
SONAR_LEFT RMB  1
SONAR_RIGHT RMB 1
CDS_LEFT RMB   1
CDS_CENTER RMB 1
CDS_RIGHT RMB  1
MOTOR_LEFT RMB 2
```



```

MOTOR_RIGHT RMB 2
ACTUAL_LEFT RMB 2
ACTUAL_RIGHT RMB 2
_SERVOS_BUSY:
    RMB 2
_SIGNAL_STATE:
    RMB 2
_CURRENT_WIDTH:
    RMB 2
_WIDTH:
    RMB 4
_current_mode
    rmb 1
***** INTERRUPT VECTORS *****
    ORG $FFFE
    FDB MAIN
    ORG $FFE4
    fdb _IRREAD
    ORG $FFE6
    FDB _SERVO_HAND
    ORG $FFF0
    FDB RTI_ISR
*****8
    ORG $F800
MAIN LDX #REGS
*Turn on A/D System
    LDAA #%10000000 ; Bit 7 (ADPU) of OPTION
    STAA OPTION-REGS,X
* Wait 100 ms for Pump Charge to Stabilize
    LDAA #40 ; 2 E cycles
WAIT1 DECA ; 2 E cycles
    BNE WAIT1 ; 3 E cycles
*
    BCLR PACTL,X BIT1 ;SET INTERRUPT RATE FOR 8.19MSEC...
    BSET PACTL,X BIT0
    BSET TMSK2,X BIT6 ;ENABLE RTI INTERRUPT
*
    LDX #STACK1+STSIZE-1 ;INITIALIZE STACK POINTERS FOR PROCESSES
    STX SP1
    LDX #STACK2+STSIZE-1
    STX SP2
    LDX #STACK3+STSIZE-1
    STX SP3
    LDX #STACK4+STSIZE-1
    STX SP4
    LDX #STACK5+STSIZE-1
    STX SP5
*
    ;INITIALIZE ALL STACKS
    LDS SP5 ;ASSUME PREVIOUS PID WAS 5
    LDX #MOTOR_SR
    PSHX
    LDY #0
    PSHY ;IY
    PSHY ;IX
    PSHY ;A AND B
    LDAA #BIT6 ;CCR WITH X=1 AND I=0

```

```

        PSHA          ;CCR
        STS    SP5
*
        LDS    SP4          ;ASSUME PREVIOUS PID WAS 4
        LDX    #ARBIT_SR
        PSHX
        LDY    #0
        PSHY          ;IY
        PSHY          ;IX
        PSHY          ;A AND B
        LDAA  #BIT6        ;CCR WITH X=1 AND I=0
        PSHA          ;CCR
        STS    SP4
*
        LDS    SP3          ;ASSUME PREVIOUS PID WAS 3
        LDX    #PHOTO_SR
        PSHX
        LDY    #0
        PSHY          ;IY
        PSHY          ;IX
        PSHY          ;A AND B
        LDAA  #BIT6        ;CCR WITH X=1 AND I=0
        PSHA          ;CCR
        STS    SP3
*
        LDS    SP2          ;ASSUME PREVIOUS PID WAS 2
        LDX    #SONIC_SR
        PSHX
        LDY    #0
        PSHY          ;IY
        PSHY          ;IX
        PSHY          ;A AND B
        LDAA  #BIT6        ;CCR WITH X=1 AND I=0
        PSHA          ;CCR
        STS    SP2
*
        LDAA  #1
        STAA  PID
        LDS    SP1          ;INITIALIZE CURRENT PROCESS AS 1
*
        LDY    #3000
        STY    ACTUAL_LEFT ;INITALIZE CURRENT MOTOR WIDTH
        STY    ACTUAL_RIGHT
        JSR    _INIT_SERVOS ;INITIALIZE SERVOS
        JSR    _INIT_IR     ;INITIALIZE IR EMITTERS
        JSR    _IR_ON       ;TURN ON IR
        CLI    ;TURN ON INTERRUPTS
        JMP    IR_SR        ;GO TO PROCESS 1
*****
*****
RTI_ISR LDX    #REGS
        BRCLR TFLG2,X BIT6 ENDRTI ;IGNORE ILLEGAL INTERRUPT
        BCLR  TFLG2,X INV6        ;CLEAR FLAG
        LDAA  PID                  ;FIND CURRENT PID
        CMPA  #1
        BEQ   SAVEP1

```

```

    CMPA #2
    BEQ  SAVEP2
    CMPA #3
    BEQ  SAVEP3
    CMPA #4
    BEQ  SAVEP4
    CMPA #5
    BEQ  SAVEP5
    BRA  ENDRTI
SAVEP1 STS   SP1
    LDAA #2
    STAA PID
    LDS  SP2
    BRA  ENDRTI
SAVEP2 STS   SP2
    LDAA #3
    STAA PID
    LDS  SP3
    BRA  ENDRTI
SAVEP3 STS   SP3
    LDAA #4
    STAA PID
    LDS  SP4
    BRA  ENDRTI
SAVEP4 STS   SP4
    LDAA #5
    STAA PID
    LDS  SP5
    BRA  ENDRTI
SAVEP5 STS   SP5
    LDAA #1
    STAA PID
    LDS  SP1
    BRA  ENDRTI
ENDRTI RTI
*****
*****
IR_SR  BRA  IR_SR
    LDX  #REGS
LOOP1  LDAA  #%00010110 ;SAMPL
    STAA ADCTL-REGS,X
    LDAA #6 ; 2 E cycles
WAITR  DECA ; 2 E cycles
    BNE  WAITR ; 3 E cycles
    LDAA ADR3
    STAA IR_LEFT
    LDAA #%00010111 ;SAMPR
    STAA ADCTL-REGS,X
    LDAA #6 ; 2 E cycles
WAITL  DECA ; 2 E cycles
    BNE  WAITL ; 3 E cycles
    LDAA ADR4
    STAA IR_RIGHT
    BRA  LOOP1
*****
SONIC_SR LDX #REGS

```

```

LOOP2 SEI
      LDAA  #%00010001    ;SAMPL
      STAA  ADCTL-REGS,X
      LDAA  #6            ; 2 E cycles
WAITR DECA            ; 2 E cycles
      BNE   WAITR        ; 3 E cycles
      LDAA  ADR1
      STAA  SONAR_LEFT
      LDAA  #%00010101    ;SAMPR
      STAA  ADCTL-REGS,X
      LDAA  #6            ; 2 E cycles
WAITL DECA            ; 2 E cycles
      BNE   WAITL        ; 3 E cycles
      LDAA  ADR2
      STAA  SONAR_RIGHT
      CLI
      BRA   LOOP2
*****
PHOTO_SR LDX        #REGS
LOOP3 BRA   LOOP3
*****
ARBIT_SR LDX #REGS
      JSR   LOOP4
      BRA  ARBIT_SR
LOOP4 LDAA  PORTC
      ANDA  #%00100000    ;CHECK PC5
      BNE  GOBACK        ;BUMP DETECTION IF NOT ZERO
      LDAA  CDS_RIGHT
      CMPA  #253
      BLT  STOPQU        ;IF CDSRIGHT DARK CHECK LEFT
      BRA  SKIP          ;ELSE SKIP
STOPQU LDAA  CDS_LEFT
      CMPA  #253
      BLT  MSTSTOP        ;IF CDSLEFT DARK TOO THEN STOP
      BRA  SKIP          ;ELSE SKIP
MSTSTOP JSR   STOP
      RTS
SKIP  LDAA  IR_LEFT      ;COLLISION AVOIDANCE
      LDAB  IR_RIGHT
      CMPB  #98
      BLT  RLOW
      CMPA  #98
      BLT  GOLEFT
      LDAA  IR_LEFT
      LDAB  IR_RIGHT
      CMPB  #250
      BGT  RHIGH
      CMPA  #250
      BGT  GOLEFT
*
      LDAA  IR_LEFT
      CMPA  IR_RIGHT
      BLT  GOLEFT
      BRA  GORIGHT
*
RHIGH CMPA  #250

```

```

        BGT  GOBACK
        BRA  GORIGHT
*
RLOW  CMPA  #98
      BLT  FORWARD
      BRA  GORIGHT
GOBACK  LDY  #3500
      STY  MOTOR_LEFT
      LDY  #2400
      STY  MOTOR_RIGHT
      JSR  DELAY
      RTS
GOLEFT  LDY  #3500          ;WORKS
      STY  MOTOR_LEFT
      LDY  #3500
      STY  MOTOR_RIGHT
      RTS
LILLEFT  LDAA  CDS_LEFT
      SUBA  CDS_RIGHT
      CMPA  #150
*      BPL  STR
      LDY  #3000          ;WORKS
      STY  MOTOR_LEFT
      LDY  #3500
      STY  MOTOR_RIGHT
      RTS
GORIGHT  LDY  #2300
      STY  MOTOR_LEFT
      LDY  #2400
      STY  MOTOR_RIGHT
      RTS
LILRIGHT LDAA  CDS_RIGHT
      SUBA  CDS_LEFT
      CMPA  #100
*      BLT  STR
      LDY  #2300
      STY  MOTOR_LEFT
      LDY  #3000
      STY  MOTOR_RIGHT
      RTS
FORWARD LDAA  CDS_CENTER ;NO COLLISION, SO FIND DARKNESS
      CMPA  #250
      BLT  STR          ;GOSTRAIGHT IF DARK AHEAD
      LDAA  CDS_LEFT
      SUBA  CDS_RIGHT
      BLT  LILRIGHT    ;LEAN RIGHT
      BRA  LILLEFT     ;LEAN LEFT
STR  LDY  #2300          ;STRAIGHT MOTOR VALUES
      STY  MOTOR_LEFT
      LDY  #3500
      STY  MOTOR_RIGHT
      RTS
STOP  LDY  #3000          ;STOP ROUTINE
      STY  MOTOR_LEFT
      STY  MOTOR_RIGHT
WAIT4 LDAA  SONAR_LEFT ;WAIT FOR PREDATOR

```

```

        CMPA #180
        BHI  DONE4          ;DETECT WITH LEFT...RUN!
        LDAA SONAR_RIGHT
        CMPA #180
        BHI  DONE4          ;DETECT WITH RIGHT...RUN!
        BRA  WAIT4
DONE4  LDY  #3500           ;BACK UP OUT OF HIDING AND GO...
        STY  MOTOR_LEFT
        LDY  #2800
        STY  MOTOR_RIGHT
        JSR  DELAY          ;WAIT TO FINISH BACKING UP...
        RTS

```

\*\*\*\*\*

```

MOTOR_SR
        LDD  ACTUAL_LEFT
        CPD  MOTOR_LEFT
        BLT  INCL
        BEQ  FIXLEFT
        LDD  ACTUAL_LEFT
        SUBD #50
        STD  ACTUAL_LEFT
        BRA  FIXLEFT
INCL   LDD  ACTUAL_LEFT
        ADDD #50
        STD  ACTUAL_LEFT
FIXLEFT LDD  #0
        LDX  ACTUAL_LEFT
        PSHX
        JSR  _SERVO          ;LEFT
        PULX

```

\*

```

        LDD  ACTUAL_RIGHT
        CPD  MOTOR_RIGHT
        BLT  INCR
        BEQ  FIXR           ;DO NOTHING
        LDD  ACTUAL_RIGHT
        SUBD #50
        STD  ACTUAL_RIGHT
        BRA  FIXR
INCR   LDD  ACTUAL_RIGHT
        ADDD #50
        STD  ACTUAL_RIGHT
FIXR   LDD  #1
        LDX  ACTUAL_RIGHT
        PSHX
        JSR  _SERVO          ;RIGHT
        PULX
        BRA  MOTOR_SR

```

\*\*\*\*\*

```

DELAY LDX  #5              ;APPROX = 2 SEC
OUTER LDY  #10000         ;4 CYCLES
INNER  CMPA $00          ;3
        DEY              ;4
        BNE  INNER        ;3
        DEX              ;3
        BNE  OUTER        ;3

```

RTS

\*\*\*\*\*Source Code for IR modulation and to drive the servos can be found in the TJ applications software from Novasoft.