

Sea Life of the Mar Menor

Some of the largest fish you are likely to see in the Mar Menor are mullet. Mullet may be seen both in the shallows and in deeper water; many are about 30 cm long. A number of different varieties of mullet may be found in the Mar Menor.

Golden Grey Mullet

Liza aurata

Normal Max Size: 50 cm



Thinlip Mullet

Liza ramado

Normal Max Size: 40 cm



Leaping Mullet

Liza saliens

Normal Max Size: 70 cm



Flathead Mullet

Mugil cephalus

Normal Max Size: 70 cm



The Flathead Mullet is a cigar shaped fish with a flattened head and thin lips. It is a very common mullet and has many different common names. It is sometimes known as the Grey Mullet, Common Grey Mullet, Black Mullet, Striped Mullet, Bully Mullet or Mangrove Mullet depending upon which country it is found in.

Mullet are social fish and are normally found in large shoals. They feed on small organisms, which they suck up from rocks or out of the sand or mud at the bottom of the water. Most of what they eat is termed "detritus", which consists of dead or decaying animal and plant matter and faeces, yummy! They will also eat insect larvae, plankton, worms and other crustaceans.

Most mullet are good to eat, however they must be consumed when fresh (within 24 hours of capture) as they quickly spoil.

At the other end of the spectrum the smallest fish in the Mar Menor is probably the smelt. Virtually transparent and with large eyes, these are very attractive fish that swim in large shoals close to the surface.

Sand Smelt

Atherina hepsetus

Normal Max Size: 20 cm

Most smelt in the shallows of the Mar Menor are between 5-10 cm long. Behaviour: social found in shoals



Young eat water fleas and other tiny organisms. Adults eat small crustaceans, worms, molluscs and fish larvae.

Many young smelt end up as lunch for other larger fish!

As you can see from the picture Sand Smelt have small heads and large eyes. They also have a silver strip that runs down the body.

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