



**NEAT new software has been developed by European researchers to assess the environmental status of marine ecosystems**

From Dr Borja of AZTI, Spain, coordinator of the European research project DEVOTES ([www.devotes-project.eu](http://www.devotes-project.eu))

The new tool is called **NEAT**, which stands for Nested Environmental status Assessment Tool. It has been developed by researchers of the DEVOTES project.

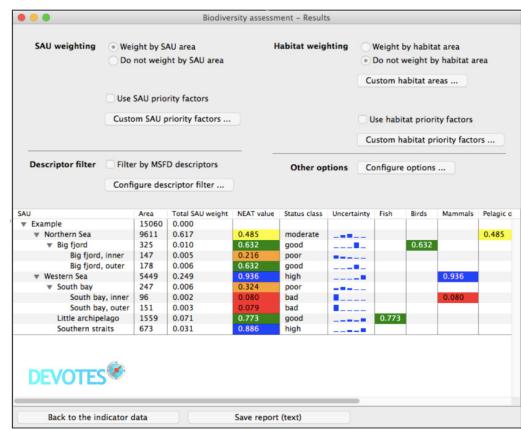
### Highlights:

**Application:** NEAT assesses the environmental status of European seas in an integrative way. NEAT is designed to support the assessment of marine areas by the environmental authorities of EU Member States, but also by the Regional Seas Conventions and for the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. It integrates a previous released tool that includes over 500 indicators used or being developed by European Member States.

**User friendly:** Marine health assessments are complex, but this tool makes the task much easier. Some of these tools can be difficult to use, so NEAT has a user-friendly interface.

**Addressing uncertainty:** NEAT determines the uncertainty of indicator values, so you can evaluate the confidence of your assessment. The more indicators and data you use, the better the assessment will be.

**Versatility:** Users can customize each step of the assessment, and the assessment better reflects the reality of the area. NEAT is so



versatile that it can also be used for other types of environmental assessment, not just marine biodiversity. So, it could also be used by firms and consultancies that carry out all types of environmental assessment.

**Availability:** NEAT and its guidelines are already freely available from the DEVOTES website (<http://www.devotes-project.eu/neat>). In the coming months, NEAT will be enhanced with even more features and possibilities to perform a tailor-made biodiversity assessment. Updates

will be released regularly. Free training webinars are planned for NEAT:  
<http://www.devotes-project.eu/neat-webinars/>



**Dissemination:** Project members are now disseminating the tool and organizing training workshops in member states and for regional seas conventions. The DEVOTES project is featured by the Euronews TV channel  
<http://www.euronews.com/2016/04/25/improving-our-understanding-of-our-seas/>

and <http://www.devotes-project.eu/devotes-breaks-into-euronews/>

DEVOTES will also hold a conference in Brussels in October for key stakeholders and leading scientists. The theme of the conference is “Marine Biodiversity, the key to healthy and productive seas”.

